



Here, at Birch, we have decades of experience supporting Forces families and their children. We understand the challenges in relocations, deployments, erratic working patterns and we would love to be able to help your children thrive.

We have developed close ties with the military community in Colchester and are fortunate to have serving parents regularly lead assembly, small class talks and communal worship. We also have Forces representation on our Governing Body.

Being a smaller school, a lot of our pastoral care is very individualised, depending on the needs of each specific child. However, there are a few things to highlight that particularly benefit the Forces children and their families.

- Birch School is a short 10 minute drive from the patches along pleasant country roads. Drop off and collection are straightforward, with most parents choosing to park in the village hall and walk down.
- Prospective parents are welcome to have a phone conversation with the Headteacher, Mrs May, as we understand the difficulty of visiting schools in person. If you have a specific day you are visiting we will always try to accommodate a tour of the school.
- Year groups average 20 children and we pride ourselves on the friendly and welcoming environment. Children tend to form friendships quickly here and there is plenty of mingling between the year groups.
- Your child's class teacher will meet with you and your child to ascertain where they are in their math's, reading and writing. Appropriate interventions are designed, wherever needed, to help bridge the gap between different learning methods or a curriculum sequencing from previous schools..
- Your child's class teacher would like to be kept updated on any deployments or relevant circumstances, so that they can support your child. Conversations about deployed parents are

encouraged and children are invited to do 'show and tell' on any interesting aspects of their or their parents' military experiences.

- Friday Forces Lunch. Most Fridays Forces children have lunch together with Mrs May and bring along a friend. Conversations may involve looking at maps to see where they have lived, where a parent has been deployed, or any other aspect of life.
- Our wrap around childcare is run by the brilliant Mrs Christopherson, a real favorite with the children. Children can be dropped off at Breakfast Club as early as 0745, allowing for a start time of 0800 at Merville Barracks. Tea-time Tigers runs for two hours after school, until 1720. Both clubs can be booked at short notice and on different days each week. Summaries of your wrap around childcare usage can be easily saved from our 'Scopay' app for the MOD WAC Scheme.
- We have fabulous grounds here and we really make the most of them, in lessons, play time and P.E. We have a forest school area, playing field, a thriving pond, a shepherds' hut, a well equipped playground and a hill for sledging when we get snow!
- We have a gorgeous canine school mentor. Buddy, the springer spaniel, is often available for children to read to or visit for quiet time.
- Most importantly, we try to be as flexible as possible and work with all parents to provide an excellent education and excellent pastoral care for each and every one of our students. We understand this looks different for each family and we do our absolute best to accommodate everyone.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please do email our office on admin@birch.essex.sch.uk or call us on 01206 330224.