



Queen Mary's Grammar School

Headmaster: R J Langton, M A

March 2019

A year in the life of a parent of a cadet

Below are 4 parental accounts of being a parent of a QMGS CCF cadet

Parent A

My son Josh is currently in year 13 and was bestowed the rank of Cadet Warrant Officer in the RAF section of the CCF, so this academic year has been slightly different from previous ones in terms of his role and responsibilities. September, the start of a new school year and a return to cadet training and parade each Friday at the end of the school day. A fantastic extracurricular way for the pupils to end the school week. The cadets get involved in learning and developing their military knowledge and aircraft training, learning to shoot and the correct drill and turnout. The older and higher ranked cadets are heavily involved in the teaching of such lessons. Josh spends a proportion of his time at home preparing for giving lessons (but more so this year, the organisation of the NCOs and delegating responsibilities to them). When Josh has previously worked towards a badge or rank he will devote some home time learning or preparing as necessary. Other time spent at home dedicated to the CCF includes parade shoe shining time (yes, really - it's an art form) or ironing crisp creases in his parade trousers, as apparently 25 years of ironing has left me ill equipped to create the level of sharpness expected!

There is a camp (usually at Farchynys) at some point in October. This, along with the opportunities the cadets have to enjoy the numerous camps throughout the year (at a small cost to cover food) is a great opportunity for the cadets to mix with pupils in other years but with a shared interest in the RAF or the associated activities. As a mum my involvement in camp now goes so far as collecting Josh on a Sunday when they return mid-afternoon. And then washing all the dirty clothes! Camp leaves directly from school on a Friday via mini bus so for parents it's a quiet(er) weekend. In addition to weekend camps, the cadets have the chance to go on annual camp which for the RAF section usually falls just prior to the Easter break and lasts for a week. Josh has also attended an international camp in Cyprus which he thoroughly enjoyed.

Each Remembrance Sunday the CCF parade through Walsall to the cenotaph where they are part of what always proved to be a moving service. This year was even more poignant as it commemorated 100 years since the end of WW1 . This year, as CWO, Josh led the parade. Last year he held the QMGS contingent banner. There is a lot of practice and effort put into the banner



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party (made up of a selected group of cadets) in order to show respect for those fallen and pride in the cadet force the pupils are currently a part of. Also over the autumn a small group of cadets are selected to form part of an elite with strengths in different areas, for example, drill or shooting. They enter a competition that competes against other cadet forces to win trophies for the best in each skill and then overall. After Christmas and throughout the spring and summer months the cadets continue to enjoy camp, field days and flying and gliding opportunities at RAF Cosford.

I cannot honestly remember all the amazing opportunities Josh has been privileged enough to be involved in due to his involvement in the CCF, but as a parent I am so grateful. He has learned responsibility, developed team work skills, organisational abilities, grown in self-confidence and exercised self-discipline. The CCF has inspired him to pursue a career in the RAF. It has brought out determination and has shown him resilience and hard work lead to reward. I cannot recommend it highly enough!

Parent B

Since Ethan has joined the CCF his confidence and independence has soared. He has made some amazing friends that, I am sure, will be a part of his life for many years to come.

Ethan loves his CCF 'adventures' and when he comes home is always full of stories about all the things they have gotten up to. He tells me even the food is good! High praise indeed!

The effect of Ethan joining CCF has been nothing but positive. He has a great pride in wearing his uniform and we, as his family, are tremendously proud of the path he has travelled, and continues to travel, with the CCF.

Parent C

The CCF has played a key part in school life and the QMGS experience for my son since he joined the Army section in Year 9.

It was the RAF Section of the CCF that first captured his imagination. When he visited Queen Mary's as a year six primary school pupil, like many young boys of his age he loved spitfires and it was the chance of joining the Royal Air Force section of the CCF that inspired him to take the 11 + exam more than any of the other fantastic opportunities the school offers. It was however the Military section that he joined and where as a cadet he has enjoyed some truly life enhancing experiences.



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All CCF cadets have the opportunity of taking part in activities that build their confidence, independence, team working and leadership skills but like many of the extra-curricular opportunities on offer at Queen Mary's, it's how much effort your son puts in that will determine the rewards.

CCF activities regularly take place in the school's outdoor centre in Farchynys, a place that provides the perfect getaway from the many pressures faced by many young people and the place that inspired my son's love of the great outdoors. The CCF experience at Queen Mary's and Farchynys inspired my son to travel further in his cadet journey and apply for one of 12 places representing the UK in the CCF Leadership and Challenge course held annually in Canada. He was successful in his application and spent six weeks in Canada that were life enhancing. He learnt new skills and developed friendship that will last for life. The leadership skills he gained helped him to become RSM in his final year at school, a role he holds with great pride.

The CCF is a place that builds confidence, character and skills but it also provides the opportunity for fitness, friendship and fun.

Parent D

I am extremely pleased with her continued progress. She is extremely enthusiastic and proud of being given the opportunity to be part of this activity. She is always coming home talking about how well the sessions have been and what activities have been undertaken.

I can see how she is developing from this role, from being quite introvert, she is gaining in confidence at each session and is gaining confidence and experience in communication and team working.

She has seized every opportunity to develop with the squad and has in fact become more disciplined and organised in her home life- organising school rotas and study. She is also ironing her own uniforms and although we haven't got this quite right -polishing her own shoes!!

She thoroughly enjoys the field trips and is extremely proud of her knowledge gained in first aid which will be beneficial in civilian life. After participating in the recent quiz she was so proud of the position achieved, but more importantly she was reflective of how the team worked together and recognised peoples strengths within the team and there was no blame placed on any participant (including herself) who had not answered questions correctly.



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When given the opportunity to attend Cosford on a flying experience again she was exhilarated by the experience which was fantastic to see.

The whole experience is definitely helping Cerys to grow as a person using all the skills in her development and achievements within school and outside activities also. It is also giving her a direction in steering her future career, although she has always wanted to study medicine she is now exploring the option of pursuing a medical career within the RAF.