

## **Pennington CE Primary School – Proposal to establish a new Special Educational Needs (SEN) Unit for pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs from September 2027**

Pennington CE Primary School and Hampshire County Council would like to hear your views on the proposal to expand the school by an additional 50 primary places by establishing a special educational needs (SEN) Unit for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs, utilising the former Pennington Infant School site and accommodation. If approved, this provision would open in phases from September 2027.

Children with social, emotional and mental health needs may face challenges in understanding and managing their emotions, building relationships, and coping with everyday situations. They often benefit from consistent routines, nurturing relationships with trusted adults, and access to therapeutic support. With the right interventions, these children can develop resilience, emotional awareness, and positive coping strategies that support both their wellbeing and educational progress.

Please note that this consultation relates specifically to the proposal and principle to establish the SEN Unit. Further consultation will be held in relation to planning and building works when details are known and if approved to proceed.

**The consultation will run from 9 January to 6 February 2026.**

### **Why do you need to expand Pennington CE Primary School?**

Hampshire County Council has a duty to make sure there are enough school places within the county for those children and young people who have complex special educational needs that cannot be met within a mainstream school setting.

The County Council is committed to expanding successful provision wherever possible to meet demand. There is an increased and growing need to provide specialist support for pupils with SEMH needs in the New Forest. This proposal will provide much needed specialist educational accommodation to meet current and future demand.

The County Council and senior leadership at Pennington CE Primary School are consulting on using the Infant School accommodation and site to provide a new Unit for pupils with SEMH needs. These pupils would be on Pennington CE Primary school roll and be educated on the infant school site. The proposal will add a total of up to 50 places at Pennington CE Primary School which will be phased increase over 3 years.

Pennington CE Primary School is already successfully meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and the surplus accommodation at the former infant school site gives an opportunity to expand this specialist provision. Pennington CE Primary already has an SEMH Resourced Provision based at the Primary site, which will be unaffected by the establishment of the Unit.

**What is the difference between the existing SEMH Resourced Provision and the proposed SEMH Unit ?**

<b>Resourced Provision</b>	<b>SEN Unit</b>
Pupils work towards spending least 50% of their time in mainstream classes (with support, as required).	Pupils spend majority of their time in the Unit depending on the needs of the individual child, joining mainstream peers for some aspects of school life e.g. assembly, social time, PE, where appropriate and beneficial for their individual needs and the wider community.
Pupils admitted to RPs will have a level of SEN need which requires additional support to that available in the mainstream setting but have the capability to develop skills for independence and may require different levels of specialist support at different times.	Pupils admitted to SEN Units will have more complex, likely co-occurring levels of need that cannot be addressed solely in the mainstream setting, meaning that their independence skills will require a different intensity of approach to develop.
These are mainstream provisions with some additional resources for a particular type of SEN. The resource is considered specialist but is more integrated within the wider school community.	These are specialist provisions for a particular type of SEN within a mainstream school, where it is not an expectation that the communities will mix unless this is advantageous to the development of all.  In some cases, a unit may support pupils who are registered at other schools but attend the SEN unit part-time as a short-term in-reach provision. In this instance then the pupil is dual-rolled with a robust transition plan back to their mainstream placement. This is a decision between the Local Authority and Governing Bodies.

**What building works will be taking place at the school?**

In order to create a new SEN Unit at the former Pennington Infant School site, capital works will be required to update and reconfigure internal accommodation, provide specialist areas and therapy spaces and to ensure safeguarding for pupils and staff. Improved external areas and additional parking and pick up/drop off area will also be created. Detailed feasibility work will be undertaken subject to approval following consultation period. Required works are estimated at £6m and proposed to be funded from High Needs Capital funding. Planning approvals and consultation in regard to detailed plans will happen at a later date if the project is approved to proceed.

**When will the building works start at the school and how will you ensure the health and safety of pupils whilst the works are taking place?**

It is planned that the building works, to create the facilities at the former Pennington Infant School site, will take 6-9 months and be complete for the Unit to be operational from September 2027.

Health and safety of children, staff and visitors is paramount. The County Council works with construction partners who have significant experience of working on school sites. A detailed health and safety plan will be developed.

### **What will be the impact on pupils at Pennington CE Primary School?**

The new SEN Unit will bring additional specialist staff, training, and resources to Pennington CE Primary School, enhancing inclusion and wellbeing for all pupils. It will improve facilities, provide opportunities for shared expertise, and strengthen the school's capacity to support a wide range of needs, creating a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

The proposed SEN Unit won't affect the current SEMH Resourced Provision already established at Pennington CE Primary School.

### **Will the school receive additional funding due to the numbers increasing?**

Pennington CE Primary School will receive additional funding based on the increase in number of pupils on their roll and specialist funding related to the pupils additional needs. This will provide for the additional staffing and resources required to run the Unit without affecting the main Primary School budget.

### **What happens after this consultation?**

**This consultation will run from 9 January to 6 February 2026.** Officers will then consider the consultation responses, received in writing, before deciding whether the proposal should continue to the formal publication stage.

If so, a statutory public notice will be published, setting out the County Council's intent to increase the capacity of the school. It is anticipated that this will be published in March 2026.

After the date of publication, there will be a four-week period in which any representations can be made. After the conclusion of this period, the County Council will make a final decision on whether to proceed with the proposal. It is anticipated that a decision will be made in spring/summer 2026.

### **Will I have the opportunity to discuss the proposal and ask questions?**

A drop-in session where you will be able to discuss the proposal with Hampshire Officers and School Leadership will take place on **Wednesday 21 January between 3:30pm and 6pm at Pennington CE Primary School.**

If you are unable to email or visit the above website and wish to make a comment, then please write to [sendcommissioning@hants.gov.uk](mailto:sendcommissioning@hants.gov.uk) or by letter to:

Claire Campling  
SEN Service Manager  
Children's Services  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Elizabeth II Court West  
Winchester  
Hampshire  
SO23 8UG

**All comments must be received by 6 February 2026.**

**How can my views be heard?**

We will consider all responses received:

- In person at the drop in date Wednesday 21 January 2026 3:30pm – 6pm
- Via e-mail [sendcommissioning@hants.gov.uk](mailto:sendcommissioning@hants.gov.uk)
- Via letter to address above

**The closing date for responses is 6 February 2026**