

## The Cavendish School Newsletter - 2 November 2017

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 3 to 13.

### Latest News

#### Developing the Plans

Since learning that we were successful in gaining approval for The Cavendish School (TCS), our team has been busily engaged in developing the plans to open the school for September 2019. We hold fortnightly phone meetings with the Department for Education looking at the detail of our plans and how we can move forward by working collaboratively to ensure the successful opening of TCS to the agreed timescale. We hold monthly meetings of the TCS Steering Group which comprises Morris Education Trust staff, our Education Lead, Kim Johnson (retired Headteacher of an outstanding special school in Kent) and David Jenkins, Trustee. Much of our work has been surrounding the proposed site on the Impington Village College (IVC) campus and ensuring that the existing college buildings on the intended location (at the end of Park Drive) are themselves relocated elsewhere on the IVC campus.

#### Extended age range

One exciting development has been the outcome of discussions with the Local Authority, who will be the commissioner of places in the new provision when it opens in 2019. We are delighted to announce that the age range for TCS will be extended and there will be an additional 10 places commissioned for pupils in Years 3 and 4 (when at full capacity). The Local Authority has identified this cohort as one needing more flexible placements between 'mainstream' primary schools and the specialist provision at TCS, to cater for rising diagnosis of children with ASC. This means the school when fully opened will now cater for a total of 80 pupils, aged from 7 to 18 and the building design will reflect this age range.

#### Strategic Leader of SEND

Sharonne Horlock works for the MET as the Strategic Leader of SEND, is part of the TCS Steering group working and is heavily engaged in plans for The Cavendish School. In addition Sharonne is involved with a number of other schools:

*'This term is providing lots of opportunity. As well as working with the SEND teams at Impington and Witchford Village Colleges, I am also seconded as SENCo in Milton Primary. At Milton this term is speeding by with lots of opportunities to meet and work with children, families and wider professionals in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Each day is very different, multi-faceted, and often exhausting. But, I am fortunate. I am learning daily from the individual experiences with the children whose conversations are always highly entertaining and*

*frequently poignant; the families and carers who share so openly to ensure their children have the best possible support; the teachers who work consistently tirelessly for the pupils in their care and the teaching assistants whose knowledge and understanding is, as in any school, an amazing asset.*

*I am also fortunate to be exploring Autism through cooperative research with the intuitively and purposefully inclusive Germander Park (infant) School in Milton Keynes. Visiting Germander Park is providing a fantastic opportunity to observe proactive inclusive practices. Having collected a range of whole staff questions exploring special educational needs and disability within a mainstream environment a wealth of themes such as, participation, challenges, personal perspectives, behaviour as communication, progress and learning and accountability were prominent. Narrowing the potential for a viable action research project has been not been easy, largely due to the enthusiasm and ambition to explore and evidence everything! Further visits, lots of animated discussion and keeping the purpose of wanting to demonstrate practices that can be usefully applied in other settings has eventually lead to the broad research question, 'How does inclusion impact on the progress and learning of pupils with Autism?' This is exciting and we will continue to share our research journey with you.*

*I always knew this but this term has shown me once again that working together, regardless of agenda, makes all the difference.'*

## **Prospective students**

Thank you to everyone who has already joined our mailing list and expressed interest in The Cavendish School. We continue to invite parents/ carers and students who are interested in a place at the new school to get in touch. By expressing interest you are letting us know that you would be happy for us to contact you. There is much work to be done in order to open in September 2019, and we very much welcome your input so that we can build a great school.