

Report to the Executive Director of Children's Services for decision on a statutory change to St William's Primary School, Norwich from 1 September 2025

What is the proposal?

The proposal is to establish a 16 place Social, Emotional and Mental Health Base at St William's Primary School, Williams Loke, St Williams Way, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0AJ from 1 September 2025.

Public notice and representation period

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

Six submissions were received during the statutory Public Notice period. Three in favour of the proposal including the local councillor and three not supporting the proposal.

Those in favour said;

- I would like to express full support for what is a much-needed proposal. I am incredibly sad this has not come sooner for my own daughter in year 6, who has been massively disadvantaged due to the lack of such provision. I am aware how much of a need there has been for her year group alone. I am so pleased action is being taken for other families, within the community, to benefit from this in future. It really is so desperately needed. I don't want to go into too much detail but I can only imagine how different my daughter's life would've been for her primary years, with access to something such as the SRB. Let alone for our family as a whole and other pupils at her school. When 'specialist staff' is stated, is it possible to know what this is?
- This has my 100% support
- I am wholly in support of St Williams providing the SRB as I believe in providing children with an education in the way that they need to give them the best chance of a good education. I think St Williams is a good site to offer this and I have full confidence that the Executive Headteacher will be more than capable of managing the existing and new provision. The only points I would like to raise are:
 - building work impact is kept to a minimum for current pupils and doesn't take away any of their outside space (or if it does doesn't impact on being able to continue to offer sports clubs/outdoor activities/PE/ break and lunch time play etc.

- the SRB doesn't take away any main school staff focus/energy/time from providing existing pupils/ main school pupils with a varied and high quality education, along with any emotional, social mental health support they may need.

Those who do not support the proposal said;

- I am writing to you with my concerns of the proposed SEMH SRB opening at St Williams. Both my children attend the school. My concerns are based around the impact on current pupils and the school itself. St Williams has recently formed the Hive Federation with Brundall Primary School, which has seen staff spread thinly between the two schools. I would question the opening of an SRB so soon after such a big change to the school. Working within SEND myself, I am fully aware of the pressures to increase a SEN offer, however I question how wise, or indeed successful an SEMH base would be at this school. The specific demands and pressures of SEMH do not fit well here, in my opinion.
- I wish to put forward my concerns and disapproval of these plans moving forward. I have 2 children at this school and feel strongly that this would negatively affect their education experience at the school, to the point that I would look at re-locating them. I understand the pressure that the council is under to find appropriate education placement for children with these special needs, however putting all other children's education at risk by doing it the cheap way trying to integrate into a mainstream school is not the right approach.
- I feel unacceptable behaviour at St Williams is not well managed currently – the language and behaviour of a minority of the pupils is appalling and impacts the majority of children. This does not seem to be managed effectively as has been going on for a number of years – the root cause isn't being addressed and instead the support for those impacted is the focus. If the root cause was addressed then this wouldn't be required. The aim is for the 16 pupils to integrate with the main school on a regular basis – how will the behaviour be managed and will there be the staff in place to ensure this happens safely? Surely this pours fuel on the fire when there is already an underlying issue. The outdoor space at St Williams is a key feature at the school – there is no detail of where this is going to be built. Having attended the first sports day since pre covid and the school summer fayre last week it was clear all areas of the field and the fantastic forest school are used by the school on a regular basis and are an assets to the school that should be protected to allow the children to enjoy the outside environment. It is also not a massive field for 400 plus pupils. The building work can not disrupt the children's learning - building a new building is disruptive . How will this impact the current pupils learning. Will this take place over a holiday period? There is limited information in the proposal and more needs to be shared and considered publicly, I therefore do not support this.

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

St William's Primary School was rated Good by Ofsted in February 2020.

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 Social, Emotional and Mental Health bases in the Norwich area which can be provided by St William's 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;

	Action	Lead	Date
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	Completed
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 three objections to the proposal during the statutory Public Notice period. In response to the comments made against the proposal, not already covered in this report, it is noted;

- The school is aware of some challenges within their current year 6 and have worked closely with the Inclusion Team and increased staffing to these classes.
- Norfolk County Council supports the presumption of mainstream education opportunity for all children. This SRB proposal enables children to be supported both in the SRB and integrated into school life with extra support in place ensuring the efficient education of other children is not compromised.
- It has been made very clear in the discussion about the location of the SRB that the Forest School area and field is very important to the school and that any building in these areas would be detrimental to the other children at the school.
- The capital team have built bases in several other schools and are experienced in managing their work around the safe and effective running of a school.

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 to establish a 16 place Social, Emotional and Mental Health Base at St William's Primary School, Williams Loke, St Williams Way, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0AJ from 1 September 2025.



Proposed significant change to St William's Primary 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 establishing a 16 place Specialist Resource Base at St William's Primary School, Norwich, from 1 September 2025.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/srb-2023> ; 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: 19 June 2023

Statutory Proposal to establish a Specialist Resource Base (SRB), for 16 places, at St William's Primary School, Norwich, from 1st September 2025

1. Local Authority details

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

2. School details

Name	St William's Primary School
Type	Community School
Address	Williams Loke, St Williams Way, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0AJ
Age Range	4 - 11 years
Capacity	420 pupils; Numbers on roll 1 June 2023 = 413
Ofsted	Last Ofsted; February 2020 Rating; Good

3. What changes are proposed?

It is proposed to establish a 16 place Social, Emotional and Mental Health Base at St William's Primary School, from 1 September 2025.

We appreciate that children and young people with social, emotional and mental health 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.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health bases form part of the Specialist Resource Base programme in Norfolk and are a key component of Norfolk's SEND Local Offer, and of mainstream inclusion support to children, families and the school system.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Bases provide a learning area which is calm and adapted to meet the needs of children and young people. It will be a primary phase base, offering up to 16 places for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children.

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 St William's 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 Social, Emotional and Mental Health bases in the Norwich area which can be provided by St William's Primary School.

Norfolk County Council and the Governors of St William's 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 16 pupils to benefit from the specialist education and support provided by St William's Primary School Social, Emotional and Mental Health Base
- Increase the number of places for pupils in the Norwich area with social, emotional and mental health 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. St William's Primary 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 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.

This Specialist Resource Base will be located within the site of St. Williams Primary School. It will be a new building creating 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. Target opening is September 2025.

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. 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.

School organisation process	Date
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