

# ***Welcome to Packham Class***

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## Who Are We?



Miss C Leach  
Lead Teacher



Mrs L Hearmon  
HLTA



Mrs D James  
Teaching  
Assistant



Mrs N Rosier  
Teaching  
Assistant

# What Do We Do?

## **Placements**

Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) are additionally funded provisions within an LA/academy mainstream school. They provide additional staffing, tailored environments and access to additional resources/expertise. They are funded from Norfolk's High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant and subject to a funding agreement via a Service Level Agreement/Partnership agreement with the LA. They are registered SEN units that form a constituent part of a school/academy.

Our ASD SRB class is for up to 10 children who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder diagnosis (or who are on the ASD pathway) and are in key stage 1 or 2; and who need specialist input to enable them to overcome barriers to accessing mainstream lessons. Our class is called Packham class after the famous Naturalist Chris Packham. An individual and gradual approach is taken to integrating the children into mainstream classes and they are assigned a main school classroom as well as the SRB classroom. The children benefit from a low stimulus work environment within the SRB which is attached to the main school and is a safe secure space divided into appropriate spaces such as chill out areas and learning environments adapted to the children's needs. We access all areas of the main school including the playgrounds and outdoor spaces, halls and library. Autism Bases are areas within a mainstream school setting with a dedicated lead teacher and high levels of support staff. They are an integral part of the school and provide additional support from trained staff for children with social communication difficulties or a diagnosis of autism. The Base provides a learning area which is calm and adapted to meet these needs. Children and young people can be, as needed taught in the Base. Pupils are supported to access mainstream classes alongside their peers as much as they are able. The balance of time spent between the Base and mainstream classes can vary and should be dependent on the child/young person and their ability to access mainstream classes and whole school life as much as appropriate to do so.

Placements at the Autism Base are permanent, and the pupil will be on roll of our mainstream school. These places do not form part of the school published admission number (PAN) and are registered in addition to that number. By accessing the Autism Base and its support it will allow those young people with autism and other associated needs to be effectively supported in a mainstream setting with access to its curriculum and other opportunities.

Working in partnership with pupils, parents and our main school staff is central to providing a supportive environment to help pupils work through their ASD needs and any social and emotional difficulties that they are experiencing in mainstream education. Our aim is to help children develop strategies they need to be able to re-integrate successfully back into mainstream education unsupported by the end of year 6. If a place is offered to a child, then parents will be invited to visit the base and meet staff and set a transition plan. Visits can be arranged with the lead Teacher-Miss Leach via the email link at the top of this brochure. We actively encourage parents to come and look around the base and the main school before putting a referral in.

All staff in the Base are Norfolk Steps trained and undergo refresher training every 12 months. This consists of Step On training which enables focus on de-escalation and preventative strategies. Also, how to manage difficult or dangerous behaviour and to have an understanding of what challenging behaviour might be communicating. Step Up training which enables effective policy that encompasses preventative strategies for tackling harmful behaviour. Developing a positive

handling plan for each child if felt restrictive physical intervention is required. They are trained in these moves to ensure that all children and adults are kept safe whilst in the Base. Miss Leach and Mrs James are the Lead Steps trainers for the school.

#### **ASD Base Aims:**

- To support children with special educational needs to access and thrive in a mainstream school environment.
- To enhance children's progress by effectively supporting social communication and interaction needs
- Facilitate better access to the curriculum and good progress made relative to each learner's individual starting point.
- To use evidence-based good autism practice to support, manage and develop the sensory processing needs of learners enabling greater access to a mainstream school environment.
- To work in partnership with parents to build confidence that schools are able to successfully meet their child's needs.
- To implement effective transition for children when moving to/from SRBs and in the next phase of their education.
- To use evidence-based practice to develop the social and emotional skills of learners.
- To develop excellent, consistent whole-school practice in meeting the needs of learners.



# *Where Are We Situated?*

The Base is situated within the main building of Nelson Academy in Downham Market. Many of our children arrive here via taxi, as the Base is out of their home school catchment area (transport will be arranged with parents as part of the admission process). We have a separate entrance for the children, two main classroom areas, a sensory room and an outdoor space, for individual or group work. We are also able to use the hall space within the academy and the large outside play area, as part of children's lunchtime provision. These spaces allow us to be flexible with the groupings of children and enable 1:1 support when needed for emotional regulation and social skills when necessary.



# *What Does Our Provision Look Like?*

## **Curriculum Adaptations**

Our planning ensures that children cover the required year group objectives. We plan for a mixed cohort, at different levels but can be flexible and group pupils as required to ensure we cover gaps in their learning and support them to make progress. We follow the same curriculum as the main school and lessons are planned around a three year rolling programme. We try to give children firsthand experiences and focus on the core skills of confidence, self-esteem, listening, turn-taking, sharing and co-operation with the aim of developing these areas to support children to access main stream education successfully.

## **Timetables**

Our timetable mirrors a normal school day structure, as it helps children to follow the routine of the rest of the school. This means that English and Math's is usually taught in the morning sessions. Whole class teaching sessions may be shorter which allows children to work in smaller groups with an adult. The other curriculum areas are taught across the week as well as weekly therapy sessions such as ELSA, art therapy, lego therapy and forest school. P.E is taught weekly, and uses indoor and outdoor spaces. We also plan for individual needs and so during the week there are 1:1 sessions for children which help to target academic, social or emotional areas of learning. In Packham class each pupil follows their own individual timetable, combining their year group timetables with their time spent in the SRB. Despite this, we still follow daily routines to support the regulation of the pupils. Lesson times look different for each of our pupils, with learning taking place either in their year group classes and/or in Packham class.

## **Involving Children**

Discussions are held with children to gain their opinions in what they feel we need to work on as a cohort, this could be social skills or particular life skills and sessions are then developed to support the children with these. This also includes playground activities and lunchtime provision. The children's opinions are also drawn upon when we set and review termly targets, for EHCP reviews and for wellbeing sessions. Our pupils also have roles within the classroom and school so that they are active members of the main school.

Roles include Pupil Parliament, Mental Health Champion, Eco Leaders, Librarians, Online Safety Ambassador, Book Monitor.

## **Communication with Parents**

We use Class Dojo as our main point of contact with parents as this enables us to easily upload photos of the children's learning or to send messages of successes as well as areas that have been difficult that day. This helps communicate any information easily between us and parents, especially as children may live far away from the Base. Regular telephone calls are also had between school and parents. We send out a half termly newsletter to not only the SRB parents but to the whole school and we have half termly parent sessions where parents and families can come in and join us for a session.

## **Educational Psychologist**

Dedicated access to Educational Psychologist's time has been made available and funded by NCC to support SRBs. This is free at the point of delivery for SRB schools and is specifically for working with the SRB cohort and SRB staff, although where possible any training spaces would be made available more broadly for staff within the schools. Our EP is Dr Lloyd Smith.

Our Educational Psychologist uses a wide range of knowledge and experience in his work with children and has had extensive training and experience of psychological theory and practice and is able to offer a range of skills such as advice with regards to targeted interventions or specific types of training.

### **Sensory Diet**

A sensory circuit is a form of sensory integration intervention. It involves a sequence of physical activities that are designed to alert, organise, and calm the child. The sensory circuit aims to facilitate sensory processing to help children regulate and organise their senses to achieve the 'just right' or optimum level of alertness required for effective learning. The circuit should be an active, physical, and fun activity that children enjoy doing. Sensory circuits are a great way to both energise and settle children so they can focus and engage better in the classroom. Many children can benefit from attending a sensory circuit, even for a short period of time. The activities can also be utilised at different times of the day as part of a sensory diet to help the child regulate.



### **Life Skills**

The term '*Life Skills*' refers to the skills you need to make the most out of life. Any skill that is useful in your life can be considered a life skill. Tying your shoelaces, swimming, driving a car and using a computer are, for most people, useful life skills. Broadly speaking, the term 'life skills' is usually used for any of the skills needed to deal well and effectively with the challenges of life. In the SRB we work on basic life skills such as cooking, personal hygiene and first aid. We have a weekly life skills session as well as a weekly food technology lesson.





### **Lego Therapy and Social Skills**

Lego-based therapy is an evidence-based approach that aims to develop social communication skills in autistic children, such as sharing, turn-taking, following rules, using names and problem-solving. We have a weekly Lego therapy session which is run by our HLTA. We use this time to also work on our listening and social skills. We also make sure we have time to work on being a team player and will use our break and lunchtimes to often play board games or card games.



### **Swimming**

The SRB children attend weekly swimming lessons at the local swimming pool over the Autumn and Spring terms. Many children with autism are drawn to water for its calming, sensory experience. In fact, a 2015 study found that children with ASD enjoy swimming significantly more than children without ASD. And while water can present a safety concern, water play and swimming also offer several benefits for children with ASD.

### **Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)**

It is compulsory for RSE to be taught from September 2020, however we will be in discussion with parents about what is right for your child so that we select resources for what is developmentally appropriate and will be happy to share the resources with parents to achieve this.



Our Relationships and Sex Education Policy (RSE) is available via the school website.

### **Tracking children's progress**

It is important to all of us that we support the children in making progress, this will consider academic targets but importantly will include targets around children's social communication and interaction along with developing life skills.

- We will monitor progress in social communication areas by using the Autism Education Trust's Progression Framework along with other tracking tools such as Thrive.
- We will monitor academic achievements using the school's Skills Curriculum Progression Grids across all subjects along with formal assessments three times a year.
- In each area of learning, we will gauge children's understanding and establish their next steps and how to achieve these.
- Each child will receive an annual report in the summer term along with two other updates.

We will develop your knowledge of the school's ethos and curriculum by:

- Providing regular updates
- Providing you with a parent -friendly prospectus (this booklet)
- Showing you and your child around our school
- Involving you in the life of our school through agreed access days, requesting feedback on school procedures and practices by:
- Asking you through questionnaires, about different aspects of school life.

We believe it is important that the children recognise that they are part of a wider community, locally, nationally, and internationally, and so we support various fundraising occasions such as Children in Need and Comic Relief. We participate in events such as World Book day too. We will also celebrate National Autism Month in April to continue to celebrate every child as unique and valued.

## Transition

Prior to a child's placement with us they will have some transition sessions where they can meet the staff in the Base, their SRB peers and have a tour of the main school. They will then build up their day over three sessions. Target for the term will be set with the child, their parents and their current/ previous school.

## An Autism friendly school

Along with all Nelson Academy and SRB staff championing the positive contribution that any children in school can make to the wider school community, children across school will be given age-appropriate guidance in understanding autism through assemblies and class discussions. Nelson Academy has a clear Anti-Bullying policy and will not accept bullying in any form. As we develop an understanding of the children and their needs, we will select other pupils as Autism Champions to buddy up for playtimes and other activities. We will also conduct Autism competency audits to ensure that all staff are appropriately trained. It is our goal to make Nelson Academy Autism Friendly in its wider school environment.

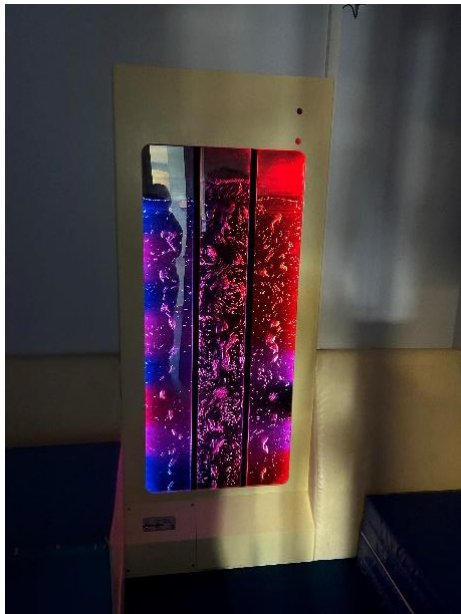
The main class the '*Packham Class*' is open and spacious to allow children to move around and use the space flexibly.



We have a smaller class '*The Garden Room*' that we use for sensory activities, lunch and art.



The Sensory Room is used if a child needs to go to a quiet area or needs some time to self-regulate.  
We use the Zones of Regulation to help us show what we are feeling



### **Why Apply:**

Applications should be made if the school-based interventions at a child's home school are not proving effective in supporting their progress in line with their assessed ability. A higher ratio of adult to child staffing can support additional needs and provide interventions needed. Pupils are not required to have an EHCP (Education, Health, Care Plan) to join the SRB.

Schools can apply for a child to attend the SRB by completing the online referral form on the Norfolk Schools website:

<https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-needs/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/send-provision-services/specialist-resource-bases-srbs/make-a-referral>. A panel meeting happens once every half-term to discuss suitability of a placement and to assign places should they be available.

The first step in the application process is for the home school and the child's parents to contact the SRB Lead Teacher (Miss Leach) to have a discussion and arrange an observation of the child in their home school. The home school will then be required to complete the SRB referral form by the deadline dates published on the Norfolk Schools website. Please note, a placement at an ASD base means the child moves on to the roll of the school; it is not a dual placement.

Referrals and admissions to ASD bases are managed by a county wide admission process including half termly admission meetings. A discreet observation will then be made of the child in their home school before the panel date.

A copy of the pupil profile for the ASD SRB is below- children do not have to meet all of this criteria to be deemed suitable for a place.

### **Pupil Profile**

Autism Bases are permanent school places in the setting where they are arranged. The children/young people who would benefit from a placement at a Base can access a mainstream curriculum but have barriers to their learning such as social communication difficulties, rigid thinking, sensory sensitivities, difficulty in managing a busy environment, anxiety and need support to regulate their emotions. They may have a diagnosis of autism.

Learners who access provision through the SRB will typically fit the following profile:

Are in the age range appropriate to the school.

Will exhibit significant difficulties in the dyad of impairments, which are social communication difficulties and 'restricted/repetitive behaviours'.

Unusual sensitivity to sensory stimuli which hinders or prevents them from engaging in mainstream education.

May have a diagnosis of autism but not essential for entry.

Are likely to hold an Education Health and Care Plan, but this is not necessary for placement.

Live within 45 minutes in KS1 or 60 minutes for KS2-KS4 travel time by car to the Base.

May have a range of secondary needs, such as speech, language and communication, specific learning difficulty, physical, medical or sensory needs.

Have the underlying cognitive ability to access a mainstream school curriculum once barriers to learning have been addressed.

Would not usually meet the criteria for a complex needs school, except for Sprowston Infant's Complex Needs Base.

Have high levels of anxiety related to confusion and/or fear of what is happening in the immediate environment such that the ability to learn is

severely compromised.

Have extreme difficulties in the understanding and acceptance of age-appropriate social rules governing, for example, turn-taking, collaborative activities and the sharing of adult attention.

Have a lack of awareness, to a greater or lesser extent, or even apparent disregard of personal safety and that of others.

Have a strong and obtrusive adherence to routines and rituals which makes any change of routine very challenging and may even provoke defiance or other negative reactions.

Experience considerable, persistent and pervasive problems in establishing and sustaining relationships with peers.

Exhibit egocentric behaviour that fails to consider others in a way which would be viewed as age-appropriate behaviour in any particular situation.

The absence of other primary reasons or causes for these difficulties.

### Trips Out

In the SRB we annually attend the Norfolk Show as well as trips out to places such as Lynn Sport to take part in specially adapted sports for people with disabilities and also end of year trips such as the dinosaur park. We use any trip out of school, be it a walk into the town centre, or out on the bus, as a way to practice our social and life skills that we have been learning.





# *What Does the SRB at Nelson Academy Provide?*

Nelson Academy is part of the Eastern Multi Academy Trust. The trust provides oversight of the ASD Base and liaises with the Norfolk SRB services to provide the SRB support. Mrs Sarah Wilson is the Principal at Nelson Academy and she works closely with the SRB Lead to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the SRB.

## **Resources**

The Base can utilise the resources within the main school of Nelson Academy. This includes staff training, learning resources, learning spaces, taking part in special events and celebrations. The children in the Base are part of Nelson Academy main school, as it is important that they identify as still being part of mainstream provision and part of a larger peer group.

## **Evaluation and Development**

Nelson Academy monitors the quality of teaching and learning and supports the performance management of staff in the Base.

There is also a lead partner from specialist provision which oversees the ASD Base. Our lead partner is Miss Emma Stevens. The ASD Bases across Norfolk meet regularly to share good practice and develop resources through a half termly 'Hub'.

The lead teacher, Miss Leach develops an improvement plan with Mrs Wilson and this is reviewed during the academic year. This helps to identify changes and developments for the ASD Base alongside a yearly cohort review and quality assurance review. These all lead into the details of how the base can improve. The staff of the Base have their own training programme which helps to develop their expertise and meet the needs of the children. However, they can also access training in the main school, which may be of benefit, such as first aid or safeguarding.



**Useful contact details:**

This brochure and contact details can be found on the Nelson Academy website at:

<https://www.nelsonacademy.co.uk/>

Address:

Nelson Academy, SRB Base, Nursery Road, Downham Market, PE38 9PF

Telephone: 01366 383824

Email: [cornelia.leach@nla.eastern-mat.co.uk](mailto:cornelia.leach@nla.eastern-mat.co.uk)

Norfolk Schools Website provides updated information relating to the SEMH Base provision:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-learning/schools/specialist-resource-bases-srbs/autism-bases>

**Complaints or Compliments:**

Miss Leach is the first port of call for all queries. However, as the ASD Base is part of the main school organisation, the Nelson Academy complaints policy should be followed if any situation cannot be resolved directly with the Base staff. Mrs Sarah Wilson (Principal) is the next point of contact in the main school.

Please see the academy's website for a copy of the complaint's policy or contact the school directly using the details above.

## Parent & Child Testimonials

"The team at SRB have helped my daughter so much already, from settling sessions to knowing her triggers and being there for her. I can't wait for her to start on her journey in September as I know now she is being understood and can't wait to see her flourish! One word - amazing!"

"Being the parent of a child with ASD and school related anxiety, it can be hard to visualise how a setting will help them flourish, but the Nelson SRB team are nothing short of amazing! They are knowledgeable, understanding and compassionate in their approach to supporting the different needs of children with ASD. They take the time to listen to parents and work hard to build a caring and trusting relationship with not only the child but also with their family, creating a safe space for them to grow and learn and get the best from their education. The support my son has received has been second to none, I cannot fault the staff and I know he will miss them all dearly now he's moving on to high school."

"Here's my hand for a lifetime and a piece of my heart too, I wouldn't have made it through year 6 without the help of you."

"Thank you for all the help and support you have given to us over the last year. I will be forever grateful for your kindness, compassion, and the difference you have made to my child's life. He is leaving Nelson Academy a kind, happy, confident child who is 100% ready to take on his next chapter. Thank you for the role you have played in getting him there, we wouldn't have done it without you."

"All the team in Packham are amazing. Heartfelt thanks for helping, guiding, supporting and just 'being there' for M over the years. You have made it possible for him to enjoy school and education again."

"This class was the class where I met my first friends. The class where I was accepted for who I am."

"The team at the SRB have helped my daughter so much, from settling sessions, to knowing her triggers and being there for her. I can't wait for her to start her journey in the SRB as I know she is being understood and can't wait to see her flourish! One word AMAZING!"

"Being the parent of a child with ASD and school related anxiety, it can be hard to visualise how a setting will help them flourish, but the Nelson SRB team are nothing short of amazing! They are knowledgeable. Understanding, compassionate in their approach to supporting the needs of children with ASD. They take the time to listen to parents and work hard to build a caring and trusting relationship with not only the child but also their family, creating a safe space for them to grow and learn and get the best from their education. The support my son has received has been second to none, I cannot fault the staff and I know he will miss them dearly now he is moving onto high school."

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