



The Cavendish School

enabling the self



The Cavendish School will be a special school dedicated to young people with autism spectrum condition (ASC). The school will serve families across Cambridgeshire, offering places for children with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in Years 5 to 13.

At capacity, it will cater for 70 children for whom ASC is the primary condition on the EHCP, and who represent a broad range of needs across the spectrum. The Cavendish School will provide a highly specialised environment in which children will be supported to enable them to progress and become appropriately independent, emotionally and socially confident young adults.

The school will be co-located on the site of Impington Village College, a highly successful mainstream secondary school with an excellent track record for enabling children with a range of special educational and complex needs to thrive. The Cavendish School will cater for the full range of need and, therefore, have the full range of provision from highly personalised curriculum to access to mainstream. There will be choice and variety so that students can flourish.

Who are we?

The **Morris Education Trust** is a new multi-academy trust developed by Impington Village College. The Trustees have sought to develop a distinct ethos that embraces the educational vision of Henry Morris, the former Local Authority Director of Education who established the village college model in the 1930s. The Trust champions inclusive, comprehensive, community and life-long education in the Cambridgeshire context. The Cavendish School will embody these principles ensuring that families and the wider community are able to participate in an important holistic provision for young people with ASC.

The Morris Education Trust is developing a family of schools bound by a shared vision:

To be outstanding and inspiring learning communities that are truly inclusive, innovative and international

Inclusive embracing and supporting all the Trust's students to achieve highly

Innovative challenging and supporting all members of the communities to look forward with confidence and to be at the forefront of education thinking and achievement

International developing and adopting a global outlook and encouraging all members to acquire international-mindedness

The Morris Education Trust absolutely believes that establishing the new school for children with ASC is both true to, and an enabler of, this vision. It will be highly inclusive and aspirational for its students; it will celebrate neurodiversity and all aspects of ASC, and will look to develop young people who are capable of thinking beyond themselves and outwards to a dynamic and changing world.

Our rationale

The Cavendish School will be opened by the Morris Education Trust in partnership with Cambridgeshire Local Authority. As commissioner, the local authority has to place over 70 young people age 9–19 with ASC in very costly independent or 'out-of-county' provision. With an excellent track record for supporting children with a range of special education and complex needs, Impington Village College is in a good position to respond to the need for a new dedicated school in Cambridgeshire. The Cavendish School will be accessible and available to families who cannot be catered for within current state provision in the county.

A school celebrating ‘neurodiversity’

The Cavendish School will celebrate ‘neurodiversity’ which advocates that neurological differences should be recognised and respected, as with any other human variation. ASC is not a disorder needing a cure, but an authentic form of human diversity, self-expression and being.

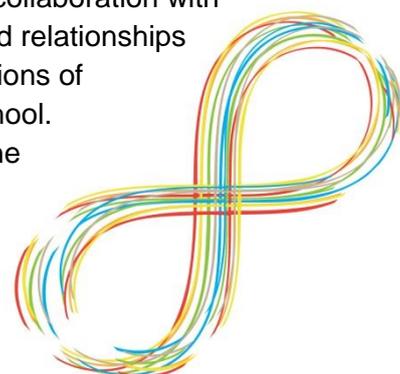
The Cavendish School will encourage, support and teach individuals to effectively communicate, self-advocate and participate in the wider community. We will ensure that ASC is something that children will learn to accept and be proud of, and that will support their existence as adults. We will not seek to teach them programmed behavioural responses, but rather to think flexibly and to creatively solve problems that they encounter on their journey. Their condition will affect the pathway of their life, but it will not determine it. To this aim, we will ensure that our school is neuro-diverse in the foundations and fabric and in guiding and supporting the future aspirations of each individual student. The Cavendish School will be highly aspirational for all its students, regardless of condition. It will become a beacon for better understanding of ASC, and its students will learn to be ambassadors for ASC.

Coaching to excellence

We will seek to fulfil the potential of all children who attend The Cavendish School. ASC will not limit or hinder life choices, hopes and aspirations. Children with ASC have the same aspirations as neurologically typical children including a need to communicate, a desire for friendships and meaningful relationships, the need to be employed in purposeful activities, to be independent and to be happy. We will find every way to ensure that our students are able to develop and flourish to the best of their ability: academically, socially, emotionally and personally.

At the heart of the school will be relationships, with the recognition of their importance in supporting the growth of each child. For each student these relationships include those with the staff with whom they work, with other students in the school and with the families. On entry to the school, each student will be assessed to identify the developmental milestones that have been met and those which have been bypassed. Staff will collaborate with each family to establish a comprehensive overview of the relationship development necessary for each child. An adult with knowledge and understanding of the child will support and ‘coach’ them as they progress through the school. The child’s ‘coach’ will be trained and granted the time to engage daily with the child in a way and with means that are appropriate to the child, not the adult. We accept that for some children this will mean engagement during activities, perhaps before school, during the school day, at break or lunch time or as we close the learning for the day.

We recognise coaching is most successful when performed in close collaboration with families. We will develop and nurture positive and powerful supported relationships within The Cavendish School and collaborate on building the foundations of each child’s education as they join and then progress through the school. Development will be as actively encouraged at home as it will be in the formal setting of education at school.



Communication is all

ASC is a lifelong developmental condition that affects how an individual communicates and relates to others, and can lead to rigid repetitive behaviour rooted in anxiety. However there is no 'typical' child with autism. There are characteristics which appear to affect the condition and many children struggle to communicate effectively in the environments which they inhabit. We will build and develop a school where the development of effective communication through speech and language is paramount. Enabling children with ASC to make meaningful choices and take advantage of opportunity is fundamental. From the outset, we will focus on coaching students to evaluate how to make the best or right decision for themselves (both within school and beyond, the latter in collaboration with families); this will be built up and developed as they mature. No less important is emotional intelligence and communication. Anxiety is frequently a co-concurrent condition for individuals with ASC. At least one in three adults with autism experience severe mental health difficulties (National Autistic Society, 2015). Children with ASC will often struggle with anxieties and frustrations. We know that anxiety, in particular, can greatly affect those with the condition where changes in routine or environment, unfamiliar social situations and sensory sensitivities may impact on the child's ability to learn and progress. We will create and provide an environment that reduces and then manages anxiety, through the design of the school as well as the approaches of staff and whole curriculum. The school will nurture and enhance emotional communication and development through the way our staff interact and engage with students.

Without learning to develop these differing types of effective communication, a child with ASC will be limited. We will be a school that aspires to remove all limits. The Cavendish School will frame a philosophy that enables a bespoke curriculum to ameliorate each specific barrier to accessing the community, educational progress and self-advocacy. Sensory integration will be adopted, with students supported to manage their own sensory needs by our staff. A flexible model is essential to enable students to maintain equilibrium and regulate behavioural responses before traditional learning models of student-teacher relationships can begin. We will employ a number of professionals who will be able to deliver a range of therapies including speech, language and communication, and occupational therapy alongside other staff.

A curriculum for all

From entry to the school, students will follow an innovative holistic curriculum leading to KS2 Tests in Year 6, and GCSE and other accredited qualifications by the time that they are 16. The Post-16 provision will offer a programme that is linked more closely to needs and strengths for progression to more independent study, training study, training and/or further education at 18/19. Effective transition planning at each stage will enable effective partnership between school, families and children. Longer term targets will be presented as small understandable steps along clear progression pathways.

The Cavendish School will use its freedoms as an Academy to develop its own curriculum, highly appropriate to the needs of its pupils, but which reflects the aims and values of the one developed so successfully within its sponsoring Trust. This innovative curriculum, known at Impington Village College as 'ICE' (Impington Curriculum Experience), aims to be inclusive, international and inspirational and it applies to *all* students, regardless of abilities. It aspires to enable children to see the connections between their learning in different

subjects and to develop them more holistically. It develops students to be internationally-minded and globally aware. It asks 'big questions' that are challenging and stretch children in their comprehension of the environments they inhabit. It prepares them for a world that is rapidly changing. We aspire for our students to go on to experience success in their chosen field, but also to enjoy relationships, and to live independently and happily without fear or anxiety.

Although the curriculum in KS2 and KS3 will have overarching themes, students will follow a broad core curriculum linked to those subjects within the National Curriculum. Literacy and numeracy form the most important elements and these will be a significant part of the curriculum. Other subjects will be followed, with an increasing emphasis that varies depending on the interests and needs of each student. Assistive technology will be integral in supporting access to, and progress in, learning. As the child progresses into KS4, we will be able to access additional subject specialists from IVC and make sure of more dedicated classrooms for Science and Technology. Where appropriate, students can join their peers in mainstream 'option' subjects for GCSE. For Post-16 students, an even greater individual programme will be developed and we expect many students in this phase to join with those in Impington International Sixth Form to access appropriate Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. For all students aged 14 and older we will provide support by ensuring each has access to a relevant and appropriate work-placement in partnership with local employees so that they can further develop the skills and experiences to progress at 18/19 into successful workplaces. This will be coordinated by a Lead Teacher within the school, supported by a Level 3 TA with specific responsibility for Progression. Placements will be made with individuals in mind and students who need staff support will receive this.

Our curriculum will extend before and beyond the formal school day and we recognise particularly the value of extra-curricular learning and activities for the development of the child with ASC. The school itself will offer many differing activities to enable the interests of each child to be supported and we will share the same extension opportunities offered to the students at Impington Village College: in particular, the rich tradition of performing arts (music, drama and dance) and sports, well supported by the Trust's outstanding Sports Centre, located just two hundred metres from the preferred location for The Cavendish School.

At the heart of our whole curriculum for The Cavendish School sits a 'Learner Profile' which aims to develop learners who model these characteristics:



We believe these characteristics should be developed in all students regardless of neuro-diverse or neuro-typical development. We will evaluate the progress of each child against these characteristics as they progress through the school, using a survey that involves staff, families and, where possible, students themselves. This will be reported alongside academic attainment and progress. Overall progress—academic, social and emotional well-being—will be reviewed regularly by students, families and practitioners with expert knowledge of ASC.

Q&A

What is a special free school?

Free schools are new, state-funded schools that are independent of Local Authority control and set up in areas with demonstrable need. Special free schools are free schools that provide specialist, full-time education for pupils with a specific SEN, either with or without a statement or EHC Plan. Once open, free schools have the same legal status as academies and are funded and held accountable in the same ways.

When and where is this happening?

The process for establishing a new school is incredibly rigorous and initially involves an in-depth application to the Department for Education (DfE) which we submitted in September 2016. The DfE are now in the process of assessing the application and we will find out in early 2017 if the bid is approved to move onto the next stage of development. As we wait, we continue to welcome your input in order to help develop details for the new school. The ambition is to open the school for new students in September 2018, but this may be delayed depending on how the DfE respond to the application.

What age children will be able to attend the school?

Once The Cavendish School is established it will welcome young people from age 9 to age 19 (school Year 5 to Year 13). In the first year, 2018, students will only be admitted for Years 5, 6 and 7 and in Year 12. In each subsequent year, we will admit 'upwards' (thus the Year 7s from 2018 become the Year 8s of 2019 and so on) to develop and grow the culture of the school successfully. If you have a child with ASC who may be interested in attending then please let us know.

What will it be like to be a student at The Cavendish School?

The Cavendish School will support every student as an individual to develop and flourish to the best of their ability: academically, socially, emotionally and personally. Vital to the school will be relationships, reflecting their importance in supporting the growth of each young person. There will be a bespoke curriculum that reflects the needs and interests of each individual, and a programme of opportunities including extra-curricular which is centred around each student.

What level of individual need does the school plan to accept?

There is no black and white answer to this question as each young person is an individual with a unique set of needs, strengths and interests. When a parent expresses interest we would start an investigatory process to learn about their child. The aim is to establish whether The Cavendish School would be right for each individual, and whether the school can meet their needs within the cohort of students. Each student who attends The Cavendish School will have a bespoke programme of learning that is tailored to their own needs and interests. On offer will be an eclectic range of therapies and learning opportunities designed to support and challenge them as an individual.

Will the school cater for girls as well as boys?

The Cavendish School will cater for both girls and boys whose primary need is autism. The presentation of ASC in girls can be very different from boys. Many of the diagnostic systems and stereotypes of ASC are based on males, so there are likely to be many girls with ASC in schools whose needs are not identified or understood. Our challenge is to develop a programme which responds to gender-related ASC differences. Sharonne Horlock, who is a key member of the working group, sits on the National ASC and Girls Forum and is drawing on the latest research and thinking to inform plans.

What are the benefits for students and parents?

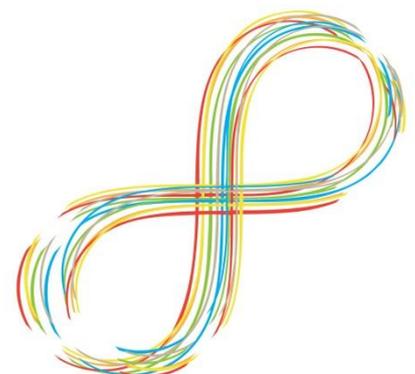
The Cavendish School will offer quality education for children from age 9 to 19, giving parents the security of knowing that their child will have an appropriate school place until they leave education. Each student will have the benefit of a bespoke programme that is planned around their needs and interests as an individual. Each student will have access to a full range of facilities, and a variety of extra-curricular opportunities including those open to mainstream students and those specifically offered to ASC students. A work experience programme will be developed, especially designed to support each individual as they set out on their very important journey from school into employment. Parent and student input has been crucial in shaping the proposal for the new school and this will continue to be the case when the school is open. The mission statement of The Cavendish School is *enabling the self*. This means striving to ensure each student is equipped to live the life they choose.

How will it be funded and managed?

The Cavendish School will be a separate school run independently of Impington Village College and will receive dedicated funding. The school will have its own Head-teacher, staff and specialist therapists providing a broad range of skills and experiences to support the specialist programme. It will be linked to Impington Village College under the umbrella of the Morris Education Trust, but will be inspected separately by Ofsted.

Where does the name come from?

Henry Cavendish was a distinguished British natural philosopher and scientist of the 18th century. Cavendish is noted for his discovery of hydrogen or what he called *inflammable air*. He was known for great accuracy and precision in his research, and it is thought he was on the autism spectrum. The Cavendish School has been named to remind us that anyone with ASC can pursue their ambitions as Henry did.



How can you get involved?

We are inviting input from young people with ASC, prospective parents, professionals working in the sector, local businesses who may be able to support work placements, and from the wider community. If you have something to contribute please get in touch. You can also join our mailing list to receive newsletter updates about the development of the school.



Name:

Email:

Please tick the option which best describes your interest:

- Parent of young person with ASC**
- Young Person**
- Professional interest**
- Local business**
- General interest**

Please share any other details about your interest in the school that may be relevant:

Please return this form to:
The Cavendish School
Impington Village College
New Road
Impington
Cambridgeshire
CB6 3AQ

You can also express interest via our website at:

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