

CCF Annual Report

2025-2026



KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL BATH COMBINED CADET FORCE



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REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE
SUNDAY 9TH NOVEMBER 2025

Background

The Combined Cadet Force (CCF) has been connected to Beechen Cliff since 2007, the year in which the army brokered an agreement between King Edward's School and Beechen Cliff. This agreement is signed by the Headteachers of both schools and reviewed every three years. From this point, nineteen years ago, Beechen Cliff pupils were able to put themselves forward as members of the contingent and to participate in the training and enrichment programme which underpins cadet activity across the country.

The contingent is led by a Staff instructor (or SSI) who arranges all the activities, writes risk assessments and oversees the work of all the cadets and adult instructors (CFAVs). Currently the SSI and Contingent Commander is Captain Philip Jones, supported by Lt Jennifer Noble, the latter taking responsibility for the administrative function of the unit. Both of these roles are funded by King Edward's School.

The activities are funded (fully or subsidised) by the army and this makes it possible to provide an extensive and well resourced package for children. A weekend exercise away costs the cadets around £25 on average. In addition to CCF created activities the cadets can participate in the Beechen Cliff Duke of Edinburgh Award programme, generally at Bronze and Silver level, and use the experiences towards the volunteering/skills section of the programme. In the academic year (2025-26) twenty eight boys have taken this opportunity.

When can boys from Beechen Cliff join the contingent?

Boys in Year 8 attend a special assembly, given by current members of the CCF. They are introduced to the idea of what the CCF is and how it operates between the two schools. Following this assembly parents are asked to complete a form which indicates that their son would like to attend a 'taster' session which is organised at the contingent base in King Edward's School. Following this session parents can then 'sign up' their sons as members of the CCF and they begin in September of Year 9.

At the first session in September the boys are issued with all the kit and uniform required as members of the CCF. All of this is free, although a refundable deposit is taken upon joining, to ensure the return of the items at the end of service. At any point during their time in the contingent the boys can exchange kit or equipment to make sure they have everything they need and that all the uniform items fit.



A group of senior cadets (five of them Beechen Cliff) at a recent exercise on Salisbury Plain

Contingent Inspection Dashboard

The contingent was last inspected in November 2024 as part of the biennial inspection process used by the army. This inspection was very successful and the unit received exceptionally positive feedback in relation to its syllabus delivery, the quality of the cadets, their ability to articulate responses to the various questions put to them and the overall leadership of the contingent. The unit is currently rated as green (good) in all areas of safeguarding, syllabus delivery, leadership, staff training and record keeping. The feedback shows us that King Edward's CCF remains one of the strongest units in the south west in relation to the experience it provides for its cadets. The next inspection will take place in November 2026.

The range, armoury and ammunition bunker have also been inspected in the last four months. There are a small number of items which are required to bring the ammunition bunker and range to the level required under the latest regulations and this will mean that .22 rifle target shooting will not take place until September this year. The contingent received an additional twenty L98 rifles last year and this means that the contingent stocks fifty

L98 (military rifles) and twelve .22 target rifles. This has given the cadets a broader range of opportunities to train on the rifles and to use them on exercise.

Contingent Roll

September 2021 -	64 on roll	(19 Beechen Cliff pupils)
September 2022 -	75 on roll	(28 Beechen Cliff pupils)
September 2023 -	110 on roll	(57 Beechen Cliff pupils)
September 2024 -	125 on roll	(68 Beechen Cliff pupils)
September 2025-	126 on roll	(69 Beechen Cliff pupils)
September 2026-	122 on roll	(63 Beechen Cliff pupils)*

*Anticipated numbers based on assumptions regarding the leavers and joiners.

The 'ideal' strength of the contingent is between 80 and 100 cadets, based on unit capacity and the number of staff (CFAVs) available. At this level the number of trained NCOs to new cadets means that 'class' sizes are good and the training can be thorough and effective. Beechen Cliff pupils currently provide nine of the NCOs and there are eight cadets who have been put forward to take the intensive training programme in August (a ten day course) which will allow them to be considered for promotion. We would expect to see all of them qualify in August to become NCOs and to take their part in training the next wave of recruits. The numbers of Year 10 are lower for both schools this year and this will mean a slightly smaller 'pool' being available for senior cadets in the next two years. It is hoped that the current Year 9 cadets will prove able to take up MOI places in good numbers in August 2027 to ensure that the calibre of NCO leadership remains very strong.

Activities in 2025-26

Visits to Bovington Tank Museum, a FIBUA day activity on Salisbury Plain, paintballing days, .22 range and archery experiences and a visit to a company with covert surveillance expertise were sandwiched between the core exercises of the year. This year has seen the cadets offered a good range of experiences, although the loss of the range, albeit temporary, has curtailed ambitions to enter a number of teams for the Country Life competition. Music camps, featuring a week away at an army base, give free tuition to pupils and allow them to progress to be members of the CCF Corps of Drums, have taken place over two weeks during the year. In 2025/26 two Beechen Cliff boys took up the offer and are now established members of this team. This is the same number as last year and we are very hopeful that we can enhance numbers in the next few years. All the new Year 8 applicants will be offered this opportunity from September. A BTEC course has also been offered to the cadets

this year, allowing them to validate their experience and skills in a package that gives them a Level 2 qualification. Last year each of the Beechen Cliff NCOs achieved a Pass at Level 2 in the BTEC.

Significant Events

The contingent participated in the Remembrance Parade and service in the city in November 2025, as it does every year representing the CCF and individual schools.

Later the same month the cadets attended the Annual Dinner and Ceilidh; an opportunity to celebrate successes and to experience an 'officers' mess event first hand. Last year one of our own senior cadets was awarded the Sword of Honour at the event, giving the junior cadets within the school a clear role model for future progression.

Later in the year all the new cadets were involved in '*Exercise Patch Up*', a realistic simulation exercise where the youngsters have to show their ability to think under pressure, apply first aid and deal with casualties in a number of fairly stressful situations. Those that pass this weekend activity are awarded their First Aid badges and are always very proud to receive them.



Snowdonia, July 2025.

Exercises in the Field

There have been six key exercises over the course of the last twelve months:-

1. Snowdonia Adventure Training - July 2025. Whilst not a syllabus related exercise, the Snowdonia experience took the place of the usual Summer Camp and provided an opportunity for fifty cadets to develop their skills in a number of adventurous activities. This was an exceptional experience which introduced a number of skills to the cadets and included an indoor climbing experience in a former slate mine. This one is included here as it took place after the 2024-5 report had been published.
2. Exercise First Chance - September 2025. This exercise introduced the new cadets into life 'in the field' and began the basic training phase which allows the newly qualified NCOs the chance to teach lessons, be assessed and to lead their own sections. This is a very effective three day exercise which brings all the cadets 'on' in many ways.
3. Exercise Next Step - March 2026. This exercise took place at Scraesdon Fort, near Plymouth, focusing on the development of weapons and tactical skills. All the new cadets have the opportunity to use the weapons system (rifle) in a variety of scenarios.
4. Exercise Urban Leader - May 2026 - This exercise took place on Salisbury Plain and involved teaching cadets the basics of FIBUA (Fighting in a built up area) and movement in urban environments.
5. Exercise Warrior Cadet - June 2026 - This is a tactical exercise for the older cadets. The 'tactical' element refers to the fact that the whole period of the exercise is live and various activities take place as the sections attempt to meet objectives over 48-72 hours. (Note - postponed until October 2026)
6. Exercise - Summer Camp - July 2026 - This year the contingent is joining up with hundreds of cadets from other CCFs around the South West. Shooting, signal exercise, night attacks and various competitions will provide the backdrop for a really impressive gathering.

Training

The contingent staff have been active in taking up opportunities provided by the army to increase current qualifications and the experience for cadets. All the staff have undergone enhanced safeguarding training over the year and five of the staff (including myself) have been trained and qualified in managing the armoury facilities and vehicle use across the range of stock required for exercise use and the carrying of cadets. Three staff qualified this year in the setting up and running of archery; meaning that the staff can now run full ranges, .22 indoor ranges, archery, abseiling/mountaineering and the use of army 'FIBUA' areas.

We have been able to welcome a new member of staff to the contingent; in this case a former pupil of Beechen Cliff School. He is a commercial electrical engineer and provides a number of skills and new enthusiasm for cadet life which might 'flag' in some of the older members of the contingent!

The aim is to build the skills, resilience and determination of our cadets. To this end the training provided to the CFAVs (often requiring a week away at an army camp somewhere in the UK) is focused on making sure that we have the ability to provide all aspects of the syllabus to a level which challenges the cadets to be the best they can be.

Achievement of targets for the 2025-6 year.

Targets for 2025-26

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| ● Fifty percent of the new NCOs to be drawn from Beechen Cliff pupils - | Achieved |
| ● Fifty percent of cadets to be Beechen Cliff pupils | Achieved |
| ● Retention to remain above 80% | Achieved (82%) |
| ● A new BCS staff member inducted into the contingent to begin the training. | Not Achieved |

It is hoped that 2027 will see the recruitment of a new staff member to begin training within the contingent.

Targets for 2026-27

- Forty percent of the new NCOs to be drawn from Beechen Cliff pupils
- Fifty percent of cadets to be Beechen Cliff pupils
- Ten BCS cadets to be from a FSM/SEN background
- Retention to remain at above 80%
- A new BCS staff member inducted into the contingent to begin the two year training programme

Does being a member of the CCF improve life chances?

We will leave you with this from the Minister for the Armed Forces. In an era where employment opportunities within the 18-24 age group are becoming ever more competitive, it might be worth reflecting on the skills and attributes that membership of the school's cadet force can develop, leading to confidence and leadership capacity that often sets them apart from others in the field of employment.

**“Indeed,
people’s life
chances go
through the
roof when
they join the
Cadet Forces.”**

**ALISTAIR CARNS MP,
MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES,
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT, APRIL 2026**





Contingent canoeing, Snowdonia. July 2025

I must pass on my thanks, as always, to Tim Markall, the PTA and the school governors for their continuing support of the CCF and the opportunities it gives for Beechen Cliff boys to have experiences which are often the preserve of the independent sector. We are indebted to Captain Phil Jones and his team at King Edward's for their huge commitment of time and effort, providing benefits to the KES and BCS pupils. As always, I have very much enjoyed the role of acting as the Beechen Cliff liaison staff member for the last few years and am looking forward to the challenges that 2026-27 will bring.

Any member of the Beechen Cliff parent body who would like to visit the contingent to see it at work is very welcome to do so. Enquiries should be directed to adavies@beechencliff.mnsp.org.uk.

Andrew Davies
June 2026

