

July 2023



## **Report to the Executive Director of Children's Services for decision on a statutory change to Necton VA Primary School, School Road, Necton, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 8HT**

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

The proposal is to establish a 10 place Speech, Language and Communication Needs Base at Necton VA Primary School, School Road, Necton, Swaffham PE37 8HT, from 1 September 2025.

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

A statutory public notice was issued by Norfolk County Council on 19 June and published in the Eastern Daily Press on 21 June 2023. Copies were displayed at all the main entrances to Necton VA Primary School from 19 June. The four week representation period came to an end on 14 July 2023. See Appendix 1 for Public Notice and Prescribed Information.

One submission was received during the statutory Public Notice period, from a SRB lead in a local school, who supports the proposal. They said 'I write in support of this proposal. In the proposal document, it says placements will be 2 terms initially, but SLCN placements are 4 term. The document describes the differentiation to support the children's needs, but does not talk about the expectation to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum. This feels like an omission. If it is possible to amend the document that would be ideal, otherwise, all parties involved - providers and potential families - will need to be aware of the error.'

Unfortunately it was not possible to amend the documentation during the public notice period. However, there will be opportunities to explain the SRB placement offer to parents and stakeholders, before the start date of 1 September 2025.

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

Necton VA Primary School was rated Good by Ofsted in November 2021.

This proposal is part of Norfolk County Council's Local First Inclusion which is the county council's six-year special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) improvement programme. 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.

Pupils at the SRB not only benefit from smaller classes with favourable pupil-staff ratios, but also benefit from being in a mainstream school and being included in many learning opportunities with their peers, with additional support from specialist staff. In addition, the SRB would have access to further resources and expertise from a Specialist Partner and wider professionals.

Norfolk County Council does not have enough local specialist special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision in mainstream schools. Our research has identified the SEND need and the location areas. Specialist Resource Bases in mainstream schools enable all children and young people with SEND to get a consistently high-quality education with the right support for their needs in their local area first.

This proposal builds on the 31 specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools across Norfolk, many established during the Phase 1 SRB programme/ expansion started in 2019, with some still in development. They provide a total of 411 specialist places, across five different SRB specialisms;

- Learning and Cognition (LCN)
- Speech, language and communication (SLCN)
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Deaf (hearing impaired)

We have identified further priority areas for new or expanded SRBs, as part of Phase 2, including Speech, Language and Communication Needs bases in the Dereham/Swaffham area which can be provided by Necton VA Primary School.

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.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the proposals to establish SRBs in Norfolk Schools. This identified the following actions;

<b>Action</b>		<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.	Consultation on SRB accommodation designs with SRB project group, specialist providers, educational psychologists, current and proposed SRBs to maximise opportunities for the building to be accessible and appropriate for the groups of children with SEND they cater for	NCC Capital Team	<b>Completed</b>

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date</b>
2.	Tender specifications to include Equality Act 2010 compliance and ensure due regard to BB104 guidance to ensure accessibility and SEND specific considerations are catered for in building projects	NCC Capital Team	May 2023 – February 2024
3.	Schools to update their SEND information reports to include the SRB as part of the school's local offer	SENCO	From opening
4.	SRB schools to review their own equality and accessibility action plans	SRBs	From opening
5.	SRB schools to make reasonable adjustments for any SRB pupils with a disability so they can play an equal part in whole school life	SRBs	From opening

Actions 3 – 5 will be incorporated in the planning meetings with schools, in preparation for the SRB opening in their 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 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, as the pupil numbers in the SRB are low and some pupils may arrive onto the school site by taxi.

### Funding

All capital costs for the new purpose-built accommodation will be funded from Norfolk County Council's Local First Inclusion SEND Improvement Programme, to ensure there is the appropriate accommodation. Long term value for money will be achieved as there is greater capacity to meet the needs of children with SEND 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 Executive 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 Necton VA Primary School to establish a 10 place Speech, Language and Communication Needs Base at Necton VA Primary School, Swaffham from 1 September 2025.



## **Proposed significant change to Necton VA Primary School, Swaffham**

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 establishing a 10 place Specialist Resource Base at Necton VA Primary School, Swaffham, from 1 September 2025.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/srb-2023> ; emailing [schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk) or by writing to the School Organisation Team, Children's Services, Lower Ground Floor, 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, Lower Ground Floor, 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: 19 June 2023

## **Statutory Proposal to establish a Specialist Resource Base (SRB), for 10 places, at Necton VA Primary School, Swaffham, from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025**

### **1. Local Authority details**

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

### **2. School details**

<b>Name</b>	Necton VA Primary School
<b>Type</b>	Voluntary Aided School
<b>Address</b>	School Road, Necton, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 8HT
<b>Age Range</b>	4 - 11 years
<b>Capacity</b>	210 pupils; Numbers on roll 1 June 2023 = 189
<b>Ofsted</b>	Last Ofsted; November 2021      Rating; Good

### **3. What changes are proposed?**

It is proposed to establish a 10 place Speech, Language and Communication Needs Base at Necton VA Primary School, from 1 September 2025.

We appreciate that children and young people with speech, language and communication needs can struggle to engage with learning and cope in a classroom without additional strategies and interventions. A Specialist Resource Base (SRB) can support children to overcome barriers to learning, to learn strategies to enable them to successfully participate in a mainstream school setting, in which they can flourish.

This proposal is part of Norfolk County Council's Local First Inclusion which is the county council's six-year special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) improvement programme. 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.

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

The SRB places will be allocated through Norfolk County Admissions processes and the base will grow up to full capacity from 1 September 2025.

### **4. What is a specialist resource base**

A Specialist Resource Base (SRB) is a bespoke accommodation base, providing an enabling environment for learners, in a mainstream school, where children are taught by specialist staff.

The Speech, Language and Communication Needs base has additionally resourced provision with small class sizes, high staffing ratios and access to additionally funded specialist support. Pupils are supported with a highly differentiated provision which reflects the learning difficulties each child has. The teaching follows an individualised learning plan to accelerate progress in core skills and so, enable successful reintegration back to mainstream provision.

Pupils attend for an initial two terms of support but remain on the home school roll. Placement can be extended for an additional two terms should it be needed.

A panel of professionals would continue to admit pupils to the SRB, not only from the local area, but also across a wider area. Pupils at the SRB not only benefit from smaller classes with favourable pupil-staff ratios, but also benefit from being in a mainstream school and being included in many learning opportunities with their peers, with additional support from specialist staff. In addition, the SRB would have access to further resources and expertise from a Specialist Partner and wider professionals.

The SRB will be managed by the Headteacher and Governors at Necton VA Primary School.

## **5. 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.

Norfolk County Council does not have enough local specialist special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision in mainstream schools. Our research has identified the SEND need and the location areas. Specialist Resource Bases in mainstream schools enable all children and young people with SEND to get a consistently high-quality education with the right support for their needs in their local area first.

This proposal builds on the 31 specialist resource bases attached to mainstream schools across Norfolk, many established during the Phase 1 SRB programme/ expansion started in 2019, with some still in development. They provide a total of 411 specialist places, across five different SRB specialisms;

- Learning and Cognition (LCN)
- Speech, language and communication (SLCN)
- Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Deaf (hearing impaired)

We have identified further priority areas for new or expanded SRBs, as part of Phase 2, including Speech, Language and Communication Needs bases in the Dereham/Swaffham area which can be provided by Necton VA Primary School.

Norfolk County Council and the Governors of Necton VA Primary School feel these changes would benefit children and young people because it;

- supports more students with special education needs and disabilities to be educated and thrive in their local school and community;
- enhances students' progress by effectively meeting their individual complex needs;
- helps facilitate better access to the curriculum and supports students to achieve their potential;
- ensures that needs can be met locally avoiding the need for students to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. This is better for young people and saves the taxpayer money in transport costs;
- increases the availability of places to meet the needs of students with SEND;
- addresses identified geographical, and age and phase gaps in SRB provision as identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy;
- supports the sharing of complex need expertise and good practice as part of our school.

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

Norfolk County Council wants to:

- Enable 10 pupils to benefit from the specialist education and support provided by Necton VA Primary School Speech, Language and Communication Needs Base
- Increase the number of places for pupils in the Swaffham/Dereham area with speech, language and communication needs, as part of the Local Authority's Local First Inclusion programme.

Norfolk County Council's policy is to expand schools that are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. Necton VA Primary School was inspected in November 2021 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 SEND.

This proposal offers parents access to more specialist resource base places in Norfolk, reducing the travel time for children and young people living locally.

#### **7. 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 additional places which removes the pressure of meeting the needs of pupils in mainstream schools who are currently waiting for additional support.

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

The speech, language and communication needs base will be located within the site of Necton VA Primary School. The project will involve a new building to create an enabling environment for SRB learners in a bespoke accommodation base.

All capital costs for the new purpose-built accommodation will be funded from Norfolk County Council's Local First Inclusion SEND Improvement Programme, to ensure there is the appropriate accommodation.

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

#### **9. Will this 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 2025.

#### **11. Related proposals**

There is no other proposal linked to this 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). Please put the school name in the heading of the email.
- Writing to: School Organisation Team, FREEPOST, 1H 2076, Lower Ground Floor, 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.

<b>School organisation process</b>	<b>Date</b>
Public Notice published	19 June 2023
Statutory consultation (representation stage)	19 June – 14 July 2023
Decision required, no later than	14 October 2023
If approved, SRB starts	1 September 2025