

Grateley Primary School Service Pupils – Meeting Notes - dated 3 January 2024

Background

This meeting was held at 2pm, 3 January 2024 at Grateley Primary School to allow an open conversation between the Head (Mrs. Norman) and service parents around how the school can support service children, use and account for the Service Pupil Premium (SPP).¹ A number of suggestions had already been put forward in the document 'Grateley Primary School - Service Pupils.' (see p.5 - Annex 1)

The SPP is worth £335 per eligible pupil in financial year 2023-24. According to the most recent census, Grateley Primary School has 32 service children, giving a funding pot of £10,720. SPP will rise to £340 per eligible pupil in financial year 2024-25 although the number of service children at Grateley Primary may change.

General

Mrs. Norman welcomed parents and began by outlining the difference between the Service Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium.² She announced that Grateley Primary School is being used as a case study school by Hampshire County Council and has been identified as being good for well-being according to the Thriving Lives Toolkit³ (see p.9 - Appendix A) produced by the Service Children's Progression Alliance (SCPA). She stated the school's aim is to ensure more areas become embedded practice versus emerging or developing practice. Mrs. Norman then outlined the following aims for the academic year.

- **New ELSA** (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) - the aim being to make this available to service children whether their parents are away for a 1 week exercise or 6 month deployment.
- **Teaching assistant (TA)** – an advert for this post is currently live. Current point of contact is Ms. Forrest-Talbot. The aim is to have a named Armed Forces Assistant.
- **Friday afternoon 'teddy bears' picnic** – suggested aim of 1st ½ hr for those service children whose parents are deployed with 2nd ½ hr for other service children.
- **Books** - a number of books focused around military personnel and deployment are on order.
- **Visit to other Armed Forces School** – Mrs. Norman suggested on in Winchester. Detail TBC.
- **INSET Day 9th Feb 2024** – Introduction to Thrive – for all staff. Looking at how trauma impacts children and helping children build new neural pathways.
- **Armed Forces Notice Board** – on the wall in the school. Content TBC.
- **Assembly** - an opportunity for service children to speak or service parents to deliver a brief.
- **Coffee mornings** – for service parents/carers of service children.

Mrs. Norman also invited parents to notify the school if they think their service child needs support.

Parents responded to the above points with comments and suggestions below:

- **Armed Forces point of contact.** This was deemed useful if the deployed serviceperson's spouse/partner needed support, needed to notify school regarding an issue e.g around pick up/drop off. COMMENT: Mrs. Norman reminded parents of Grateley Primary School's *After School Club* and *Breakfast Club* which can be booked on the day and Armed Forces Wrap Around Care. (WAC)⁴ offering 20 hours paid childcare during term-time. Discussion was had

¹ [Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know)

² "The SPP is there for schools to provide mainly pastoral support for Service children, whereas the pupil premium (PP) was introduced to raise attainment and accelerate progress within disadvantaged groups. Schools should not combine SPP with the main PP funding and the spending of each premium should be accounted for separately." – Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-service-pupil-premium/service-pupil-premium-what-you-need-to-know> last accessed 3 January 2024.

³ https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/framework-Nov21-English_221205_095328.pdf

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-for-service-children>

around a Service Parents' Network run by parents. Facebook and WhatsApp were raised as options (noting not all parents are on social media) that could be self-administered.

- **Coffee Mornings.** These were agreed as a good idea and a way for new service parents to make intros to others, perhaps leading to agreement on what a service parents' network might look like. Mrs Norman suggested 1 coffee morning per term. Timings/day dependent on school hall availability with a preference for the afternoon to allow parents to segue into pick up.
- **Armed Forces Schools visits.** Suggestions for schools in Tidworth such as Zouch and Clarendon were made as they had experience with high volumes of service children.
- **Assemblies.** An open invitation was put forward for service parents to do a brief or *show & tell*. One parent shared their previous experience of their spouse doing this at the school and how this had instilled a sense of pride in children regarding their parents' role. All pupils would benefit from this. The idea of a treasure hunt with clues to solve was also put forward.
- **Friday afternoon 'teddy bears' picnic.** Parents shared experience of where a 'Service Kids Club' had worked previously in other schools and highlighted that belonging to a club/group gave service children a unique identity amongst their peers which made them feel special. Reference was made to the Eco Council as a good example of this.
- **Uniform.** Suggestions were made that SPP could fund a branded school jumper per child or bag. Parents shared their experience of how simply having access to a 2nd hand branded jumper helped their child fit in. This was especially in the case of a short notice move. Others shared that not having the right uniform would instantly make a child stand out as 'different.' A request was made for detail around uniform policy (e.g branded items) and suppliers to be made readily available on the school website and a request for a set of 2nd hand good condition items to be set aside for short term loan whilst service parents acquired new uniform.

There then followed some questions around some of the school's ambitions.

Q. How is Mrs. Heaps able to teach full time as well as deliver ELSA provision?

A. ELSA provision is 1 afternoon per week, with Mrs. Heaps sessions covered by Mrs. Ford. The aim is to extend this provision.

Q. How long is the ELSA waiting list?

A. Not long. All children will get access to ELSA although this may not immediately be a 1-to-1 session and may be in a group setting.

Q. What other funding is available through charities for example for service children?

A. The school did not have this information.

(Following the launch of the Families Strategy in January 2022, the MOD created a dedicated fund, 'The Armed Forces Families Fund' (AF3). The programme opened for applications on 3 April 2023 and closed on 31 May 2023. Successful projects will be expected to start from September 2023 with all projects started by January 2024. This programme is now closed. An 'Armed Forces Assistant' may well be a suitable person to remain aware of other funding streams.)

A discussion followed around specific support for service children:

- **Janine Shipley** (Community Development Worker) from Middle Wallop Community Centre Janine.Shipley406@mod.gov.uk was mentioned by several as an excellent local point of contact for support and information around activities which successfully engage service children.
- **Storybook Soldier.** This was mentioned by one parent as a great comfort when a parent was absent. This was an initiative run at least 12 years ago where deploying personnel read and recorded a story which was made into a CD. This was funded by ABF The Soldier's Charity, Annington Trust and the Army Central Fund. However, it is not clear whether this is still running. With developments in technology, other options such as WhatsApp recording or a school Yoto player with parents recording an individual 'Make Your Own' card, might be worth exploration. <https://uk.yotoplay.com/educators>

- **Phone Calls.** The creation of a 'quiet area' or booth where a child could receive a phone call from a deployed parent was raised, however other parents mentioned the potential negative impact on a child if the call suddenly cut out. One parent shared their previous experience of a school that did create such an area and that it was not used for this reason. COMMENT: Mrs Norman mentioned that if there was a time difference the school may be able to permit a call if this was the only time available.
- **Key events.** Mrs. Norman addressed the point of technology to support deployed parents viewing key events such as the nativity and offered live streaming as a viable option. She mentioned that safeguarding of other pupils would need to be considered. This could be managed through tailoring the current generic permission form parents complete around photographing etc of their children, through use of technological measures such as bespoke live stream invitations and via additional measures such as written confirmation from the deployed individual that they would view the live stream in a private setting where others could not view it. This would be agreed on a purely case by case basis and for deployed personnel only.
- **Moving into the school.** Service children receive the same support as other children entering the school, including tests within 3 weeks of arrival on phonics, literacy and numeracy to measure attainment and assessment of their social and emotional development. Grateley Primary School also telephones the previous school.
- **Moving from the school.** Service children's documents are couriered to the new school and it is annotated that the child is a service child. Grateley Primary School also telephones the new school. A follow-on question from this last point was as follows:
Q. How is the service child prepared for moving to a new school?
A. The child is asked about their new school.
Some parents raised that a service child may never have seen or visited their new school prior to arrival due to the nature of short notice postings. Service children are known to move more frequently on average than other pupils and may have attended 5 or more different schools.
- **Short notice arrivals.** For those unable to visit the school prior to arrival, a slide show on powerpoint or video *walk around* was suggested by one parent who had found this beneficial for their child. This provided a softer landing for a service child who could then see the layout/classrooms/play area etc.
- **Buddy system.** One parent mentioned that having a buddy for their child had been a 'lifesaver.' Mrs. Norman mentioned that this system was in place. A fellow service pupil (if suitable) might be a preferred option for this.

Authorised Absences. This was the final point discussed and covered where service parents were deploying or due to the nature of their role were unable to take leave during fixed school leave periods. A couple of parents highlighted that requests for a 1/2 day or day absence for deployment/operational reasons had been refused. COMMENT: Mrs. Norman mentioned the need to ensure that the odd day here or there did not become the norm.

A few parents contributed that it was often the shorter notice and shorter duration exercises rather than anticipated and planned 6 month deployments that caused most disruption. The reason for this was that for planned deployments there was often more time to put in domestic contingency arrangements and military unit welfare support was in full swing. Examples of broken promises to children around key events such as birthdays or weekends, the uncertainty and lack of notice with shorter exercises and deployments had a greater emotional impact on the service child and wider family. All three armed services record the time a service person spends away from their home as they are moved and tracked whether on ship, on exercise or deployment.

Mrs. Norman drew the meeting to a close at 3pm.

Financial Accounting. A breakdown of expenditure of SPP and how this would be shared with service parents was not discussed at this meeting.

Additional Resources

The following may be useful to support service children in particular as they prepare to move to/from Grateley Primary School:

- **MOD Moving Schools: A Parents' Guide**⁵ - outlines questions a parent might wish to ask.
- **MOD Pupil Passport**⁶ – this can also help children feel special and reinforce that unique identity that sets them apart from other pupils.
- **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**. Further information can be found from Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)⁷ which provides educational support to service families.
- **A 'Moving On Pack'** (for all children) could include:
 - Address/email cards to hand out to friends (with parents' consent)
 - A 'Leaving Grateley Primary' goodbye card including photo.
 - 'My favourite memories...' activity sheet
 - 'I'm looking forward to...' activity sheet
 - My favourite activities/books/place is... activity sheet giving a snapshot of their time at Grateley.

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/787792/ADR007943_Moving_Schools_Guide_ONLINE_PDF.pdf

⁶https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/783800/ADR008108-Pupil_Passport_pag.pdf

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dcyp-forms-and-information-sheets/ceas-information-6-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send>

Grateley Primary School - Service Pupils

The following information has been collated from [Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/service-pupil-premium)

What is the Service Pupil Premium (SPP)?

State schools, academies and free schools in England, which have children of Service families in school years **reception to year 11**, can receive the SPP funding.

The SPP is designed to assist the school in providing the additional support that service children may need. It is worth £335 per eligible pupil in financial year 2023-24 and £340 per eligible pupil in financial year 2024-25.

How does Service Pupil Premium differ from the pupil premium?

The SPP is there for schools to provide mainly pastoral support for Service children, whereas the pupil premium (PP) was introduced to raise attainment and accelerate progress within disadvantaged groups.

Schools should **not** combine SPP with the main PP funding and the spending of each premium should be **accounted for separately**. However, it may be the case that Schools can claim for both SPP and PP for the same child. If service children meet the criteria for both, then they are entitled to both.

What are the eligibility criteria?

Pupils attract SPP if they meet one of the following criteria:

- one of their parents is serving in the regular armed forces (including pupils with a parent who is on full commitment as part of the full-time reserve service)
- they have been registered as a 'Service child' on a school census in the past six years, see note on the **DfE's ever 6 Service child measure**
- one of their parents died whilst serving in the armed forces and the pupil receives a pension under the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme or the War Pensions Scheme
- one of their parents is in the armed forces of another nation and is stationed in England

Children have to be flagged as Service children ahead of the autumn school census deadline. Service parents need to make the school aware of their status by talking to the head teacher or school admin staff.

The purpose of the Service pupil premium

Eligible schools receive the SPP so that they can offer mainly pastoral support during challenging times and to help mitigate the negative impact on Service children of family mobility⁸ or parental deployment.⁹

⁸ Mobility is when a Service family is posted from one location to another, including overseas and within the UK.

⁹ Deployment is when a Service person is serving away from home for a period of time. This could be a 6 to 9-month tour of duty, a training course or an exercise which could last for a few weeks

What could the Service pupil premium be used for?

Schools have flexibility over how they use the SPP, as they are best placed to understand and respond to the specific needs of those pupils for whom the funding has been allocated. Schools might also consider how to improve the level of and means of communication between the child and their deployed parents. SPP should **not** be used to subsidise routine school activity (trips, music lessons etc.)

The following options list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive and can be used appropriate to the number of service children in the school, the level of mobility amongst parents and service children's needs in any given school. Some do not require funding, but others are options for how funding can be spent. These examples have been collated from examples of best practice.¹⁰

School provision

- **Website.**
 - Dedicated page on school website for service pupils to show the school understands military life and the demands it places on children and has pro-active strategies and policies in place supporting service children.
 - Charter for Service children. A great example is Cambrai Primary School in Catterick, North Yorkshire – the biggest garrison in the UK.¹¹
 - Financial statement – showing how Grateley Primary School accounts for the spend of SPP and success criteria and steps it is taking. Example from Wallop Primary¹²
- **Stakeholder Engagement.**
 - Establish a regular forum (monthly, twice yearly?) whereby service parents can share their ideas and experiences with the school to build a bank of best practice and continuous improvement.
 - Service children's get together/picnic once a year?
 - Develop relationships with/have a list of points of contact for Welfare Officers for local units e.g in Middle Wallop, at Army HQ/HQ Field Army in Andover, in Tidworth, in Bulford.
- **Pupil Attainment.**
 - Monitoring of service children's progress compared to the wider school. Example from Wallop Primary¹³
 - Intervention strategies and support for service children's learning.
- **Upskilling** of staff to understand service life e.g not just separation during deployments, extra burden/costs on parents, distance from family support networks, uncertainty, language.¹⁴
- **Safeguarding**
 - Safeguarding continuity for service children between the United Kingdom and Overseas where relevant. [JSP 834 Volume 1 - Safeguarding children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/jsp/834/Volume1/Safeguardingchildren) Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding (AFFS) responsible for providing the professional leadership and direction across the MOD for the development and implementation of safeguarding policy and practice. Within AFFS, the Safeguarding Policy Team provides subject matter expertise and guidance across Defence and with Safeguarding partners People-AFFS-Safeguarding-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk
- **Staff roles.**
 - Additional staff hours to support the needs of Service children when they join a new school as a result of a posting or when a parent is deployed.
 - Mobility co-ordinators, Forces liaison officers, Parent support advisors, ELSA.

¹⁰ [Service Pupil Premium: examples of best practice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/service-pupil-premium-examples-of-best-practice) dated 19 May 2023

¹¹ <https://www.cambraiprimaryschool.co.uk/service-families>

¹² [service-premium-funding-expenditure-2022-23.docx.pdf \(primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/service-premium-funding-expenditure-2022-23.docx.pdf)

¹³ [service-premium-strategy-statement-2021-2022.pdf \(primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/service-premium-strategy-statement-2021-2022.pdf)

¹⁴ [PowerPoint Presentation \(scipalliance.org\)](https://www.scipalliance.org/presentation) – Understanding the Language (TRI-SERVICE).

- Adult mentor who has oversight of all service children, understands the demands placed on working parents in the armed forces, as well as the implications for the children and works with colleagues to track the progress, attendance, commitment to learning and pastoral welfare of service children including those from foreign militaries and children of British Service Personnel from Foreign and Commonwealth backgrounds.
- **Transport.** Support with transport home to barracks which are rural, remote and have no public transport.
- **Joiners/Leavers.**
 - 'Settling in' pack for service children, especially aimed at in year admissions or those joining from a posting overseas where they are used to a different schooling system or school hours.
 - 'Take away' picture and letter on departure for service children to keep as a record of their time at Grateley School and the friends they made. For children who attend many schools, a tangible record of where they were and when.
- **Deployed parents.** Explore use of tech e.g live links for key events such as parents evening, nativity, sports day events to ensure children are supported.

The Service Children's Progression Alliance helps schools support service children and has produced a toolkit for schools ([framework-Nov21-English_221205_095328.pdf \(scipalliance.org\)](https://www.scipalliance.org/framework-Nov21-English_221205_095328.pdf)) This allows schools to assess how well they are supporting service children and how they can improve. Please see below:



		Principle	Vision
The 7 principles of effective support	1	Our approach is clear	Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Armed Forces children's outcomes.
	2	Wellbeing is supported	Tailored pastoral provision supports Armed Forces children's mental health and wellbeing.
	3	Achievement is maximised	Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Armed Forces children's learning and progression.
	4	Transition is effective	Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Armed Forces children arriving at and leaving school.
	5	Children are heard	Armed Forces children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.
	6	Parents are engaged	Strong home-school partnerships help Armed Forces families feel valued as part of the school community.
	7	Staff are well-informed	Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Armed Forces child.

Children's activities/support

- Celebrate April 2024 – Month of the Military Child. Dandelion is known as the flower of the military child:

"Dandelions are hardy plants which put down strong roots almost anywhere the wind carries them. It's a survivor and blooms in a broad range of climates. Military children may bloom wherever the wind takes them. They can have strong roots, planted swiftly and surely. They're often ready to fly in the breeze to new adventures, new lands and new friends."

- Have a 'Purple Up' day – wear something purple (the Tri-service colour representing all of the Armed Forces) to show awareness, understanding and support for service children and their experience perhaps during Armed Forces Week 24 to 29 June 2024.
- Support to Armistice Day.
- Create scrapbook/diary to show deployed parents on their return, highlighting their achievements and day to day school life. [About - Reading Force](#) – Scrapbook challenge - 'Our shared reading initiative encourages families to read, talk, and scrapbook about a book, improving communication and enriching relationships with books and each other.'
- School trips just for Service children, to help them enjoy their time at school and build a sense of a wider community and understanding of the role their service parent plays (e.g. with military specific trips).
- Map of the world to show where parents are deployed and to track their progress to and from deployment location.
- Support for extra-curricular sporting activities.
- www.jofli.com - [Jofli Bear](#) – to document key life events – service or foster children may already have one.
- [Get Support For Bereaved Military Children | Scotty's Little Soldiers \(scottyslittlesoldiers.co.uk\)](#)
- [2023 Purple Pack - for publication online.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) - Advice and Support for relatives and partners of members of the Armed Forces who die in service.
- [Little Troopers At School - Little Troopers](#)
- [Primary Workshops - Little Troopers](#) – resources for teachers to run a 2 hr workshop on each of the Armed Forces – Royal Navy, Army, Royal Air Force.
- [School Info Sheet - Moving on checklist - Little Troopers](#) – requires registration
- [School Info Sheet - Military life challenges - Little Troopers](#) – requires registration
- [Little Trooper Separation Pack - Little Troopers](#) - £11.50
- [Little Troopers Letters - Little Troopers](#) – Letter writing pack - £2.50 P&P

Books – for children whose parents are serving.

Countdown 'Til Daddy Comes Home by Kristin Ayyar (For ages 4-7 years)

I Miss You by Beth Andrews (For ages 2-5 years)

My Daddy's Going Away by Christopher MacGregor and Emma Yarlett (For ages 3-5 years)

A Parent in the Armed Forces: Come Home Soon by Pat Thomas (For ages 6-11 years)

The Fathers are Coming Home by Margaret Wise Brown and Stephen Savage (For ages 2-5 years)

Mummy's Home by Christopher MacGregor (For ages 3-5 years)

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst and Joanne Lew-Vriethoff (For ages 4-8 years)

My Dad's Deployment Activity Book by Julie LaBelle (For ages 3-11 years)

What will I Play While You Are Away by James R. Thomas (For ages 5-6 years)

Thriving Lives Toolkit¹⁵

		Principle	Vision
The 7 principles of effective support	1	Our approach is clear	Leaders' understanding and approach ensure resources and policies improve Armed Forces children's outcomes.
	2	Wellbeing is supported	Tailored pastoral provision supports Armed Forces children's mental health and wellbeing.
	3	Achievement is maximised	Teaching, assessment and support ensure the continuity of Armed Forces children's learning and progression.
	4	Transition is effective	Systems and support ensure seamless transitions for Armed Forces children arriving at and leaving school.
	5	Children are heard	Armed Forces children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive.
	6	Parents are engaged	Strong home-school partnerships help Armed Forces families feel valued as part of the school community.
	7	Staff are well-informed	Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Armed Forces child.

How to assess your practice

Emerging practice	Developing practice	Embedding practice
Schools with emerging practice will be actively reflecting on their activity and may be implementing actions to enhance their support, but to a small extent	Schools with developing practice will be addressing this principle to a good extent, but this may be partial or yet to be enhanced through regular monitoring and evaluation	Schools with embedding practice will fully address this principle with well-established work that is routinely monitored and evaluated and showing evidence of impact

¹⁵ https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/framework-Nov21-English_221205_095328.pdf