

The SENSS Communication and Interaction 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 Communication and Interaction Resource Base (CIRB) at The Cherwell School

The SENSS Communication and Interaction Resource Base (CIRB) at The Cherwell School is part of a continuum of support offered within the Local Offer for children and young people 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 Communication and Interaction Resource Base as the appropriate placement to meet the child’s educational needs.

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 peers
- develop self understanding, self esteem and resilience
- develop understanding, knowledge and empowerment with regards to their needs
- enjoy their time at school
- become effective communicators
- 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 CIRB 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 CIRB 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

The resource base is intended to provide students with ASC and/or Communication and Interaction difficulties additional support with specialist staffing and facilities.

On south site (KS3) the base is located from the side of the canteen and offers good access to the whole site. There is one large classroom with two further break-out rooms for small group work or to use as a quiet space. Base pupils attend most mainstream lessons but may be dis-applied from some subjects. They can use the base at these times for social communication lessons, over-teaching of other subjects or to reduce anxiety and help their general management of the school environment.

There is a kitchen for pupils to use for cooking and an outside area for base pupils to use in preference to the main playgrounds if they wish.

Base pupils have drawers and a cloakroom for keeping their school and personal affairs.

Resources to help support access and inclusion of the students are stored here as well as specialist resources for social communication and ASC.

On North site there is a base for key stage 4 and 5 pupils for the same purpose. It comprises one large room and an office. It is located adjacent to the sixth form block.

Communication and Interaction Resource Base staff

Specialist Teachers 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 Communication and Interaction difficulties is maximised in class and learning is enabled.

<h2>How do we support students?</h2>

In-class support can include: Emotional and behavioural support; social interpretation; checking that instructions and material have been understood; assisting with individual, pair and group tasks; structuring and supporting self-organisation and task management, note-taking for use in lessons and homework; supporting peer interaction; differentiating and modifying resources.

Individual and small group teaching takes place in the CIRB according to individual need. It can include: specific interventions (see bullet points); pre-and post-teaching of key concepts and vocabulary, language and curriculum concepts; parallel teaching mainstream material to a small group simultaneously with the subject teacher; supporting homework; structured relaxation; reading interventions.

We aim to help young people with Communication and Interaction difficulties to develop a positive self-image and become confident, independent and resilient young adults. We do this in various ways, for example:

- Social communication lessons to develop: speaking and listening skills, inference, interpretation of events, theory of mind, working and interacting with others, develop knowledge and understanding of autism/communication difficulties.
- Personal target setting to: develop self-responsibility and awareness of growth and achievement
- Therapeutic activity to experience and gain the ability to: gain sensory control, sensory regulation and strategies to feel relaxed.
- Independence skills : organisation and self-management, confidence and awareness out and about in the wider community
- Work experience opportunities

All students at Cherwell undertake work experience in KS4. CIRB pupils are supported by their keyworkers.

Social inclusion and well-being

Like all Cherwell students, pupils supported by the CIRB 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. Pupils from the CIRB have been members of a range of school activities e.g. sports teams, gospel choir and drama performances as well as representing their class on the school council. There are a variety of clubs available at break and lunchtimes which CIRB pupils have enjoyed attending.

Tracking student progress

In addition to school tracking processes, CIRB pupil 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. In line with the schools PR system, CIRB pupils have individualised progress tracking which records independence levels, class attendance, communication achievement and resilience indicators.

How do we give young people a voice?

We try to hold students 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 CIRB works in close partnership with the school and parents/carers, together with any agencies involved with the students, such as Speech and Language Therapy. Close liaison 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 CIRB that one size does not fit all and agree with each parent/carer of CIRB students what mode of communication with CIRB 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.

Complaints

We take any concerns or complaints very seriously at The Cherwell CIRB. In the first instance these should be raised with the CIRB 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

The base is very proud of the achievements pupils have made at GCSE level in recent years. Some students may continue their education at one of the local post 16 colleges and we have strong links to these institutions, whilst some stay on to the sixth form at Cherwell.

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.

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 Headteacher for Inclusion. CIRB staff link with the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion on a fortnightly basis to share good practice and address issues directly affecting the 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.

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

Sini Haines Central Team Manager, Communication and Interaction.
sini.haines@oxfordshire.gov.uk
07584 581211

Andrea Clayton, Lead teacher KS4, Communication and Interaction Resource base, The Cherwell school

andrea.clayton@oxfordshire.gov.uk

AClayton@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

01865 559918

Pete Austin, Lead Teacher KS3, Communication and Interaction Resource Base, The Cherwell School

01865 316712

pete.austin@oxfordshire.gov.uk

PAustin@cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

Information report Updated: September2016

Review: September2017

Pete Austin

