

## **Consultation on proposal to add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT from September 2026**

### **Our proposal**

Norfolk County Council would like to hear your views on our proposal for West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT **to add a 16 place Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice (SHIP) from September 2026.**

**This consultation is open from Thursday 26 February 2026 until 12 noon on Friday 27 March 2026.**

West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, an Infant school for children aged 2–7 is a community school in south Norwich. The school has an Ofsted rating of ‘Outstanding’ from October 2024. This proposal is to convert two existing Enhanced SEND Provisions (ESPs), known as Blossom and Juniper classes into a formal registered SHIP as part of the Specialist Resource Base (SRB) programme.

Norfolk County Council have been working closely with the school and governing body to establish this provision. Specialist Hubs of Inclusive Practice are a key part of Norfolk’s Local Offer for children with special educational needs and their families and have been identified in Norfolk’s SEND Strategy as a priority for development.

We recognise that children and young people with complex needs often face challenges in engaging with learning and managing in a classroom environment without tailored strategies and interventions. SHIPs offer children with a range of co-occurring needs such as neurodiversity; social, emotional and mental health; and learning difficulties a place to learn and develop when they are not able to access their learning in the mainstream school.

The day-to-day running of the SHIP will be overseen by the Headteacher in partnership with the governing body. It will offer 16 places for children aged 2 to 7 years. The provision will be made up of two classes and external play areas.

The SHIP is planned to open in September 2026. This timeline is dependent on key factors such as the timely completion of refurbishment works. While our aim is to meet this date, there may be some flexibility if circumstances require. It is essential that all elements are in place to ensure the hub launches smoothly and delivers a strong start for pupils.

### **What is a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice?**

A SHIP is an inclusive provision within a mainstream school that enables children with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities to have access to individualised and small group support whilst also benefiting from inclusive practice within the mainstream setting. The SHIPs aim to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access and thrive in a mainstream school environment through:

- Enabling access to an appropriate curriculum which supports progress

- Developing consistent whole-school inclusive practice in meeting the needs of all children
- Using evidence-based assessments and interventions delivered by skilled and trained staff
- Supporting and enabling increased access to the mainstream school environment and community where this is appropriate
- Implementing well-planned transitions

The SHIP will offer a permanent placement for a pupil until the end of year 2. At the end of the key stage children placed in the SHIP will either return to mainstream, attend a SHIP/SRB at the next key stage or attend a special school. The pathway taken will depend on the individual development of each child.

Pupils do not require an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to attend a SHIP. Placements will be offered by Norfolk County Council via an admissions panel attended by staff members. Qualified teachers will manage the day-to-day running of the SHIP. They are supported by higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs) and teaching assistants (TAs). All staff are trained in working with children and young people with SEND. SHIP staff can call on expert advice from an educational psychologist, specialist partners from Norfolk's special schools and specialist teachers from the Local Authority.

## What are the benefits of this proposal?

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

- **Supporting more children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)** to learn, succeed, and thrive within their local school and community.
- **Enhancing pupil progress** through tailored strategies that meet individual complex needs.
- **Improving access to the curriculum**, enabling students to achieve their full potential.
- **Reducing unnecessary travel** by providing local provision, which is better for young people and results in cost savings and the environmental impact of travel.
- **Increasing the availability of places** for students with SEND, ensuring timely access to appropriate support.
- **Addressing identified gaps** in specialist provision by geography, age, and phase, as outlined in Norfolk's SEND Strategy.
- **Promoting the sharing of expertise and best practice** in supporting complex needs across our school community.
- **Supports local pathway planning** with children with complex needs into a mainstream school environment from Earlham Nursey school.

## Costs

The project will use the current capacity and facilities within the Infant and Nursery school site. This approach will involve minor refurbishment, making efficient use of the already available building space. Any capital improvements will be supported by Norfolk County Council. It is proposed there will be work undertaken to refurbish two classrooms, kitchens, toilets, and external play areas.

## How can you have your say?

The school will be holding a drop in event at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School on **Tuesday 10 March 2026 2:15pm to 3:15pm** where you can come and find out more about this proposal. If you need any accessibility arrangements to support your attendance at this event, please let us know and we will be happy to help. Please contact **01603 451299** or [office@weins.co.uk](mailto:office@weins.co.uk) .

If you are unable to attend this event but would like to comment on our proposal, you can have your say by:

- Accessing our online survey; <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/westearlhamship>
- Returning the completed form to the school office at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School.

**We need all responses by 12 noon on Friday 27 March 2026.**

## **What happens next?**

After the consultation closes, Norfolk County Council will consider all the responses received during this consultation and decide whether to proceed with the establishment of a SHIP.

If we decide to go ahead, by law we have to publish a statutory notice.

People would then have 4 weeks to write to Norfolk County Council either supporting or opposing the proposal.

The final decision is made by the Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council as the Local Authority Decision-Maker.

If at the end of the consultation process, the proposal does not go forward, no changes will be made.

If you need this document in a different format or language, please let us know and we will be happy to help.

You can contact us by telephone on **01603 638099** or by email at **[schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk)**

# Consultation on proposal to add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT from September 2026

Let us know what you think of our proposal.

How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to establish a permanent Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School?

**Please tick a box.**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

**Why do you say this? Please write in the box below.**

**Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make to help us with this decision and in planning for the future provision for children?  
Please write in the box below.**

We would like to hear from many different people as your views help us to decide whether we make these changes. We will also use any personal information to

understand how different groups of people feel about our proposal to establish the Specialist Hub at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School.

We will process any personal information we receive from you in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (Regulation (EU) 2016/679), the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Academy Trust's data protection policy and guidelines. This means that Norfolk County Council will hold your personal data and only use it for the purpose for which it was collected, being this consultation.

We won't identify individuals when reporting back our findings and, under our record management policy, we will keep this information for five years. We will also, under normal circumstances, not pass your personal data on to anyone else. However, we may be asked under access to information laws to publish or disclose some, or all, of the information you provide in response to this consultation, including any personal information. We will only do this where such disclosure will comply with such relevant information laws which include the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Please tell us who you are (tick all that apply):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> School governor          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent / Carer                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Local resident           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the Parent<br>Teacher Association | <input type="checkbox"/> Local business           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member of staff                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Local sports group       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Local community<br>group |

Other (please specify):

At which school?

What is your postcode?

Your views will help us decide if this proposal goes ahead. You can tell us your views by returning this completed form to:

- The school office at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School.
- Accessing our online survey; [LINK](#)

**This consultation ends at 12 noon on Friday 27 March 2026**