

## The SENSS Hearing Resource Base at The Cherwell School Information Report

### Special Educational Needs Support Services (SENSS) vision:

“Working in partnership to secure good outcomes and a positive future  
for children and young people with SEN and/or disability”

### About the SENSS Hearing Resource Base (HRB) at The Cherwell School

The SENSS Hearing Resource Base (HRB) at The Cherwell School is part of a continuum of support offered within the Local Offer for children and young people with a hearing impairment living in Oxfordshire. The link to this site is as follows <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/special-educational-needs-and-disability-local-offer>

### Admissions

A child seeking a resource base place must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a statement of SEN in which the local authority have named The Cherwell School SENSS Hearing Resource Base as the appropriate placement to meet the child's educational needs. Further detail is included in the Admission Indicators document (Appendix 1).

### Aims

We aim to enable students to:

- have a well-supported and smooth transition from primary to secondary school
- fulfil their academic and social potential in an inclusive mainstream setting
- have the same educational opportunities and challenges as their normally hearing peers
- enjoy their time at school
- become effective communicators in their chosen mode(s) of communication
- become independent young people
- be involved in decisions regarding their own education and take increasing responsibility for their own learning
- benefit from the close co-operative working of parents, the school and other agencies
- be prepared for post-16 opportunities
- be prepared for life in the wider community
- become resilient young adults with positive self-image and good self-esteem



## Context

The Cherwell School is a member academy of the River Learning Trust situated on two sites to the north and south of the Marston Ferry Road in north Oxford; students in Years 7, 8 and 9 are based on the south site while those in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 are based on the north site. The Cherwell School holds an “Outstanding” rating by Ofsted and has recently been awarded an Inclusion Equality Mark for the second time. The school has two attached Oxfordshire Special Educational Needs resource bases: one for students with hearing impairment (HI) and one for students with communication and interaction difficulties (C&I). Both resource bases are staffed with specialist teachers and support staff from the centrally held Special Educational Needs Support Services (SENSS). The HRB has direct strategic links to the school Senior Management Team via the Assistant Head Teacher (Inclusion) and there is an agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining the ways in which the school and the SENSS HRB work together to provide for the students within the resource base who are on school roll and first and foremost members of The Cherwell School.

## Resources

A purpose built suite of rooms was set up in 2002 on The Cherwell School’s south site as a resource base to provide students with hearing impairment who need additional support, the benefits of on-site staffing and facilities. The HRB is well resourced with up-to-date audiological equipment, teaching resources and acoustically treated teaching rooms. These rooms are used for additional tutorial support, small group work, meetings and other student activities. Resources to support access and inclusion of the students with hearing impairment are also stored here. In addition, the HRB serves as an administrative base for the peripatetic team of Teachers of the Deaf who work for SENSS (HI) in and around the city of Oxford. On north site, two acoustically treated intervention rooms - the original HRB at The Cherwell Upper School from 1992 prior to school’s reorganisation - are available for supporting HRB students in Key Stages (KS) 4 and 5.

## Audiological provision

Students with HI at Cherwell use a range of audiological equipment. These are indicated in the student’s Education Health and Care Plan or Statement of SEN and include personal hearing aids, cochlear implants and wireless radio systems. In addition, sound field systems have been installed in key classrooms in the school. These deliver the teacher’s voice at the same volume to every part of the classroom and benefit all students in the class, not only those with hearing difficulties. The number and position of sound field systems is reviewed each year and adjustments are made to ensure that the listening needs of current students with HI at Cherwell are met as well as possible. PA systems and visual presentations are used for school assemblies. Technology is included as a focus in the school Accessibility Strategy and MoU.



Teachers of the Deaf work in collaboration with the health authority to ensure personal equipment is working optimally. They also support Cherwell students and staff to use equipment to best effect and to monitor, evaluate and develop the use of technology to support HRB students within the school. INSET is offered at the beginning of the year and on-going support is given throughout the year as the curriculum and students’ learning needs change.

## **The learning environment**

The Cherwell School is mindful of the effect noise can have on learning. Many areas, including corridors, are carpeted or covered with composite flooring and acoustic ceiling tiles are in place; all with the aim of contributing to a reduction in ambient noise and reverberation. Following a recent acoustic assessment, several classrooms have been refurbished and there is a programme for acoustic improvement in place. Curtains, blinds, soft materials used in table and wall displays, pin boarding, buffers on chairs etc. further help to improve reverberation times.

## **Hearing Resource Base staff**

Qualified Teachers of the Deaf, Communication Support Workers and Specialist Teaching Assistants have a broad range of subject specialism and experience of teaching and supporting across the curriculum at KS3, KS4 and KS5. Regular in-service training and guidance is given to mainstream staff so that the use of facilitative teaching strategies for students with HI is maximised in class and learning is enabled.

See Appendix 2 for a list of current Hearing Resource Base Staff.

## **How do we support students?**

No two students are the same and support models may look very different for different students with HI. An example of a day at Cherwell is included in Appendix 3.

We aim to enable access using the mode of communication of students' choice – spoken English, Sign Language (usually Sign Supported English with British Sign Language where appropriate) or a combination of these.

A student's access and progress in each subject area is constantly monitored so that the support provided can quickly respond to changing individual need. Teachers of the Deaf work closely with mainstream colleagues and joint planning is key in closing the gap for students with HI.

In-class support can include: checking that instructions and material have been understood; assisting with individual, pair and group tasks; note-taking for use in lessons and homework; supporting peer interaction; providing signed communication; differentiating and modifying resources; summarising film clips; transcribing film clips.

Individual and small group teaching takes place in the HRB according to individual need. It can include: specific interventions; pre-and post-teaching of key vocabulary, language and curriculum concepts; parallel teaching mainstream material to a small group simultaneously with the subject teacher; acting as a live speaker for any work involving audio material; a programme of Personal Social Health and Careers Education (PSHCE) to help build positive and resilient young adults. We currently offer Signature level 1 and 2 BSL tuition and exams for students who use BSL as a mode of communication.

Access Arrangements are offered to "level the playing field" for students with Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND) in public examinations. Teachers of the Deaf play a key role in identifying the most appropriate arrangements for students with HI based on their needs and normal way of working in the classroom and they work with school staff to ensure these arrangements are in place.

All students at Cherwell undertake work experience in KS4. Teachers of the Deaf support this in various ways, for example helping students prepare for the interview and the experience, sharing information with the employer and providing risk assessments.

### **Social inclusion and well-being**

We aim to help young people with HI to develop a positive self-image and become confident, independent and resilient young adults. To this end, we have a particular focus on supporting well-being and enabling social links with hearing and other students with HI across Oxfordshire. We do this in various ways, for example:

- a programme of regular PSHCE sessions devised and delivered in the HRB where students with HI can join together to focus on developing an understanding of hearing impairment and wider issues that affect them
- deaf awareness sessions for hearing peers may be given
- visits such as a trip to the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Listening Bus (Jan 2016)
- annual activity days are organised which provide opportunities for friendship links with a wider group of deaf young people within Oxfordshire
- students are signposted to other groups for young people with HI in the county including Friends of the Young Deaf
- involvement in ParAbility Sports events and courses such as the National Sensory Impairment Partnership (NatSIP) "Think Right, Feel Good!" course
- Hearing Resource Base students have represented Oxfordshire on advisory boards for young people with disability in Oxfordshire and nationally through the NDCS

Like all Cherwell students, students with HI have opportunities to be involved in all school activities, both curricular and extra-curricular. We encourage students to fully participate in clubs both during the school day and after school and there is an agreed process within the MoU for providing communication support for clubs if it is needed. Students with HI have been members of a range of school sports teams and have represented their class on the school council. They have also been involved in drama productions, residential school trips and exchange programmes. There are a variety of clubs available at break and lunchtimes which students with HI have enjoyed attending and indeed helping to organise and lead!



### **Tracking student progress**

In addition to school tracking processes, HRB student progress and provision is regularly monitored via procedures outlined in the SEN Code of Practice (including individual targets and Annual Reviews of EHCP or Statement of SEN). Specialist language and other assessments are used for diagnostic purposes to inform interventions and to track progress.

### **How do we give young people a voice?**

We try to hold students with a hearing impairment at the centre of any decisions that affect them and give them opportunities to make choices about their learning, their support, their equipment, their future pathways etc. This is done both *formally*, for example as part of the Annual Review of EHCP, and *informally* in regular individual or group support sessions and day to day in conversation.

We also expect young people to be active learners and to evaluate the success of their learning so that they can be partners in determining next steps and in setting goals.

### **How do we work with parents and other agencies?**

The HRB works in close partnership with the school and parents/carers, together with any agencies involved with the students, such as Speech and Language Therapy, Educational Psychologists and careers advisors. Close liaison with Teachers of the Deaf at primary and post-16 phases and with other professionals ensures a smooth transition from one key stage to another, and into further or higher education and employment.

We recognise in the HRB that one size does not fit all and agree with each parent/carer of HRB students what mode of communication with HRB staff will suit them best; email, phone, text, messages in planners etc. We meet parents in person both formally and informally and parents are key in planning outcomes and in reviewing EHCPs for their children. We are currently exploring ideas about how we might consult parents so that their views are reflected in on-going HRB development.

### **Complaints**

We take any concerns or complaints very seriously at The Cherwell HRB. In the first instance these should be raised with the student's key Teacher of the Deaf, the HRB Lead Teacher or SENSS Area Manager so that a resolution can be sought. We follow the Oxfordshire County Council complaints policy for formal complaints <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/resolving-disputes-mediation-complaints-and-appeals>.

### **Outcomes and Transition**

To date, all students with hearing impairment have achieved high value added scores and generally exceed their target grades at Key Stage 4 (Year 11). Following this, HRB students either stay on to the sixth form at Cherwell or transfer to Further Education courses at college (both for A-Level and vocational courses). Students have then moved on to Higher Education courses at University or have found employment. We have close links with the Post-16 Sensory Impairment team, based at the City of Oxford College, who support into all post-16 colleges in Oxfordshire.

### **Effectiveness of provision – quality assurance; developing the provision**

In February 2013, the Cherwell head teacher commissioned a consultation to evaluate the effectiveness of the SENSS resource bases and an action plan was devised and subsequently worked on.

In the academic year 2015-16, with the introduction of the SEND reforms, we used the document "*Quality Standards – Resource provisions for Children and young people in mainstream schools*," (National Deaf Children's Society, 2015) to evaluate our current

provision and write a Hearing Resource Base 3 year development plan which we are implementing.

It is an exciting time at Cherwell with the inclusion agenda being strengthened and developed at a strategic level with the recent appointment of a new Assistant Head Teacher for Inclusion. Hearing resource base staff link with the Assistant Head Teacher for Inclusion on a fortnightly basis to share good practice and address issues directly affecting the hearing resource base provision at Cherwell. In addition, the resource base has representation on The Cherwell School Inclusion working group and Accessibility Panel and we contribute to The Cherwell Accessibility Strategy.

*"I think being an independent young person is the most important aim that you have. The HI helps me to be independent in school. For example I will be on my own without support for my Duke of Edinburgh expedition because I had support leading up to it. I'm really excited and proud that I'm going to do it on my own just like the other hearing people."* **Hearing Resource Base student**

For more information about the hearing resource base at The Cherwell School or to arrange a visit, please contact:

Tonia Harris, Area Team Manager, Hearing Impairment Team – central area  
SEN Support Services

01865 515966

[tonia.harris@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tonia.harris@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Information report    Updated:    June 2016  
                                 Review:    June 2017

Tonia Harris

## Appendix 1

### Special Education Needs Support Services (SENSS) Hearing Resource Base at The Cherwell Academy Admission indicators

This SENSS base is resourced for secondary aged pupils with hearing impairment.

#### Key Principles:

The indicators:

- are designed to promote and support the successful inclusion of pupils with hearing impairment in mainstream settings, wherever possible
- provide clarity about how the resource base provision fits into the overall continuum of provision for pupils with a hearing impairment

A	Essential indicators:
<p>a) The pupil has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a statement of SEN or is currently undergoing a statutory assessment of his / her needs.</p> <p>b) The pupil can access the mainstream curriculum but may need it presented in a highly specialised and flexible way with opportunities for consolidation.</p> <p>c) The pupil has a persistent and long-term severe/profound hearing impairment (objective measure; average hearing loss is 71dB or greater in the better ear) that has impacted on his / her overall language and communication development resulting in significantly delayed attainment and progress over a period of time.</p> <p>A young person with a moderate hearing loss and additional difficulties will be considered if the additional difficulties are having a significant combined impact on his / her language and communication development. <b>Hearing loss will be the primary need.</b></p>	
B	Additional factors:
<p>a) Intelligibility; a familiar listener in context does not easily understand the young person.</p> <p>b) The pupil needs additional daily support for language and literacy development.</p> <p>c) There is a need for significant modification to material and delivery of the curriculum, reinforced by opportunities for 1:1 / small group work in an acoustically treated base setting.</p> <p>d) There is a need for the equivalent of daily intervention from a teacher of the deaf and a high level of specialist teaching assistant or Communication Support Worker support.</p> <p>e) A personal education plan is needed to support development of independence, social and decision making skills within an environment that supports the emotional wellbeing of the young person.</p>	
C	Voice of the child:
<p>The pupil wishes to attend the resource base.</p> <p>The independent views of the pupil have been sought about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ his / her current setting</li><li>○ what would make them feel comfortable and keen to learn</li></ul>	
D	Parent views:
The parent's/carer's views about their child attending a resourced provision need	

to be taken into account unless the provision would not meet the needs of the child, or be incompatible with the efficient education of other children, or be an inefficient use of resources.

**E Additional considerations**

The place is in line with the efficient use of resources and effective education of the pupil and other children in the Academy.

**F Exit criteria**

The SENSS Base place is reviewed on an ongoing basis in line with statutory requirements. The following circumstances would always lead to a placement review:

- a) If a pupil or parent expresses the wish to change provision.
- b) There is a consensus view that the priority need could be best met elsewhere.

Updated 2016

## Appendix 2

### The Cherwell Hearing Resource Base (HRB) Team 2016-2017

#### Teachers of the Deaf



**Tonia Harris**

Area Team Manager SENSS Hearing Impairment team (Central)  
Teacher of the Deaf

Oversees the HRB and supports HRB students as part of the role



**Abi Morton**

Teacher of the Deaf

Supports HRB students and has an outreach teaching caseload in other schools



**Rosie Carpenter**

Teacher of the Deaf

Supports HRB students and has an outreach teaching caseload in other schools

#### Support workers



**Kate Howes**

Communication Support Worker



**Medlan Porter** (currently on maternity leave)

Communication Support Worker



**Hester Bond** (covering Medlan Porter's maternity leave)

Communication Support Worker



**Justine Davies-Phillips**

Communication Support Worker



**Lianne Ranson**

Communication Support Worker



**Sarah Hunt**

Specialist Teaching Assistant (HI)



**Jemma Whitton**

Specialist Teaching Assistant (HI)



**Brigitte Whitehead**

Specialist Teaching Assistant (HI)



**Helen Barth**

Administrative Officer for SENSS

Appendix 3

An example of a day for a Hearing Resource Base student at Cherwell (written by a Year 7 student)

## A day at Cherwell: (Week 1, Wednesday)

- Arrive to Base and have implants checked and receivers put on.
- Tutor time for registration and seeing friends.
- (P1) computers (P2) Tutor period - work in groups with your tutors. \*Break\* - playing and buying food.
- (P3) Joint Base screen - work with other deaf students in the Base. \*Lunch\* - playing and buying food. (P4) English. (P5) Maths.
- Club - dry kayaking club at school.