

May 2023



Report to the Executive Director of Children's Services for decision on a statutory change to Sprowston Infant (Community) School, Norwich

What is the proposal?

The proposal is to increase the number of places at the Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base, from 18 places to 26 places, from 1 February 2024, at Sprowston Infant School, Recreation Ground Road, Norwich NR7 8EW.

Public notice and representation period

A statutory public notice was issued by Norfolk County Council and published in the Eastern Daily Press on 25 April 2023. Copies were displayed at all the main entrances to Sprowston Infant School. The public notice and supporting prescribed information were sent to parents, governors, staff and stakeholders. The four week representation period came to an end on 23 May 2023. See Appendix 1 for Public Notice and Prescribed Information.

One submission was received during the statutory Public Notice period. A town councillor considered the proposal and wrote to say how much he agreed with the increase at the infant school and that it will surely be an excellent achievement for Sprowston families.

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

Sprowston Infant School was rated Good by Ofsted in February 2020.

This proposal is part of Norfolk's Local First Inclusion programme, which aims to continue the expansion of specialist provision to reduce our reliance on high-cost lower quality independent sector provision, but will have a renewed focus on mainstream inclusion and a reduction in the reliance on Education Health and Care Plans.

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. These bases are successful in improving outcomes for the children and young people who attend them. There are

not enough places for children and young people who have ASC, SEMH and cognition and learning needs.

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

Equal opportunities issues

The County Council has considered that there are no specific discrimination issues that arise from the school organisation change being proposed.

Community cohesion

The County Council has considered that there are no specific community cohesion issues that arise from the school organisation change being proposed.

Travel and accessibility

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

Funding

There is a refurbishment programme planned which will be funded by Norfolk County Council, to expand the existing complex needs SRB to create a new 50sqm space. This will be achieved by extending the front of the school. The new space will include a new accessible pupil toilet and a corridor to the existing secure outdoor play area. In addition, there will be a new lobby to the main school entrance and two additional car parking spaces.

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 the Children's Services Committee, should decide in favour of the proposal at Sprowston Infant (Community) School, to increase the number of places at the Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base, from 18 places to 26 places from 1 February 2024.

Proposed significant change to Sprowston Infant School, Norwich

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 increasing the number of places at the Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base, from 18 places to 26 places, from 1 February 2024.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/sprowstonsrb>; emailing 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

Signed: Sara Tough

Executive Director of Children's Services

Publication Date: 25 April 2023

Explanatory Note

Sprowston Infant School has had a complex needs Specialist Resource Base for several years. It operates at 100% occupancy throughout the academic year. The school was judged Good by Ofsted in February 2020.

Statutory Proposal to increase the number of places at the Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base (SRB), from 18 places to 26 places, at Sprowston Infant School, Norwich from 1st February 2024

1. Local Authority details

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

2. School details

Name	Sprowston Infant School
Type	Community School
Address	Recreation Ground Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8EW
Age Range	4 – 7 years
Capacity	180 pupils; Numbers on roll 1 March 2023 = 143
Ofsted	Last Ofsted; February 2020 Rating; Good

3. What changes are proposed?

It is proposed to increase the number of complex needs specialist resource base (SRB) pupil places, to include 8 extra pupils at Sprowston Infant School, from February 2024.

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.

Norfolk County Council and the Governors at Sprowston Infant 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 support 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.

An informal consultation was held between Monday 20 February and Friday 31 March 2023. During that period, one public meeting was held at the school on 9 March 2023. No members of the public attended.

The consultation document is attached at Appendix A. An informal consultation was held from 20 February to 31 March 2023. 315 consultation documents were distributed to parents, governors, staff and key stakeholders. A public meeting was held at the school on 9 March. No one attended. 280 consultation documents were distributed and 6 responses were received. Of those who responded, all 6 people strongly agreed with the proposal. The analysis of the responses received during the consultation is available at Appendix B.

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

Norfolk County Council wants to:

- Enable 8 pupils to benefit from the specialist education and support provided by Sprowston Infant School's Specialist Resource Base
- Increase the number of places for children with complex needs in the north of Norwich, 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. Sprowston Infant School was inspected in February 2020 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 complex needs 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 additional places which removes the pressure of meeting the needs

of pupils in mainstream schools 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.

There is a refurbishment programme planned which will be funded by Norfolk County Council, to expand the existing complex needs SRB to create a new 50sqm space. This will be achieved by extending the front of the school. The new space will include a new accessible pupil toilet and a corridor to the existing secure outdoor play area. In addition, there will be a new lobby to the main school entrance and two additional car parking spaces.

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

8. Will this definitely happen?

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

9. 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 February 2024.

10. Related proposals

There is no other proposal linked to this proposal.

11. 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
- Writing to: School Organisation Team, FREEPOST, 1H 2076, Lower Ground Floor, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR. You don't need a stamp.

12. 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	25 April 2023
Statutory consultation (representation stage)	25 April – 23 May 2023
Decision required, no later than	23 July 2023
If approved, change of age starts	1 February 2024



Consultation on a proposal to increase the number of places from 18 places up to 26 places, at the complex needs Specialist Resource Base at Sprowston Infant School, Norwich from 1st February 2024.

Our proposal

Norfolk County Council would like to hear your views on our proposal for Sprowston Infant School, Recreation Ground Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8EW to **add 8 places** to the complex needs Specialist Resource Base (SRB) from 1 February 2024.

We appreciate that children and young people with complex needs can struggle to engage with learning and cope in a classroom without additional strategies and interventions. A Resource Base can support children to overcome their barriers to learning, to be better able to cope and to be re-integrated into a mainstream setting, in which they can achieve their potential.

We are very keen to provide this support in Norfolk schools. Our Specialist Resource Base will be expanded to cope with the additional places and will still have an enabling environment for SRB learners in a bespoke accommodation base. The Base will be managed by the Headteacher and governing body at Sprowston Infant School.

The local authority, Norfolk County Council is responsible for all admissions to Specialist Resource Bases. Referrals are considered by a County panel, and placements of pupils with or without an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are made using eligibility criteria for pupils with an ASC profile and assessing these against needs and appropriateness of referral.

What are the benefits of this proposal

The main driver for Norfolk County Council and the governors at Sprowston Infant School, is to meet the increased demand for specialist educational provision within our area, to best meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners. We feel our proposal would benefit children and young people because it will:

- support more students with special education needs and disabilities to be educated and thrive in their local school and community;
- enhance students' progress by effectively meeting their individual complex needs;
- help facilitate better access to the curriculum and support students to achieve their potential;
- ensure 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;
- increase the availability of places to meet the needs of students with SEND;
- address identified geographical, and age and phase gaps in SRB provision as identified in Norfolk's SEND Strategy;
- support the sharing of complex need expertise and good practice as part of our school.

There are several considerations that Norfolk County Council take into account when considering changes to organisations of schools. These include 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 any change is in the best interest of children's education and achievement.

What will happen to children currently supported by the SRB

The current children supported by the SRB at Sprowston Infant School will remain on roll at the school and there will be no disruption to their learning. The only exceptions would be where an annual review of a child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) decided to consider a change of school, or parental preference changes.

Capital costs

The proposal is to expand the existing complex needs SRB to create a new 50sqm space. This will be achieved by extending the front of the school. The new space will include a new accessible pupil toilet and a corridor to the existing secure outdoor play area. In addition, there will be a new lobby to the main school entrance and two additional car parking spaces. Capital costs will be covered by Norfolk County Council.

How can you have your say

We will be holding a drop-in event where you can come and find out more about this proposal and look at the proposed plans for the capital project:

- 2 – 3pm, Thursday 9 March, Sprowston Infant School

If you are unable to attend these events but would like to comment on our reorganisation proposals please:

- complete the attached form and hand it to the school office
- or email schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk
- or access our online survey: <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/sprowstonsrb>

We need all responses by 31 March 2023.

- Your school office
- Emailing schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk
- Accessing our online survey: <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/sprowstonsrb>

This consultation ends on 31 March 2023

Appendix B – Report on the consultation



The proposal;

To increase the number of places at the Complex Needs Specialist Resource Base (SRB), from 18 places to 26 places at Sprowston Infant School, Norwich, from 1 February 2024.

Reason for the proposed change	This proposal (attached at Appendix A) will enable more pupils to benefit from the consistency of and access to complex needs SRB provision for children and families in the area. It ensures that needs can be met locally, avoiding the need for children to spend unnecessary time travelling to an appropriate school further away. The proposal is in line with Norfolk County Council’s SEND Sufficiency Strategy, April 2019 which shows there is a need to increase the number of places available to meet demand and to enable children to attend a local school suitable to their special education needs.
Consultation details	An informal consultation was held from 20 February to 31 March 2023. 315 consultation documents were distributed to parents, governors, staff and key stakeholders. A public meeting was held at the school on 9 March. No one attended.
Number of responses	6 responses were received. 6 people strongly agreed (100%)
Views expressed in favour of the proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprowston Town Council believes these facilities should be provided locally, especially with the planned increase in Sprowston's population • We desperately need such provision across the whole of Norfolk (Diocese of Norwich) • The need is huge and there is not enough places. It is highly specialised provision. • There are not enough SEN spaces for all the children who need a specialised education. Any plans to expand provision will always be not only welcomed, but absolutely necessary. • There is a great need for SRB places in Norfolk and they provide great settings for children with additional needs to provide a safe and secure place for the children to learn.
Views expressed against the proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no views expressed against this proposal
Commentary	The response rate is low, but of those who responded there is strong support for the proposal, including from two key stakeholders; Diocese of Norwich and Sprowston Town Council.

Resource implications	Funding has been secured by Norfolk County Council to undertake a refurbishment programme to expand the existing complex needs SRB to create a new 50sqm space. This will be achieved by extending the front of the school. The new space will include a new accessible pupil toilet and a corridor to the existing secure outdoor play area. In addition, there will be a new lobby to the main school entrance and two additional car parking spaces.
Recommendation	To proceed to the statutory Public Notice stage, to increase the number complex needs SRB places from 18 places to 26 places at Sprowston Infant School, Norwich.

I give permission for a public notice to be issued on the proposal to increase the number complex needs SRB places from 18 places to 26 places at Sprowston Infant School, Norwich. This will appear in the Eastern Daily Press on 25 April 2023.

Signed: _____

(Executive Director of Children's Services)

Date: _____