



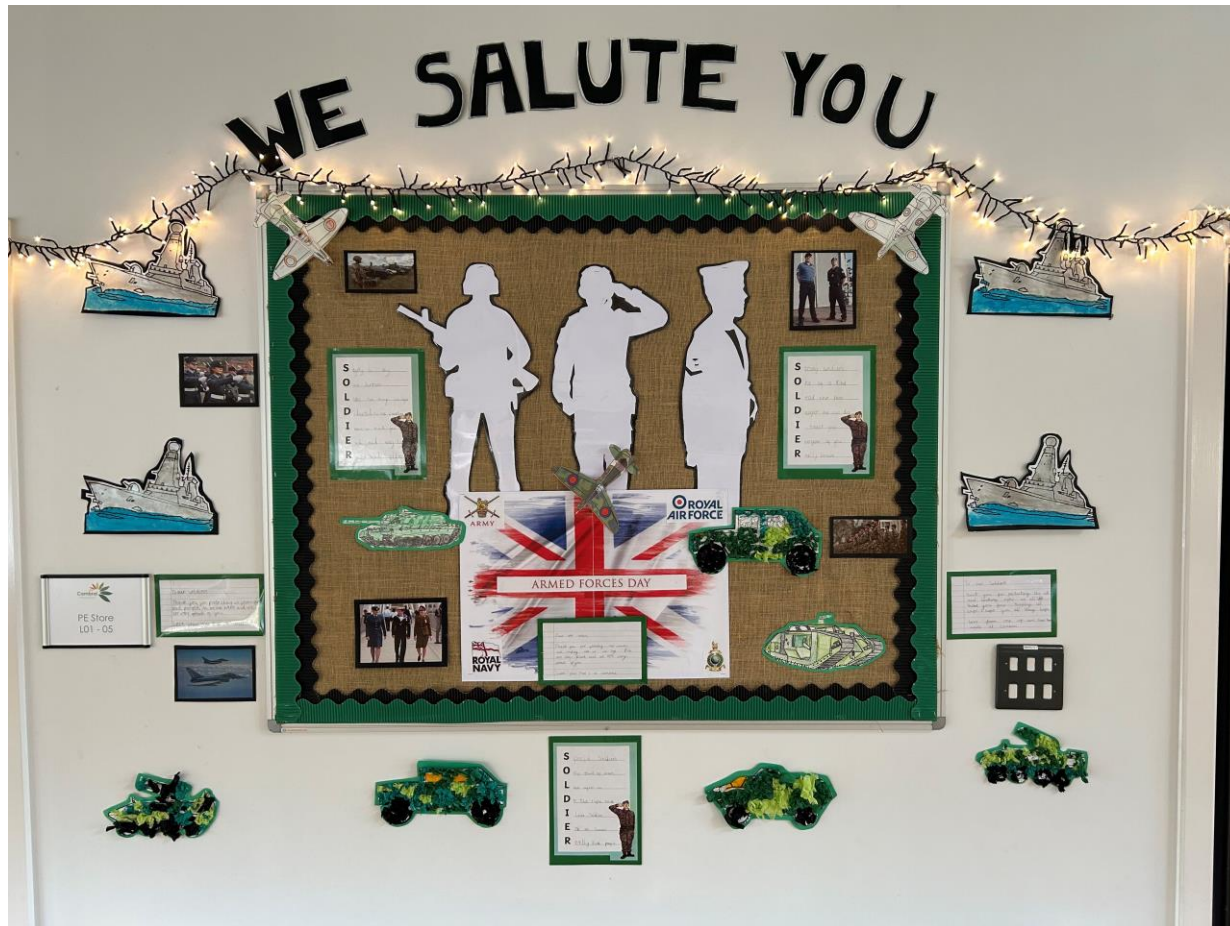
# Briefing for school Service children leads / senior leaders



**Matt Blyton, School Improvement adviser**  
***7<sup>th</sup> February 2024***  
**1315 – 1445**



# Welcome & introductions





# Getting involved



## Please:

- Ask questions and comment in the chat
- Please keep videos on if you can
- Please interact and get involved!
- Unmute to ask a question directly (there will also be opportunities for this throughout the session)
- Send questions & feedback after the briefing to:

[matt.blyton@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:matt.blyton@oxfordshire.gov.uk) or call 07551 680595



# Today's agenda:

- **Guest speaker:** Alexandra Stokes, RAFFF Policy Advisor - Education and Childcare
- **National updates:**  
SCiP Alliance / SCISS / MoTMC / Covenant / RBL
- **Local updates:**
  - Looking back: conference & Remembrance
  - Looking forwards - plans for 2024 / WHI
  - The *Didcot Schools Service Collaboration*



# HOW THE FAMILIES FEDERATIONS CAN HELP YOU

*Alexandra Stokes, RAFFF Policy Advisor - Education and  
Childcare*



## Who are we?



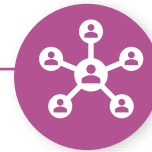
A **voice** for  
military families  
and serving  
personnel



Provide  
**confidential**  
information,  
advice, and  
signposting  
support



Present **evidence**  
to the Armed  
Forces, MOD,  
government  
departments,  
local authorities  
and others



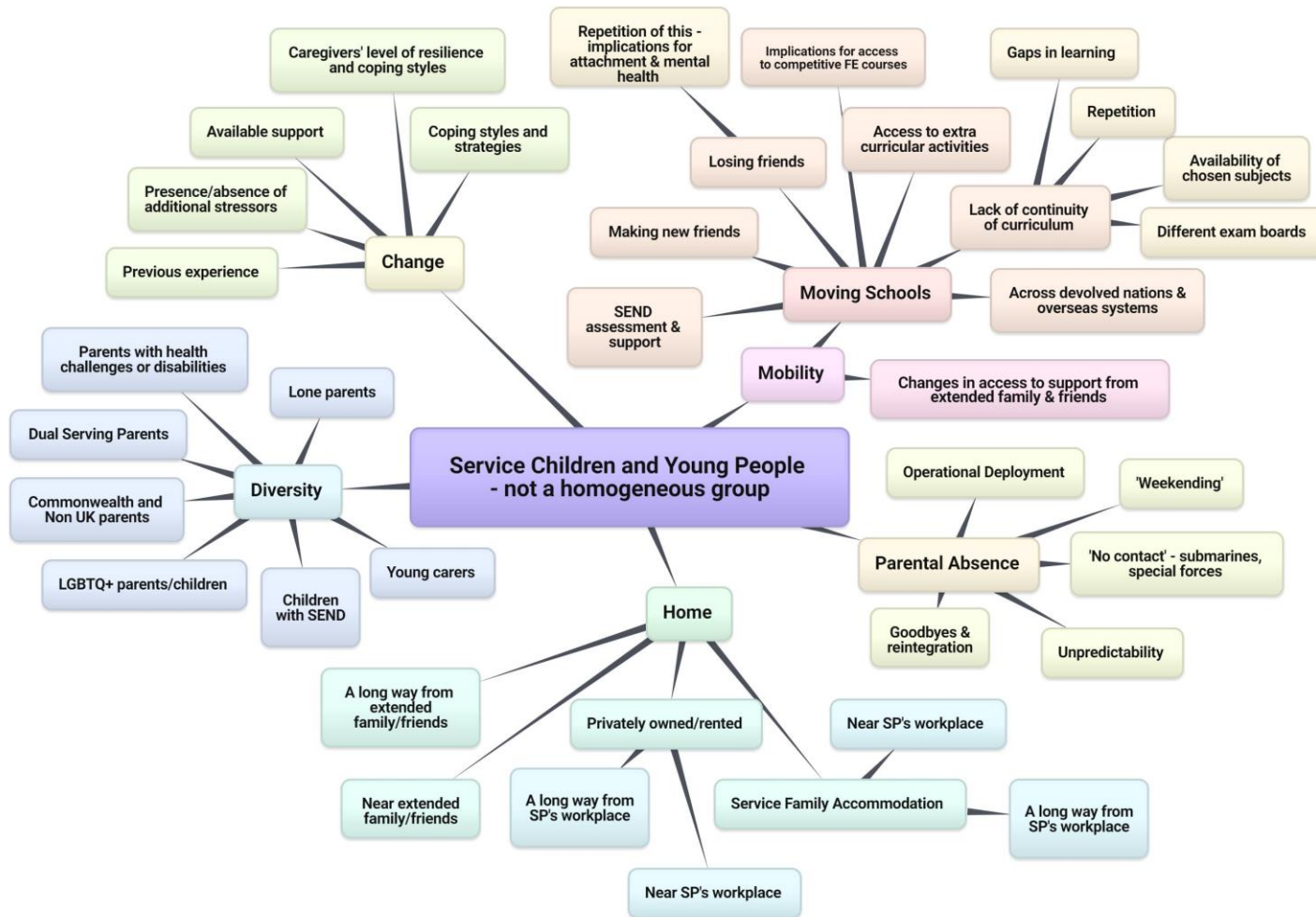
We work  
'holistically'  
alongside key  
**stakeholders**



**Independent**  
organisations

What is unique about Armed Forces family life?

- ➔ The notion of 'Service First'
- ➔ Mobility
- ➔ Deployment
- ➔ Separation





## How are Service families supported? By whom?

### Families Federations

Each Service has its own Families Federation that acts as an independent voice for families and offers support and advice

### Service family support

MOD (Armed Forces Families and Safeguarding & Defence Children Services – EAT and OEST)

Royal Navy Family & People Support

Army Welfare Support

RAF Community Support (RAF Personal Support and Social work through SSAFA)

### Devolved Nations support

Forces Children's Education

Forces Children Scotland

Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE) Cymru

### Military charities

Over 1,800 offer support including The Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, The Army Benevolent Fund, RAF Benevolent Fund and Royal Air Forces Association, Royal British Legion and SSAFA

### Networks in the UK

Service Children's Progression Alliance

Service Children in State Schools (England only)

Veterans and Family Research Hub, Anglia Ruskin Uni

# School support

## Deployment Support

Deployment is when a service person is serving away from home for a period of time. This could be on an operational tour of duty for 6 months or more, a training course or an exercise which could last for a few weeks.

The Families Federations have collaborated with the Service Children in State Schools National Executive Advisory Committee to create this resource with useful links and signposting to raise awareness of the resources and organisations offering support to help children from an Armed Forces background during times of deployment.

**Service Children in State Schools (SCISS)** is a voluntary affiliated network of state-maintained schools in England that have any number of service children on roll. SCISS have produced concise, informative **Factbooks**, including one on **Deployment and Separation**, aimed to help school leaders who might be new to supporting Service children.



The **RAF Families Federation (RAFFF)** work to improve quality of life for the RAF family around the world – at work or at home. The RAFFF have practical guidance for spouses and partners of **deployed** Service personnel and information on **Support for Children and Young People**.



The **RAF Serving Families** website highlights that there are many ways to get the help and support before, during and after the operational deployment of your serving family member including information on what to do in a family emergency.



The **RAF HiVE** Service provides an information and welfare referral service to the Armed Forces community and support all enquiries including deployment.



The **RAF Benevolent Fund (RAFBF)** are dedicated to supporting not only serving and ex-serving personnel but also the whole of the RAF Family. There are a number of services which provide support to children of those who serve. Services such as the **Youth Counselling Service**, the youth support programme **Amplay** and the **Building Stronger Families** online portal, which offers advice to parents who may need support. Visit the **RAFBF** website to learn more.



The **Royal Air Forces Association Storybook Wings** is a service where RAF parents and grandparents can record a bedtime story to be edited for their child to listen to when the serving parent is away from home. If you are serving in the RAF and would like to record your own Storybook Wings story contact [storybookwings@raffa.org.uk](mailto:storybookwings@raffa.org.uk) or get in touch with your station HiVE.

**Doodle Pack** is a service for RAF deployed parents and children who are looking to get creative. Packs include many items such as colouring books, banners, fabric pens with a pillowcase for the deployed parent to take with them. RAFA are currently updating these packs and new items will encourage outdoor activities and include an amazing scrapbook. To request a free Doodle Pack, RAF families can email RAFA at – [Doodlepack@raffa.org.uk](mailto:Doodlepack@raffa.org.uk)

The **Army Families Federation (AFF)** provides an independent voice for Army families and works hard to improve the quality of life for Army families around the world on any aspect that is affected by the Army lifestyle. For information on deployment, see the **Families Deployment Support Guide**.



The **Naval Families Federation (NFF)** support, guide and listen to Royal Navy and Royal Marines families; they exist to give Naval Service families a voice and representation to those who make the policies and decisions that affect them. The NFF provide **parental absence and family support resources**; these include 'Recommended Reading' and the NFF Parental Absence Resource, which draws together some useful information about parental absence and separation and provides some strategies to help families thrive.



The **Naval Children's Charity** provide support to children up to 25 years old of serving and veteran parents/guardians in the Royal Navy, Maritime Reserves and RFA. Support given in response to identifying individual needs of child/family either as financial grants, holistic advice and support working in partnership with other organisations, free resources for children, families, schools and other organisations. The charity has a team of caseworkers that work with families to identify and address crisis and issues they are facing, particularly child-centred need.



**Storybook Waves** enables personnel serving in the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary (Regular and Reserves) to record bedtime stories for their children to listen to whilst they are separated. To record a bedtime story personnel should visit their local Aggie's Pastoral Worker who will guide them through the recording process. If an Aggie's Pastoral Worker is not available personnel should contact Storybook Waves via [Storybookwaves@aggies.org.uk](mailto:Storybookwaves@aggies.org.uk). You can also find Storybook waves on Facebook.



The **Service Children's Progression (SCP)** Alliance bring together practitioners, researchers, policymakers and funders to build a stronger evidence-base, better policy, and enhanced support for Service children's education and progression, placing their voices at the heart of all the Alliance do. The SCP Alliance have created an **online resource database** which collates videos, guidance, toolkits, templates and more from Alliance partners. They have also produced **The Thriving Lives Toolkit** - a free evidence-based framework of seven principles to assess, develop and implement a support structure to best allow Service children to thrive.



**SSAFA**, the **Armed Forces charity**, supports members of the Armed Forces community and provides a **Personal Support and Social Work Service** for the RAF community.



SSAFA understands that military staff and families face some unique challenges such as regular deployments, having to live apart and frequent moves. Their team provides comprehensive and confidential support, with a special focus on services for adults, but including children, young people and their families.

SSAFA can also support the serving community through its **Serving Community Teams**, which are volunteer-delivered groups – located in some areas around the UK and overseas – providing practical and emotional support to Armed Forces personnel and family members and financial support by means of one-off grants, direct to individuals or to organisations to fund community projects. [sct.interest@ssaifa.org.uk](mailto:sct.interest@ssaifa.org.uk)

The **Royal British Legion (RBL)** is there for the Armed Forces community throughout their lives, whenever needed. The RBL provide a lifeline for members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, veterans and their families. The RBL website has information on how to get support including **physical and mental wellbeing, local community connections and financial grants** to support the Armed Forces community.



**Little Troopers** is a registered charity supporting all children with one or both parents serving in our British Armed Forces (regular or reserve). Little Troopers ensures British Armed Forces children and their families have access to child-focused support, providing fundamental resources and initiatives for families to use at home. The charity also has a dedicated **Little Troopers At School** programme, which is packed with practical resources to help teachers support children and young people in both primary and secondary schools including a military child wellbeing course, Forces Life Club pack, online workshops, lesson plans and more. The majority of the Little Troopers resources are available for free.



**Reading Force** are passionate about using books to bring Forces children and families closer together at home or away. If you work in a HiVE, welfare office, preschool, school, Service children's club, community group, local library, or charity and work with Forces children and their families, Reading Force complements your pastoral support perfectly. All you need to do is allocate one person to become a **Reading Force Ambassador** and register with the charity to order your free materials. Armed Forces families can also access support directly from **Reading Force**.



**Forces Children's Education** provide information and resources to help organisations and schools appropriately support Armed Forces children. The Forces Children's Education website was created by the Association of Directors of Education (ADES), in conjunction with the Scottish Government, Local Authorities across Scotland and the Ministry of Defence. Together with children, parents, educators and partners, they have produced a learning resource on **Supporting Armed Forces Families** which includes guidance on the **Emotional cycle of separation and loss**.



**Enquire** is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. Enquire can help Services Families understand how education and support is provided in Scotland, children's rights to additional support for learning, and how to work with schools to get the right support in place.



The **Highland Council** have a dedicated **Armed Forces Families Highland** website with a bank of resources to support families, Schools and ELC settings including a **"Learning and Knowledge Hub"** which includes an online training resource: **The Emotional Cycles of Deployment and Separation**.



**Supporting Service Children in Education (SSCE/Cymru)** is a Welsh Local Government Association (WIGA) programme, initially funded by the MOD's Education Support Fund and funded by Welsh Government from 2019. SSCE Cymru have created a variety of resources to support Service families, schools and Local Authorities and have a **team** who run a variety of **events** and initiatives to support Service children in Wales.



*If you are aware of other organisations or resources that support children from an Armed Forces background during times of deployment, please email the RAF Families Federation at [enquiries@raf-f.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@raf-f.org.uk) to let us know so we can help to raise awareness of these, if appropriate.*

## Actions

- Identify one thing can you do this week to develop the support for Service children in your setting

## Contact us



### Rebecca Lovell

Head of Policy

Naval Families Federation

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### Anna Hutchinson

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### Alexandra Stokes

Policy Advisor

Education and Childcare

RAF Families Federation

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# National update 1: SCiP Alliance

Service Children's Progression  
 ALLIANCE

Contact

Search



Get Involved

Hubs & Community

Impact

Tools

Research

Projects

Events

News & Views

About



Reports and research / Thriving Lives Toolkit enhancement plans / November conference



# National update 2: SCISS

[Home](#) | [Service Children in State Schools \(sciss.org.uk\)](#)

Factsheets / resources / Voice of Schools report 2 (SEND) coming soon...

 **Service Children in State Schools**  
*The Voice of Schools – Supporting Service Children in England*

[Search](#) [Language](#)

[Please use the link on the Contact tab](#)

- HOME**
- ▼ ABOUT US
- ▼ PARTNERS
- ▼ SUPPORT
- ▼ CONTACT

## A warm welcome

To the home of information and resources for schools in England who have children from service families. Service Children in State Schools aims to support, celebrate and advocate for children from a military background and the schools they attend.



Twitter



Facebook



# National update 3: MoTMC



## [Month of the Military Child — Never Such Innocence](#)

### *Competition*

The theme of this year's poetry and art competition is: **Life as a Dandelion.**

The competition is open to triservice children, with a currently serving or veteran parent and bereaved children, 6-18 years old. Entry links coming soon!

*Field of Dandelions by Lara, 9-11, Army, 2022  
Competition Winner*





# National update 4: AFC

## Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report

The 2023 report, which gives an update on the support provided to the Armed Forces community in the last year, has now been published.

AFF, with the RAF Families Federation and Naval Families Federation, had the opportunity to comment on the report and ensure that the voice of military families was heard.

They raised the need to monitor progress on issues as they are taken forward by relevant government departments and welcomed the expansion of eligibility for the Wraparound Childcare Scheme. They were pleased to note the Armed Forces Families Fund: Early Years Programme.



[Covenant on a page 2023-V1  
\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)





# National update 5:



## RBL General Election Manifesto 2024

The latest manifesto from the Royal British Legion calls on the next UK Government to:

- Introduce a national protocol to provide consistent access to public services for Armed Forces families, and increase SEND support funding for service children.

This manifesto has been put together through an extensive and robust process of consultation with RBL stakeholders in the Armed Forces community, their beneficiaries, their partners in the military charity sector, members, volunteers, and staff. They have presented a series of practical ideas which they know will significantly improve the lives of the Armed Forces community. It certainly is an interesting read!



# Local Updates: looking back





# Thriving Lives conference 19.1.24

Military families – the lived experience	Family Federations
<b>Session 2 - Workshop Session 1 (35 mins)</b>	
Workshop 1 – The role of Governance in supporting Service Children	Tim Brock
Workshop 2 – Gateway Primary School – effective school practice	Kayleigh Anstee
Workshop 3 - Little Troopers	Louise Fettigan
Coffee	
<b>Session 3 - Workshop Session 2 (35 mins)</b>	
Workshop 1 – The role of Governance in supporting Service Children	Tim Brock
Workshop 2 – Gateway Primary School – effective school practice	Kayleigh Anstee
Workshop 3 – Little Troopers	Louise Fettigan
Session 4 – AFFS Education Policy Team update	Ed Harris



### **Workshop Session 3 (35 mins)**

Workshop 4 – Under the Radar report - SCiP

Workshop 5 – SEND service pupil research

Workshop 6 – Trials and tribulations of military parenthood

Claudia Lucardi

Alison Cotton

Lyndsey Day

### **Workshop Session 4 (35 mins)**

Workshop 4 – Under the Radar report - SCiP

Workshop 5 – SEND service pupil research

Workshop 6 – Trials and tribulations of military parenthood

\* Pick up coffee on way back

Claudia Lucardi

Alison Cotton

Lyndsey Day

Being a Service Child - Feedback from Pupil conference

Review of the Oxfordshire pupil promise in light of today's conference – what is going well and what more could we do?

Conference Team

Panel session to address key questions raised during the conference (Fam Fed rep, Ed, Kayleigh, Claudia, Alison)

Lynda Atkins

Closing Statement and evaluations



# Local Updates: looking forwards

## **2024 AF3 SPSP grant – schools with small cohorts**

- Just starting – jointly led by Hannah Owen & Matt Blyton
- Targeted work with up to 14 primaries and 7 secondaries
- 3 half-day visits
- 3 CPD workshops
- Collaboration with Study Higher, Oxford Brookes
- Celebration event at end



Name and phase of school:

Carswell Community Primary School

Title of project	service home school link worker (HSLW)
Number on roll	220
% of service children	21%
Class structure	One form entry
School context	Military base(s) served Dalton Barracks
	Distance to military base 1.6 miles
	Military member on GB? Yes
	Any staff with serving spouses? No
Project objective	The school wanted to reintroduce a service home school link worker who would be dedicated to the welfare and wellbeing of service families – championing them in the community.
Why the school agreed to take part	Historically, we had a service HSLW who was invaluable to us and our service families. Funding meant their role could not continue. We feel it is the best way to address all the principles of the Thriving Lives toolkit, having an actual person dedicated to the welfare and wellbeing of our service families will have a great impact.

### Project overview

To employ a service home school link worker to support the emotional health and wellbeing of our service children and families.



### Main project objective

Increased support for service families, particularly new families. Pastoral support for service children in school and someone to understand and champion their lived experience. Ongoing service community support long term.

### Intended outcomes of the project

To have someone in place to support with deployment, mobility, bus issues, family difficulties, school community engagement and who can be a voice for service families.

As a result, service children's educational outcomes and attendance will improve and their experience of their time at Carswell will be a positive one.

### Description of what you did

The post advertised as a one year post was for three days per week, 8am to 3.30pm, to enable the successful candidate to supervise the bus from the barracks and engage with parents and carers at the bus stops, as well as supporting the children in school. The service HSLW has been in post since the beginning of term six.



### Details of any funding costs

The service HSLW works three days a week – approximate cost (from service pupil premium) is £16,000 per year.

### What has been the impact?

Although the service HSLW has only been in post for four weeks, she has already engaged with unit welfare staff and parents, run a successful camo day at school, began running nurture groups and has worked 1:1 with individual children. She has also put in place a pupil passport and a 'moving on' lap book to strengthen transition.

### Next steps

- To continue to strengthen our links with the service community.
- To put together resources to support deployment.
- To improve educational outcome by supporting service children with reading and plugging gaps in education.



Festival of Friends 2023

Name and phase of school:

North Leigh CE Primary School



Title of project	Dandelion Art and Bake Sale
Number on roll	181
% of service children	7%
Class structure	One form entry
School context	Military base(s) served RAF Brize Norton
	Distance to military base 9 miles
	Military member on GB? No
	Any staff with serving spouses? Yes
Why the school agreed to take part	We have a growing number of service families within our school community and raising the profile this group of children is important to us to maximise their achievements.

### Project overview

In the words of the children: To create an assembly because we wanted to raise money for the Little Troopers, explain why the dandelion is the flower of the military child and explain to our friends what it's like to be part of a service family.

### Main project objective

To spread aware of service Children's lived experience.

### Intended outcomes of the project

For the service children within our school community to feel that they have had their voices heard and to have the opportunity to plan and carry out a charitable event.



### Description of what you did

On Wednesday 7 June 2023, our service children presented an assembly that outlined what makes being part of a service family special. They talked about the work Little Troopers do for service families and explained how they were going to hold a fundraising event by creating a school wide art sale, where parents could buy their children's artwork. They combined this with a bake sale.

Every child in the school created a piece of Dandelion artwork and lots of people donated cakes and bakes. On the 9 June 2023, they held their art and bake sale. It raised nearly £400 for Little Troopers.

Their success was shared by Little Troopers on their Instagram page, they also had an article written in the Oxford Mail.

Festival of Friends 2023

"My two boys enjoyed the special assembly they prepared to show their friends and peer groups what it actually means to be a child of a service family, and a little bit about what they are going through when the service person is away from home due to work commitments such as deployment. They really felt part of a special group and enjoyed it all."

(Parent)

You can see all of their photos [here](#) on the Pastoral page of our school website.

### Details of any funding costs

For the Art sale, we needed to purchase canvases. We were lucky to secure £200 funding from the RAF Brize Norton Thrift Shop committee grant scheme for charities, schools and groups which allowed us to purchase a canvas for every child in the school and allowed all of our profit to go to Little Troopers.

### What has been the impact?

The impact the project has had is most effectively summed up using this feedback from one of our service parents:

"I am very impressed at how well the children came together to raise awareness and so much money for the cause. Although it is great being out of the immediate vicinity of the station, or the 'bubble', and we do love the North Leigh community, we often miss out on the military community experience and support. I think it's very important for this group of children to get together to know they aren't alone and that there are others like them who share the same feelings and have to go through the same experiences."



### Next steps

The children were inspired by all of the ideas at the Festival of Friends and have a long list of ideas they would now like to try out. We will be getting together in September to finalise our plans but the top of the list were having a teddy to go home with each of the service children, to write a diary and share with the other children, and running a camo day.



"It went amazingly well, and we all feel really proud!"

(year 5 girl)





# *Wherever Home Is* drama

<https://youtu.be/TUaCCQuwIA8>

[www.wherever-home-is.com](http://www.wherever-home-is.com)



**Email me if interested**



# Resources to support Oxfordshire schools

[Service Pupils | Schools \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Information and guidance for schools with service pupils**

**Service Pupils Promise from Oxfordshire County Council**  
[Oxfordshire County Council's 'Promise'](#)

**Toolkit for the support of Service Children** [Toolkit](#)

**Service pupil premium (SPP): DfE information for schools**  
[SPP](#)

**Quality assurance & support visits**– please Matt Blyton if interested





# Questions and thoughts





**Thank you for your contributions  
and for all that you do to support  
Oxfordshire's Service children.**

**Next session:  
2<sup>nd</sup> May 13:15 - 14:45**