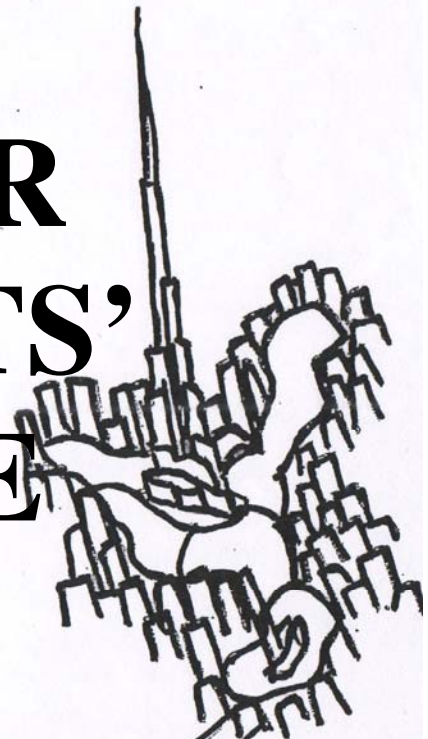




**Thomas Bennett Community College**  
Working together for success, happiness and respect for all

**Prospectus for Thomas Bennett Community College SSC**  
To provide information to those interested in placement

# THE BASE FOR ALL OUR STUDENTS' FUTURE



The Base logo by: Ned Razzell &  
Harrison Morgan



## Base Philosophy

We endeavour to understand and value each ASC student and their way of viewing the world and endeavour to teach them the skills necessary to live and succeed and feel valued in our school community and the world outside, both now and into future.

## Introduction to the Base

The Base is an important addition to the Learning and Support Department (LS and D) and is designed to support students with Social Communication Needs, which include ASC Autistic spectrum condition and Aspergers Syndrome. The Base aims to ensure that these students are included as far as possible within the community and life of Thomas Bennett Community College.

**Student Numbers:** Maximum of 14 students between the ages of 11 and 16, support is also provided for Sixth Form students if needed.

**Nature of difficulties:** All students attending the Base must have a Statement of Special Educational needs, their main presenting need must be Autistic spectrum condition usually have a medical diagnosis of Autistic spectrum condition or Aspergers Syndrome. It is expected that all students must be able to access some of the aspects of the mainstream curriculum, most are potentially within an average range of ability.

**Referrals:** Requests for places at Thomas Bennett SSC must be made via the Statement Annual Review system. Decisions on placement are made following a panel decision by the SEN team Ambassador House, Crane Street, Chichester.

**Nature of Accommodation:** The Base consists of two classrooms, with an adjoining work area and toilet facilities. These are used for group teaching or individual support as appropriate. It has recently been agreed to expand the accommodation to enable time out space and sensory support facilities. This new

building will be completed by January 2009.

**Programmes of support:** These are tailored to individual need using Assessment for Learning techniques. All Autistic students have a different profile of need and as such require provision that can be flexible when meeting this diverse need. The main focus of the Base is to teach students how to overcome their barriers to learning; usually for Autistic students these are related to the Triad of Impairments:

- **Language and communication:** Students may have problems with the use and understanding both of the content of language used around them and the social context in which it is used. They may need longer to process verbal information and longer to start a task following this processing. They may have difficulties using and understanding non verbal body language and facial expressions.
- **Social Difficulties:** These students can have great difficulty interacting with both their peers and with adults. This may affect their ability to make, or interest in forming friendships. It often means they are not able to see things from another person's point of view or empathise with another person's feelings. This can often lead to challenges of adult requests. Social skills training always needs to be part of their teaching programme.
- **Rigidity of thought processes:** most students with ASC like predictability and routine. Their behaviour can be repetitive or ritualistic. They can have difficulty adapting to a change of routine, transitions or unexpected events e.g. a fire alarm. Unstructured times like break or lunchtimes are also times of anxiety for these students.



*Pioneering work of Lorna Wing (MD, FRCPsych) author of 'Aspergers Syndrome a clinical account' 1981*



## Timetabling of support

In the Base we plan timetables according to the individualised needs of the students under our care. Programmes are carefully assessed and monitored and consequently adapted to meet these needs. The primary objective of support is to enable students to learn about the barriers to their learning via targeted social skills work, celebrate their progress and develop independence skills. We also provide support for learning across the curriculum as required.

Students from the Base are given the same opportunities as their mainstream peers both in access to the full school curriculum, but also in the development of interests in extra curricula activities, which may follow their particular interests. We value close support with parents/ carers/ families to ensure we share a common understanding of their children and provide support on agreed priorities.

## Break and Lunchtimes

- We recognise that non-structured times of the school day are often the most difficult for our students and that the skills needed must be taught both in context and during social skills sessions. We encourage all students from day one to eat lunch in the mainstream restaurant supported by Base staff. This is an excellent opportunity to teach basic lunchtime routines and independence and for interaction with mainstream students, teachers and restaurant staff. We encourage stu-



dents to follow normal break routines where possible and provide support for this to be successful. Those students requiring more support within the Base at break and after lunch are encouraged to interact with visiting non-Base students.

## Available support:

- Speech and Language service. The Base has a service agreement with the Speech and Language Therapy Service. In collaboration with Base staff they offer group support and advice for all students with Speech and or language difficulties.
- The use of Teacch approaches
- The use of Social Stories and individualised programmes of social skills support
- Use of non verbal approaches to encourage independence both within The Base and within mainstream lessons.
- Advice and support is offered by the Educational Psychologist attached to the school. Drop in sessions are planned on a termly basis with teaching staff within the Base.

We work closely with parents/ carers families and outside professionals to develop common understanding of the nature of difficulties and priorities for programmes of support.





## Conclusion

All staff working within The Base and Thomas Bennett Community college staff are hugely positive about the opportunities we are able to provide for all our students. Within The Base we focus on the special support needed to enable our students to participate fully within the school and to focus on the social independence skills and vision they will need in the real world. We work with our mainstream colleagues in providing appropriate adaptation of curriculum and approaches and we work with mainstream students in building a life changing understanding and friendship with our ASC students.

We have high expectations for achievement and social development for all our students and make no exceptions for those with ASC.

We aim to provide the scaffolding to enable the student to **live and succeed**.



## Quotes from teaching staff in mainstream school

*"D is a fantastic contributor; his art work is equal to others in class. There has been a real sense of success and achievement both with his independence and mixing with other students."*

*Mr Holden Art*

*'N's alien brooch is the best in the year group project'*

*Mr Ford*

## Quotes from Base students:

*I like music, art and IT, there are lots of people to meet, and it's not too far from home. It is a good environment for me'. H*

*'They help me to get on with my work and do well'*  
O

## Quotes from parents

*'His self esteem has been improved on. Thomas Bennett have instilled a 'I can do attitude in him'*  
Mr and Mrs M

## Quotes for mainstream students

*I like coming down to the Base as I can make friends really easy. RB*

*Sometimes I come down to the Base in a bad mood, it is nice to come down as it is nice and quiet. LE*