

Statutory proposal to add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT. This change would come into effect from 1 September 2026.

1. Local Authority details

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

2. School details

Name	West Earlham Infant and Nursery School
Type	Community School
Address	Scarnell Road, Norwich. Norfolk NR5 8HT
Age Range	2-7 years
Capacity	Numbers on roll January 2026: 281
Ofsted	Last Ofsted; October 2024 Rating; Outstanding

3. What changes are proposed?

It is proposed to add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice (SHIP) at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT. This change would come into effect from 1 September 2026.

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

The proposal forms part of the Local Authority's SEND Strategy and Local Offer and responds to identified demand for additional specialist provision locally.

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient and appropriate school places for all children, including those with SEND. SHIPs help meet this duty by strengthening inclusive provision within mainstream schools.

An initial consultation was held from 26 February to 27 March 2026. During that period, a consultation event was held on 10 March 2026. No-one attended. A total of 395 consultation documents were sent to governors, staff and parents at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School and key stakeholders.

A total of 18 responses were received to the consultation. Feedback was highly supportive, with the vast majority expressing strong approval of the proposal.

A copy of the consultation report including the consultation proposal, is available in Appendix A.

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

A Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice is a type of specialist provision located within a mainstream school. SHIPs provide targeted support for children with complex or co-occurring needs while enabling access to inclusive learning opportunities where appropriate.

Norfolk County Council's policy is to expand schools that are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. West Earlham Infant & Nursery School was inspected in October 2024 and rated outstanding.

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.

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.

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.

All capital costs will be met by the Local Authority. Long term value for money will be achieved as there is greater capacity to meet the needs of children with SEN 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 September 2026.

10. Related proposals

This proposal is not linked to any other proposal.

11. Documents available

The following documents are available in relation to this proposal:

- Consultation proposal document
- Consultation report (informal consultation)
- Statutory Public Notice

12. Further information

If you require this information in an alternative format or have questions about the proposal or process, please contact the School Organisation Team at schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk

13. 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.

14. 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	11 May 2026
Statutory consultation (representation stage)	11 May 2026 to 5 June 2026
Decision required, no later than	5 August 2026
If approved, change starts	1 September 2026

Consultation report to the Executive Director of Children’s Services for permission to publish a statutory public notice

The proposal; To add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice at West Earham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT. This change would come into effect from 1 September 2026.

<p>Reason for the proposed changes</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Earham Nursery school.
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<p>Consultation details</p>	<p>The consultation was delivered, as set out by the DfE statutory guidance 'Making significant changes (prescribed alterations) to maintained schools', August 2025.</p> <p>A consultation was held from 26 February to 27 March 2026.</p> <p>A total of 395 consultation documents were sent to governors, staff and parents at West Earham Infant & Nursery School and key stakeholders (full list is in Appendix B).</p> <p>A consultation event was held on 10 March 2026 in person, supported by the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, SENCO, and two Governors. No-one attended. The consultation was promoted widely, via the school and county council website. The consultation analysis is available at Appendix B.</p>
<p>Number of responses</p>	<p>A total of 18 responses were received to the consultation. Feedback was highly supportive, with the vast majority expressing strong approval of the proposal.</p>
<p>Summary of views expressed in favour of the proposal 17 responses (94.4%)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Support for Existing SEND Practice • Clear Community Need for specialist provision • Benefits for Families including stability and reduced travel • Confidence in School Leadership • Suggestions such as ensuring funding and maintaining class sizes
<p>Views expressed against the proposal</p>	<p>No respondents disagreed with the proposal. Only one respondent neither agreed or disagreed.</p>
<p>Commentary</p>	<p>The consultation has been run in accordance with the DfE guidance. The response rate is 4.56%. Of those who responded to the consultation, there is very good support for the proposal with 94.4% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the proposal.</p>
<p>Resource implications</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Recommendation</p>	<p>94.4% of those who responded to the consultation are supportive of the proposal and see the benefits of this provision. The proposal is supported by parents, governors and staff at the school.</p> <p>The proposed SHIP is part of the Council's Local First Inclusion Programme and would meet the need and location in Norwich for this provision.</p> <p>Norfolk County Council's policy is to expand schools that are rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. The last published Ofsted rating for West Earham Infant & Nursery School was in October 2024 where it was rated Outstanding.</p>

	It is recommended for Norfolk County Council to proceed to the statutory public notice stage of the school organisation process.
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I give permission for a public notice to be issued on the proposal to;

- Add a Specialist Hub of Inclusive Practice at West Earlham Infant & Nursery School, Scarnell Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR5 8HT

These changes would come into effect from 1 September 2026

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

Date: 17.04.2026

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 Earham Nursery 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 Earham 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 .

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 Earham 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