

Education - The Experience of Service Children

We all take our children's education seriously, but what sets the experience of a Service child aside from that of his or her civilian friends?

- Another posting equals another new school. Service children can attend upwards of five different schools up to the age of sixteen, and past research has suggested that each move can put a child back six months. Children also have to cope with leaving friends behind and making new ones with each move.
- Service children can move between England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, SCE schools...even local schools overseas. Each area has its own system, meaning adjusting to changes in curriculum, ethos and sometimes even year group.
- It is not always easy for parents to choose a school for their child, or to get their child into the school of their choice if it is popular and oversubscribed. Admissions worries and appeals are an ongoing part of Service life.
- Service children are proportionally more likely to have Special Educational Needs and to require extra help in school. This is often the result of 'gaps' in their learning caused by moving schools. It is important that the time and resources spent waiting for and undergoing assessments in one school are carried over effectively when the child moves.

On the other hand...

- Service children are often more adaptable and flexible than their civilian friends, having grown used to change and the broader view of the world that this has given them
- Educational experiences extend beyond the classroom and children from Army families can benefit from living overseas or in other parts of the UK.
- Heads and teachers often speak positively of the contribution our children make to their school communities.
- There is plenty of help out there, and the situation is improving all the time. AFF is always ready to help with your education queries, and if we don't know the answer, we will do our best to find out.