

2 June 2021



## **Report to the Executive Director of Children's Services for decision on a statutory change to Millfield Primary (Community) School, North Walsham, Norfolk**

### **What is the proposal?**

The proposal is to alter the Special Education Needs provision at Millfield Primary School, which currently provides a 10 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Base. From 1 September 2021, on the site at Millfield Primary (Community) School, Recreation Road, North Walsham, NR28 0ES, the provision will be expanded by adding a further 6 places, to make a 16 place ASD SRB.

### **Public notice and representation period**

A statutory public notice was issued by Norfolk County Council and published in the Eastern Daily Press on 29 April 2021. Copies were displayed at all the main entrances to Millfield Primary School. The four week representation period came to an end on 27 May 2021. See Appendix 1 for Public Notice and Prescribed Information.

No submissions were received during the statutory Public Notice period.

All statutory requirements in relation to the statutory consultation were complied with.

### **The decision**

In coming to a decision, the Decision Maker is obliged to consider the following factors:

- Education standards and diversity of provision
- Equal opportunities issues
- Community cohesion
- Travel and accessibility
- Funding.

#### Education standards and diversity of provision

Millfield Primary School was rated Good by Ofsted in November 2017.

This proposal supports the implementation of the Norfolk Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy and Alternative Provision Transformation Programme vision for Norfolk, to be a county where;

- all children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) reach their potential and thrive
- parents are confident in the improved local SEND and Alternative Provision offer of sufficient, affordable, good quality, local specialist provision.

The cost-effective provision of high quality educational places is central to meeting the County Council's objective of ensuring inclusion and high standards of achievement for Norfolk learners with Special Education Needs.

Specialist Resource Bases are a key part of Norfolk's Local Offer for children with special educational needs and their families. It has been identified in Norfolk's Transformation Programme as an area that needs significant growth. This proposal addresses an identified need in Specialist Resource Base provision as identified in Norfolk Special Educational Needs Sufficiency Strategy.

Expanding existing provision to a 16 place model provides additional benefits as it enables a review of the existing accommodation to ensure its fitness for purpose and economies of scale in delivering additional places at a reduced cost to the tax payer. It also enables greater flexibility in the staffing model to support pupils over two teaching groups and staff cover whilst the lead is undertaking classroom observations, panel meetings or other SRB related activity.

This proposal ensures that needs can be met locally, avoiding the need for children and young people to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away.

#### Equal opportunities issues

This proposal supports the presumption of mainstream education for children with special education needs under the Children and Families Act 2014. It also provides further choice for families of children with special educational needs whose preference is for their child to be supported in a mainstream school.

#### Community cohesion

The County Council has considered that there are no specific community cohesion issues that arise from the school organisation change being proposed. The provision will promote inclusion of pupils with SEND in mainstream settings.

#### Travel and accessibility

It is expected there will be a positive impact on travel and accessibility as this proposal seeks to implement additional SRB places in north Norfolk, therefore minimising the need to travel further to access this provision.

It is not anticipated that there will be a significant increased impact on peak time traffic at the school site, as the majority of these pupils will arrive onto the school site by taxi.

#### Funding

All capital costs will be met by the Local Authority. The capital programme for Millfield Primary's SRB is to provide a two classbase SRB with 8 pupils in each class. To achieve this, there will be changes to the existing accommodation as well as an additional classbase, with an extension adjacent to the outside space to support additional accommodation requirements.

Norfolk County Council has worked with schools, SRB staff, specialist partners and reviewed provision in other areas, to develop a specification to inform the SRB design brief for Norfolk. This ensures where possible, consistency of provision that meets the needs of pupils and staff. This design brief is applied to individual school sites. In some cases, this requires a new build, while others like Millfield require a remodelling and expansion of the existing accommodation.

Long term value for money will be achieved as there is greater capacity to meet the needs of children with SEN locally.

### **Conclusions and recommendation**

In considering the proposals, the Decision Maker can decide to:

- Reject the proposal
- Approval the proposal
- Approve the proposal with a modification
- Approve the proposal subject to it meeting a specific condition.

There were no objections to the proposal during the statutory Public Notice period.

It is therefore **recommended** that the Director of Children's Services, in her role as Decision Maker as delegated by Norfolk County Council, should decide in favour of the proposal at Millfield Primary (Community) School, to alter the SEN provision by adding 6 places to the Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base, from 1 September 2021.



## **Proposed significant changes to Millfield Primary School, North Walsham; to alter special educational needs (SEN) provision**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that, Norfolk County Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to the following school, in accordance with section 19 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and The School Organisation (Prescribed Alterations to Maintained Schools) (England) Regulations 2013, by altering the 10 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base, to establish a 16 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder Specialist Resource Base, located on the school site, from 1 September 2021.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/millfield> emailing [schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk) or by writing to the School Organisation Team, Children's Services Floor 8 (Bay 34), County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DL.

**Within four weeks** from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to, or make comments on, the proposal by sending them to the School Organisation Team, Children's Services Floor 8 (Bay 34), County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DL or by email to: [schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk)

Signed: Sara Tough  
Executive Director of Children's Services

Publication Date: 29 April 2021



**Statutory Proposal to expand the 10 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Base (SRB), at Millfield Primary School, North Walsham by adding a further 6 places from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021**

**1. Local Authority details**

Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH

**2. School details**

<b>Name</b>	Millfield Primary School
<b>Type</b>	Community School
<b>Address</b>	Recreation Road, North Walsham, NR28 0ES
<b>Age Range</b>	4 – 11 years
<b>Capacity</b>	315 pupils; Numbers on roll 1 April 2021 = 272
<b>Ofsted</b>	Last Ofsted; November 2017      Rating; Good

**3. What changes are proposed?**

It is proposed to expand the 10 place Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Base (SRB), at Millfield Primary School, North Walsham by adding a further 6 places to form a 16 place SRB, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. SRBs are specialist units attached to individual mainstream schools. SRBs are a key component of Norfolk’s Local Offer and of mainstream inclusion.

**4. Why do we want to do this? (evidence of demand)**

Norfolk County Council has a statutory duty to;

- ensure a sufficient supply of school places in its area for children of school age
- promote high educational standards, diversity and parental choice
- ensure fair access to educational opportunity
- help fulfil every child’s educational potential.

The Norfolk SEND Sufficiency Strategy identified gaps in provision and priority areas for development including the need for expansion of existing Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) SRBs, where possible. To meet this need and demand for specialist resource base places, Norfolk County Council has been working with governors and senior leaders from Millfield Primary School to expand this provision to ensure improved access to SRB provision in Norfolk, for children, young people and their families.

Norfolk County Council feels these changes would benefit children and young people because it will;

- Provide places at a school experienced in supporting children with ASD and associated traits ensuring they benefit from well-established Autism friendly practice and support
- Support more children with special education needs and disabilities to be educated and thrive in their local school and community.

- Increase the availability of places to meet the needs of children with SEND
- Ensure that needs can be met locally avoiding the need for children to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. This is better for children and young people and saves the taxpayer money in transport costs.
- Address identified geographical and age and phase gaps in SRB provision as identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy
- For children who sometimes struggle with changes to routine a primary phase development avoids place planning challenges with single phase only developments
- Improve the accommodation for the existing and new pupils to ensure the accommodation is conducive to meeting their SEN needs

Data from the recent review of Specialist Resource Bases demonstrates SRB referrals are consistently high, with occupancy rates frequently at 100%, and children waiting for spaces. SRB's have proven successful in improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

#### **5. Objectives, including how the proposal would increase educational standards and parental choice.**

Norfolk County Council wants to:

- Expand the 10 place ASD SRB by adding a further 6 places to the SRB at Millfield Primary School
- Increase the number of places for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder needs in North Norfolk, as part of the Local Authority SEND Transformation Plan.

Norfolk County Council's policy is to expand schools that are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Millfield School was inspected in November 2017 and rated Good. The cost-effective provision of high quality educational places is central to meeting the County Council's objective of ensuring inclusion and high standards of achievement for Norfolk learners with SEN. This proposal offers parents access to more Autistic Spectrum Disorder specialist resource base places in Norfolk, reducing the travel time for children and young people living locally.

#### **6. Will there be any effect on other schools, academies and educational institutions within the area?**

We cannot foresee any impact on any other schools, as this proposal provides specialist support in a mainstream school which removes the pressure of meeting the needs of pupils who are currently waiting for additional support.

#### **7. Project costs and an indication of how these will be met, including how long term value for money will be achieved.**

All capital costs will be met by the Local Authority. Norfolk County Council has worked with schools, SRB staff, specialist partners and reviewed provision in other areas, to develop a specification to inform the SRB design brief for Norfolk. This ensures where possible, a consistency of provision that meets the needs of pupils and staff.

This design brief is applied to individual school sites. In some cases this requires a new build, while others like Millfield require a remodelling and expansion of the existing

accommodation. At Millfield, this will include an additional class base with an extension adjacent to the outside space, to support additional accommodation requirements.

Long term value for money will be achieved as there is greater capacity to meet the needs of children with SEND locally.

## 8. Outcome of informal consultation

All requirements for the informal consultation were delivered, as set out by the DfE statutory guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alternations') to maintained schools, 2018. See Appendix A for a copy of the consultation document.

A consultation was held from 22 February to 26 March 2021. A total of 606 consultation documents were sent to governors, staff and parents at Millfield Primary and key stakeholders. A consultation event was held on 3 March 2021; one person attended, with the Headteacher and Norfolk County Council representative.

Of the 30 people who commented on this proposal, 24 people (80%) strongly agreed and 1 person (3.3%) agreed. 1 person (3.3%) disagreed, 3 people (10%) strongly disagreed. 1 respondent (3.3%) neither disagreed or agreed. See Appendix B for the report on the consultation.

## 9. Will this change definitely happen?

No. There is a statutory process we must follow to make this type of change to schools.

## 10. Implementation date and proposed stages

If the proposal is agreed by the local decision maker; the Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council, it is intended that the significant change will be implemented from 1 September 2021.

## 11. Related proposals

This proposal is not linked to any other proposal.

## 12. How can I make my views known?

Any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposals, within 4 weeks of the publication of the statutory public notice by:

- Sending an email to; [schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk)
- Writing to: School Organisation Team, FREEPOST, 1H 2076, Floor 8, Bay 34, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.

## 13. What happens next?

The following table sets out the key dates for the consultation and decision making. At any point the proposal may be withdrawn. The dates set out below meet the Department for Education requirements for consultation on school organisation proposals.

School organisation process	Date
Public Notice published	29 April 2021
Statutory consultation (representation stage)	29 April – 27 May 2021
Decision required, no later than	31 August 2021
If approved, change of age starts	1 September 2021



## **Consultation on proposal to expand the existing Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Millfield Primary, North Walsham Norfolk, from 1 September 2021**

Norfolk County Council would like to hear your views on our proposal for Millfield Primary School. We are proposing:

- To increase the number of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder at Millfield Primary School's Specialist Resource Base, by adding 6 places from 1 September 2021 onwards. This will make it a 16 place SRB.

We are committed to reviewing and developing Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) provision as part of Norfolk's Local Offer of support to children, young people and families. This proposal will be supported by a Norfolk County Council capital project (subject to feasibility) to remodel the existing accommodation, in line with the ASD SRB building specification, to create an appropriate accommodation base and enabling environment for SRB learners.

The proposal will also be supported by a revised funding agreement to support an increased staffing structure.

The SRB places will be allocated through Norfolk County Admissions processes and may not be full from 1 September 2021, but will grow up to full capacity through this admissions process.

### **Why we want to add 6 places to the existing SRB**

Norfolk County Council feel these changes would benefit children and young people because it will;

- Provide places at a school experienced in supporting children with ASD and associated traits ensuring they benefit from well established Autism friendly practice and support
- Support more children with special education needs and disabilities to be educated and thrive in their local school and community.
- Ensure that needs can be met locally avoiding the need for children to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. This is better for children and young people and saves the taxpayer money in transport costs.
- Increase the availability of places to meet the needs of children with SEND
- Address identified geographical and age and phase gaps in SRB provision as identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy
- For children who sometimes struggle with changes to routine a primary phase development avoids place planning challenges with single phase only developments
- Improve the accommodation for the existing and new pupils to ensure the accommodation is conducive to meeting their SEN needs



Norfolk County Council takes into account several considerations when proposing changes to the organisation of schools. This includes school leadership, performance, impact on the community, diversity of provision, need for places, travel, early years provision and special education provision. The overall driving force is to ensure that any change is in the best interest of children's education and achievement.

### Capital costs

All capital costs for refurbishment will be funded by the Local Authority to ensure there is the appropriate accommodation.

### How can you have your say

This consultation is an opportunity to tell us your views and ask questions on our proposal to add 6 places to the ASD SRB.

You can do this by:

- Completing the attached form and handing it to your school office
- Accessing our online survey <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/millfield>
- Emailing [schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk)

**If you would like to attend an online consultation meeting, using Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday 3 March at 6pm, please email [schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk) for more details.**

**We need all responses by 12 noon, Friday 26 March 2021.**

### What happens next

Norfolk County Council will review the responses to this consultation and present the findings to the Executive Director of Children's Services who will decide whether to proceed to the statutory public notice stage for this proposal.

### Background Information

#### Norfolk's Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) Strategy

In 2018, Norfolk County Council announced it was to invest £120m in specialist school places and services, with up to four new special schools and 170 places in specialist bases at mainstream schools. One of our objectives through the Norfolk Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision Transformation Programme is to create more than 500 extra school places for children with special education needs and disabilities in Norfolk. Our proposal is part of this investment. Specialist Resource Bases are a key part of Norfolk's Local Offer for children with special educational needs and their families and has been identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy as a priority for development.

#### What is a Specialist Resource Base (SRB)?

Specialist Resource Bases (SRB) are part of mainstream schools, whereby children access classes and whole school life as their individual needs allow. For the rest of the time they are taught in smaller groups with additional staffing. Please note; children who join an Autistic Spectrum Disorder SRBs, join the roll of the school.

## Report to the Executive Director of Children's Services for permission to publish a statutory public notice

**The Proposal:** To expand the existing Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at Millfield Primary School, North Walsham, Norfolk, from 1 September 2021

Reason for the proposed change	The proposal is to expand the existing 10 place ASD SRB by adding 6 places to have a 16 place SRB at Millfield Primary School.		
Consultation details	<p>All requirements were delivered, as set out by the DfE statutory guidance 'Making significant changes ('prescribed alternations') to maintained schools, 2018. A consultation was held from 22 February to 26 March 2021. A total of 606 consultation documents were sent to governors, staff and parents at Millfield Primary and key stakeholders. A consultation event was held on 3 March 2021; one person attended, with the Headteacher and School Organisation Manager. The main issues raised were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive opportunity for the school and SRB</li> <li>• Concern that the recent site visit by NPS had a different view on capital programme than discussed with headteacher.</li> <li>• Concern whether Millfield SRB would have same provision as other SRBs.</li> <li>• Concern about the process to review placements to the SRB and exit planning.</li> <li>• Issue of review of pupil's progress not being equitable for those with ECHP and those without.</li> </ul>		
Number of responses in favour of the proposal	24 (80%) strongly agree 1 (3.3%) agree	Number of responses against the proposal	1 (3.3%) disagree 3 (10%) strongly disagree 1 respondent (3.3%) neither disagreed or agreed
Summary of views expressed in favour of the proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an overwhelming demand for these places locally, which also minimises the stress of long distances to other provision</li> <li>• The SRB model has proved to be effective</li> <li>• The provision at Millfield is of high quality and staff are skilled and experienced</li> <li>• This SRB has supported me as a parent and I have seen incredible progress with my child</li> <li>• This SRB encourages mainstream and SRB children to have mutual respect and embraces their differences, thereby breaking down stereotypes.</li> </ul>		
Summary of views expressed against the proposal / no opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that an increase in number of pupils in the SRB would have a negative impact on the children currently attending, as there would be an increase to the pupil/staff ratio</li> <li>• Difficulties in getting children diagnosed to access the SRB</li> <li>• Children with autism can go undiagnosed for years due to their intelligence</li> <li>• Concerns that the provision will not match the rest of the county SRB provision and that pupils at Millfield may be disadvantaged</li> <li>• The need for a clear structured and supported process for regular review of all SRB placements agreed by all parties, to ensure a pupil does not become 'trapped' by a placement in a setting which does not meet their evolving needs</li> </ul>		

Resource implications	Norfolk County Council are funding all capital costs for refurbishment to ensure there is appropriate accommodation for the SRB, in line with the ASD SRB provision across the county.
Commentary	<p>83% of respondents are supportive of the proposal stating there is a demand for places locally for children with autistic spectrum disorder. The provision at Millfield is found to be effective with skilled, experienced staff. The additional 6 places, will enable an improved staffing model to be in place at the SRB, for 2 groups of 8 pupils, rather than one group of 10 pupils. This will result in the recruitment of an additional teacher for the SRB.</p> <p>The governing body have raised specific concerns about the accommodation quality of the SRB provision, on going funding arrangements so they are equal to other similar SRBs and the review and monitoring process for pupils in the SRB. As part of the discussions with the school and governors in preparation for this proposal, the local authority has;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provided the school with the model for a 16 place SRB, for which there is greater flexibility to utilise the delegated budget to meet the needs of pupils with a two teacher model. This model has been adopted for all new SRBs being established under the SEND and AP transformation programme and has received unilateral feedback as a more effective model from school leaders, SRB advisory staff and SRB project members internal and external to NCC. The SRB funding model proposed for a 16 place model is consistently applied to the SRB programme across the county, to avoid inconsistency in funding for delivery of the provision</li> <li>- Agreed to work with the school to review panel documentation and document processes explicitly as part of co-produced revised operational guidance. This was originally planned to be completed last term but delayed due to the recognition that the Operational Guidance needs to be reviewed fully and involve representatives from all SRB types. It is envisaged that as the SRB has regular access to Specialist Partners and EP placement reviews can take place termly and any identified issues brought to the SRB forum meetings where advice and way forward is agreed.</li> <li>- Agreed to undertaken a NCC capital programme (subject to feasibility) to remodel the existing accommodation in line with the SRB specification for an enabling environment.</li> </ul>
Recommendation	To proceed to Public Notice stage to expand the existing 10 place ASD SRB by adding 6 places to have a 16 place SRB at Millfield Primary School

I give permission for a public notice to be issued on the proposal expand the existing 10 place ASD SRB by adding 6 places to have a 16 place SRB at Millfield Primary School. This will appear in the Eastern Daily Press on 29 April 2021.



Signed: Sara Tough  
(Executive Director of Children's Services)

Date: 1 April 2021