



“Cavendish High Academy is the place where dreams come true. I love my school!”
Libby Grimwood

Cavendish High Academy



Welcome to Cavendish High Academy

My true self, the essence of me, is my uniqueness and the ultimate gift I can offer.



1982 and now: we have been teaching, caring and supporting families for a long time!

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Cavendish staff says...

It is with great pride that I welcome you to our marvellous school.

We are an Outstanding School for young people with special needs aged 11-19 years. Our young people all have Statements of Educational Need and the school is designated for Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, ASC and Moderate Learning Difficulties with Emotional Vulnerability.

Happy

There is a lot to be happy about at Cavendish High Academy. We are very 'child-centric', and dedicated to ensuring that, through our innovative, exciting curriculum and excellent resources, every child has the opportunity to learn... and be the very best they can be!

Creative

We believe in being creative and enhancing the curriculum to make learning even more fun. For example, we have a fantastic Forest School, which gives our students the opportunity to further develop their independence, improve their decision making skills and raise their self-esteem!

Celebrate

We celebrate any achievement or progression. For example, every year we have a Leavers Ceremony at Chester Cathedral conducted by the Bishop of Birkenhead or Chester, and attended by dignitaries from the Local Authorities.

Dedicated staff

All our staff are highly skilled and committed to ensuring our students have the best possible foundation, to journey on into adulthood. The journey is a joint collaboration between the students, the school, and you... the parent!

Parent partnership

We pride ourselves on working closely with parents. You will see, by reading the many parent and pupil stories within this prospectus, that you and your child are very important to us. We champion the link between school and parent and work very hard to involve you in every step of your child's time here.

Get in touch

I would urge you to visit our wonderful school. I am truly confident you will find this a welcoming and supportive school, with staff that listen, consult and actively encourage your involvement. I know that you will be impressed by the quality of education and care we can offer your child.

To make an appointment to visit, or to simply ask me a question, please call the school office on 01928 561 706.



Children at Cavendish High Academy are happy, safe and loved, says Jane

Lee and Jane McDermott live in Widnes with Josh, 15.

Safe and secure

Josh moved to Cavendish High Academy in 2009 when his former school changed its admission policy. Jane was extremely worried about how the move would affect Josh.

"We were very anxious because Josh had been in his other school for many years," says Jane. "Josh has classic autism and sensory issues and moving to another school was a massive change. However, I needn't have worried because the staff are great and it's a very safe and secure environment so he made the transition really well."

Providing reassurance

Knowing that the staff always have time to talk provides a lot of reassurance for Jane.

"The staff are very aware that parents can become anxious," admits Jane. "What might seem like little worries to outsiders can seem massive to us, but you are never made to feel stupid and the teachers always make time to listen. I like to walk Josh to his classroom every day and hand him over to his teacher and I'm never made to feel that he's too old for me to be doing that, which means so much to me."

Picture perfect

"Josh has no speech so I can't ask him what he's done," says Jane. "It's important for me to know, so sometimes the staff take pictures, or little videos and I can't put into words how much that means."

For example, they recently took the time to video him swimming half a width and another day when Josh waited for a little girl so they could sit together at lunch they took a picture of him waiting for her because it was such a breakthrough that he chose to sit next to someone."



Making progress

Since attending Cavendish Josh has made excellent progress.

"Although Josh is severely autistic, there have been significant changes," says Jane. "There are seven boys in his class and to some degree they all have language, which helps to bring Josh along. He's trying really hard and lots of sounds are now coming out. He's also beginning to integrate with children outside of his classroom, which is fantastic."

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Every morning I see the head teacher waiting outside the school to meet and greet the children. There are not many other parents there to see this, so she does it because she wants to. I always have a big lump in my throat because as every child walks past they go and give her a hug.

“You cannot make children with special needs do that. They love her to bits - even my Josh gives her a ‘thumbs up!’”

Lee and Jane McDermott

”

From 1978...to now: generations of caring for children and making an impact nationally!

1978: Cavendish Farm School opens. First purpose-built special school in Cheshire for children with severe learning difficulties aged 2-19 years.

1981: Hydrotherapy Pool built, first of its kind in the area.

1984: Staff of 1984 with first Headteacher Miss Davies.

1986: New Education Act comes into force and changes special school education.

1990: Independence bungalow built. First of its kind in the area.

1991: New Headteacher Miss Fowler starts. Whole school photograph.

90's: Celia Dickinson Advises Government on developing assessment criteria for SEN.

2001: Celia Dickinson becomes Headteacher.

2006: Re-designated to cater for children aged 11-19 years.

2007: School act as advisers for international development of assessment for SEN.

2009: Re-designated as a secondary school for pupils aged 11-19 years.

2014: Converted to an academy and became The Cavendish High Academy.

The Cavendish High Academy
A Special School in Cognition & Learning



Alison and Tony say nothing is too much trouble for the staff at Cavendish High Academy and Hannah absolutely loves it
Alison and Tony Thompson live in Runcorn with Hannah, 12

Perfect choice
Alison and Tony didn't hesitate to send Hannah to Cavendish High Academy, as it had already been a wonderful school for her older brother Mark.
"Hannah, who has global learning difficulties, had a brother called Mark who used to go to Cavendish, but he died three years ago at the age of 12," recalls Alison. "We knew that it was a very good school and the staff were amazing so it was a perfect choice for Hannah."

Family environment
Despite their initial concerns that Hannah might find the move to Cavendish unsettling Alison and Tony need not have worried.
"Hannah already knew and liked most of the teachers from when Mark went to the school, and she settled in straight away and was quite happy," says Alison. "Everyone knows everyone at Cavendish - it's just like being part of one big, happy family."

On target
Within months of Hannah starting at Cavendish she rapidly made good academic progress.
"Hannah's teacher says she is quite good at maths and problem solving and is on track to achieve her targets for the year," says Alison. "Her maths has come on so much and I think that the one-to-one sessions she receives really help her."

Sports and creativity
"Hannah really likes art and finding out how things work," says Alison. "The children's work is often put up in the local arts centre and the staff are always taking them out on trips. They also go to different sports events and Hannah has represented Cavendish in sports, which was great... It's just a really lovely school!"

Dedicated staff
Alison and Tony say nothing is too much trouble for the staff at Cavendish. "If you have any problems you can talk to the staff about them. The head teacher is there every morning... The staff are just lovely, and very dedicated. Nothing is too much trouble."
"When Mark died the staff were absolutely amazing and I don't know what we'd have done without them. There are still photos of Mark up at the school and I think this helps Hannah."

Individual approach
"When Hannah was at her old school she would sometimes come home feeling a bit miserable, but now she's really happy and can't wait to tell us what she's been doing. There's nothing about Cavendish that she doesn't like."

Starting school: teaching and learning



Teaching and learning

On entry to the school, students are assessed and a 'learning pathway' is designed to meet their individual needs. To communicate with students, we use a number of methods including signing or symbols, Makaton and/or British Sign Language and Picture Exchange System.

Speech and Language Therapy Department

We also have our own on-site Speech and Language Therapy Department, with two qualified therapists working across the school. We work closely with class teams in order to maximize the speech, language and communication skills of our students.



Emotional well-being

The emotional well-being of students is of great importance too, and we take time to find out about them as individual young people. This approach ensures that pastoral support is appropriate, which in turn leads to peer group 'friendship groups' and 'buddies'.



Facilities

We are a 21st century school with state-of-the-art classrooms, and very modern facilities including:

- Science and Technology Area
- Drama Studio
- Music Centre
- Hydrotherapy Pool
- Home Economics Area
- Independence Bungalow
- Sports Hall

...and Student Hubs, where students can relax, have personal space and mix with friends!



Cavendish High Academy has helped Gill's son to gain independence and achieve more than anyone believed possible

Gill Price lives in Runcorn with her son James Corker, age 18



Major move

Gill was so convinced that Cavendish was the right school for James that she moved house to be closer to it. "When I looked around Cavendish I thought the head teacher and staff were brilliant," says Gill. "I was also happy that I could look absolutely everywhere, which hadn't been the case at other schools I'd viewed."

Small class sizes

Class sizes at Cavendish are small, usually with seven children and two or three classroom assistants. "The classroom assistants were excellent and helped James to learn a lot of things like putting on his coat, which he found difficult," says Gill. "Cavendish is all about independent living and trying to ensure that in the future James can work and live by himself."

High School fun

After 14 years at Cavendish both Gill and James have seen many changes and improvements. "The school has grown a lot. The facilities are excellent and there is a new building with a new science class, cookery room and drama hall. There is also a cybercafé where children can go at lunch and break times. Because Cavendish is now a High School they have tried to make it feel more mainstream so the children can do things like queue up and spend their money to buy things."

Social skills

The outdoor facilities at Cavendish help children to play and socialise. "There is

a big field where the children can play football," says Gill. "And there is also a playing area with a walking trail and a hut where the children can meet up and chat to each other. This is great for helping them to develop communication skills and James has come on a lot."

Work experience

James has exceeded all expectations and is now enjoying work experience at ASDA. "I managed to find James a placement at ASDA where he works for four hours with his PA," says Gill. "This is great for him and he's doing really well. None of us can believe what James is managing to achieve."



“ At one point last year James lost his speech. But the school worked with him to give him back his voice and communication. Now his speech is unbelievable and his attitude to people is brilliant. Recently the school held a careers night and James stood up and made a speech with his PA. I couldn't believe he did that. Everyone was so proud of him that they were crying, including me!

”

Gill Price

Starting school: extended curriculum



Through the School Council, students get a say in the running of the school!

Extended curriculum: trips and visits

To make learning even more fun, all students have opportunity of a residential visit. Recent visits have been to:

- Bendrigg Outdoor Centre
- Snowdonia
- London
- Ypres
- Paris.

Recent day-trips have included Chester, Liverpool Alton Towers and Blackpool.

Sport

We have a big sports hall with a sprung floor. Physical Education (PE) plays an important role in providing our students with a wide and varied curriculum.

Rebound Therapy

Rebound Therapy is delivered alongside the PE curriculum, and can help strengthen limbs, increase muscle tone, and develop freedom of movement. For our students with ASD, it can aid in the development and improvement of body and spatial awareness.

Communicating with parents

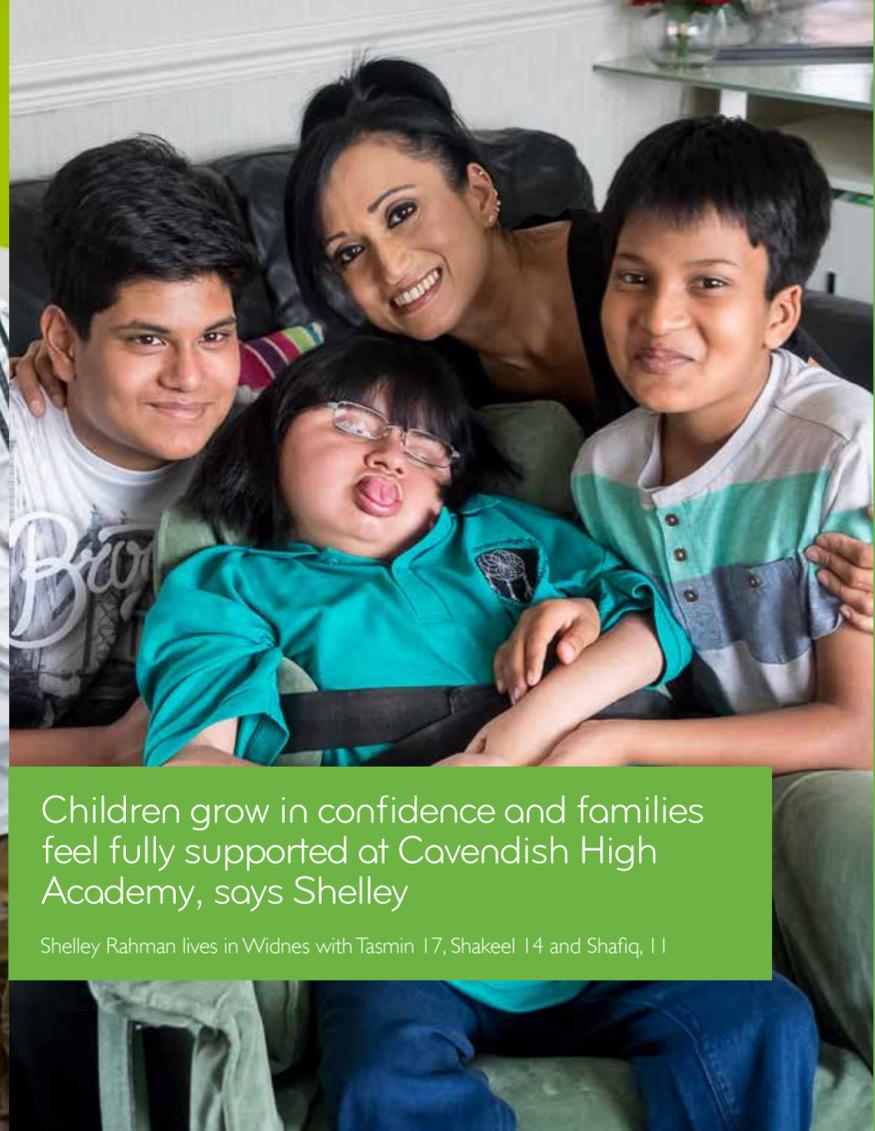
It is important to Cavendish High Academy that parents are kept fully informed of their child's progress. We do this through:

- a parent portal on the website
- half-termly newsletters
- open days/evenings each term
- open door policy to see Headteacher or Senior Leadership Team
- updated termly student progress reports
- department coffee evenings including Speech & Language Therapists
- Friends of Cavendish events through the School's Council



Children grow in confidence and families feel fully supported at Cavendish High Academy, says Shelley

Shelley Rahman lives in Widnes with Tasmin 17, Shakeel 14 and Shafiq, 11



Choosing Cavendish

"Some schools looked a bit institutional and didn't feel right," says Shelley. "When we went to see Cavendish the atmosphere was cheerful and jolly, the teachers were friendly and welcoming and it catered for a wide range of disabled children who all seemed happy and well cared for."

One-to-one support

Like many other children at Cavendish, Tasmin is severely disabled and totally dependent on others. "Tasmin needs a great deal of physical and emotional support," says Shelley. "She has no communication and needs one-to-one support as she can't do anything for herself. She is in a special class of six or seven children who all have limited communication skills."

Sensory stimulation

"The staff at Cavendish are very good at assessing the capabilities of children and finding out what stimulates them and makes them interested," says Shelley. "Tasmin needs a lot of stimulation otherwise she switches off and won't get involved."

All wired up!

The staff work very hard to include all children in fun activities. On one memorable occasion both Tasmin and Shelley completed a zip wire ride!

"The school took the children to a residential activity centre called Bendrigg in the Lake District," recalls Shelley.



"The staff didn't want Tasmin to miss out so they invited me too, so I could help with her medical needs. It was amazing, and the children did things like canoeing, caving and archery. Tasmin even scored a bull's eye!"

From caterpillar to butterfly

So how would Shelley sum up Tasmin's experience of Cavendish? "It's not all about learning," she says. "At Cavendish they help the children to grow and to socialise in their own ways. They bring these children out of their shell, and it's like watching a caterpillar turn into a butterfly."

“

The staff recently told me that Tasmin had enjoyed a really good day with the iPad. I'd no idea she could use an iPad but the staff had downloaded a programme for her, and with the help of a special holder that put the iPad in her line of vision Tasmin was able to track what was on the screen with her eyes. I couldn't believe it. You get so many brilliant ideas like this.

“...You think nobody else can care for your child like you can, but at Cavendish they develop an emotional attachment and they really do care. Tasmin absolutely loves it.

”

Shelley Rahman



For students aged 11-14

National Curriculum

We have, for many years, worked with Government through their Education Departments and the Qualification and Curriculum Authority to develop a curriculum appropriate to the learning needs of young people with learning difficulties.

Learning opportunities

At Key Stage 3, we deliver the National Curriculum as a framework to offer a broad and balanced learning opportunities.

Love of learning

We want to ignite a 'Love of Learning', as it adds a great deal to life. So, we teach the curriculum in an appropriate and highly creative manner, covering subjects such as:

- history
- geography
- art
- music
- design and Technology

...and through these subjects, students will learn about the world around them!

Aspirations

Through our Key Stage 3 Curriculum, we are helping our students to develop aspirations, and equipping them with the skills needed to deal with the adult world.



Security and support were major priorities for Elisha and Michael, and Cavendish High Academy provided Mark with all he needed

Elisha and Michael Newton live in Widnes with their children Mark, 13 and Allana, 16.



Safe and sound

Elisha and Michael were keen to find a school for Mark that provided support, safety and security.

"Mark, who is autistic, had previously been in both a mainstream and special needs primary school and was due to transition to senior school," recalls Elisha. "Our main priority was to find a small school that could provide him with strong support. It was also very important that the school was safe and secure and offered a good education. This is the case at Cavendish High Academy, as Mark is currently working towards Key Stage 3."

Nurturing approach

Mark's transition to his new school was very smooth. "Mark settled in straight away," says Elisha. "He was put into a nurturing group that was all in one classroom so it didn't feel like a huge change from primary school. There were seven children in his class, with one teacher and two assistants.

As Mark began to accept the changes to his environment the staff gradually scaled up the transition. This nurturing approach worked very well!"

Reward and motivation

Skilled staff use a range of motivational tools to help children achieve the best that they can. "Mark loves jig-saws and to get Mark on task and give him focus he was rewarded with time to play with jig-saws," says Elisha. "This is a very effective tool and really helps with his learning."

Accessing activities

Although Mark doesn't like to socialise, Elisha is delighted that he has access to afterschool clubs.

"The afterschool clubs are fantastic," she says. "If you have a child like Mark who doesn't understand about being friends and is not interested in anybody it is so nice for him to be able to access activities with other children in an environment where he feels safe."

Feeling loved

"I absolutely recommend Cavendish," she says. "I know Mark gets the support he requires and seeing him happy to get on the school bus every morning shows us as parents how happy he is there. When we speak with the staff we know they are just as thrilled as we are when Mark makes a new step in his development and this shows us he is loved there too."



“

When something happens to Mark that hurts or upsets him he regresses strongly. Six years he went into a cold swimming pool and became absolutely terrified of water. The staff persevered and gradually broke down his fears and much to everyone's surprise he learned to swim.

“When Michael and I took him swimming recently and Mark swam in the pool we cried with pride.

”

Elisha and Michael Newton

The Flexible Learning Department: Key Stages 4 & 5

helping our students to understand their potential and get ready for life after school



For students aged 14-16 and up to age 19 in some cases

Learning opportunities

The purpose of the Flexible Learning Department (FLD) is to provide learning opportunities for students, and help them to take responsibility for their own education through accreditation pathways... ultimately enabling each young person to reach their fullest potential and lead as independent a life as possible.

Wider range of subjects

Students study a wider range of subjects, encompassing:

Challenge

It is all about recognising what your potential is, and being gently challenged to reach for it. To know who you are, where you want to be and, and most of all... how to get there!

Learning Gateway

The majority of our students will stay at Cavendish until they are 19 years old.

There are some who will leave at 16 years, and for them an individual 'Learning Gateway' is offered, to help them reach their potential through alternative educational routes and access appropriate learning pathways.

Key Skills:

- communication and literacy
- application of numbers
- information technology, computer literacy and media studies.

Wider Key Skills:

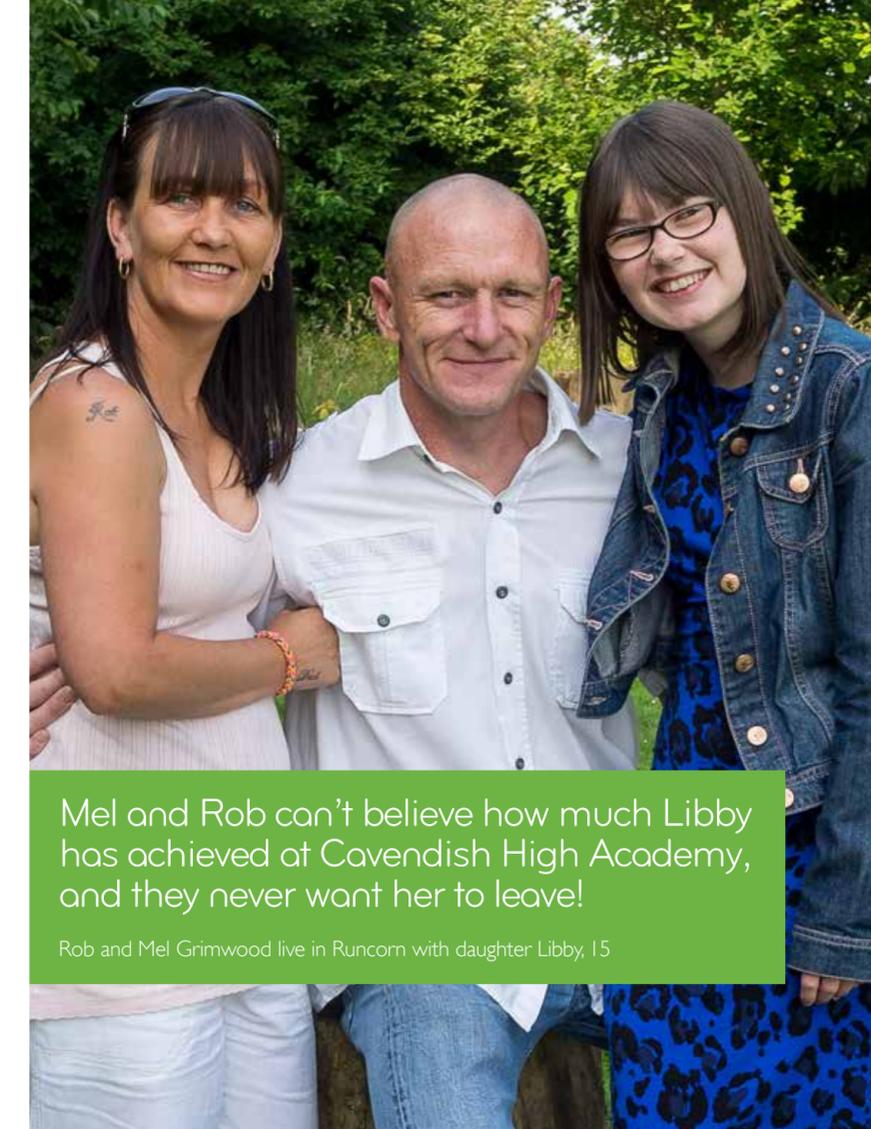
- working with others
- improving own learning performance
- problem solving

Enrichment Studies:

- citizenship
- creativity
- educational visits
- work-related learning including Young Enterprise
- careers and work experience
- sports and leisure.

General Studies:

- personal, social and health education
- citizenship
- scientific and environmental studies
- The wider world and humanities



Mel and Rob can't believe how much Libby has achieved at Cavendish High Academy, and they never want her to leave!

Rob and Mel Grimwood live in Runcorn with daughter Libby, 15

Overcoming stigma

Mel and Rob were devastated after being advised that their daughter Libby would not be ready for mainstream school. However, fast-forward ten years and they say that sending Libby to Cavendish High Academy was the best thing they ever did. "Libby used to go to mainstream nursery but I couldn't get her out of nappies or talking and after various assessments it was suggested we send her to Cavendish," recalls Mel. "I was devastated. When I was growing up there was a stigma about Cavendish and I didn't want Libby to go. I kept her at home for months until I was finally persuaded to visit."

Nothing to hide

After visiting Cavendish Mel completely changed her opinion. "It's so safe and secure," says Mel. "There is nothing to hide and the staff were happy to show us around every bit of the school. I'd been afraid that they would just put the kids in front of a TV and leave them to their own devices, but I couldn't have been more wrong."

Making the impossible possible

Both Mel and Rob believe that Cavendish has helped Libby achieve things they never would have thought possible. "The school encourages the children to do so much," explains Mel. "For example, Libby is going to France for four days as part of the World War One Centenary Commemorations. She's also been on a science weekend, and we were incredibly

proud when she completed her Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. She's now thinking of trying for Silver."

Safe and sound

One of the things that attracted Mel and Rob to Cavendish was its safe environment.

"Libby is quite a vulnerable girl who would not thrive at mainstream school, but at Cavendish she is safe and secure," says Mel. "If anyone is nervous about sending their child to the school then please talk to us. It was the best thing we ever did - Libby is what she is because of Cavendish."

"Libby is very happy and has so many friends that she always wants to be at school. Cavendish should be her middle name!"

Children say

From Libby: "I love the Apple Mac computers in the IT room. Cavendish High Academy is the place where dreams come true. I love my school!"



Pathways: extra help for students who require a higher level of support



A personalised curriculum

Pathways ensures a supportive, structured and positive environment to meet the needs of those students who require a higher level of help to support their learning.

Each student in Pathways accesses a personalized curriculum, designed around their individual needs. The focus is on the communication and the functional skills they will require to be an active, engaged member of the school, home and community.

Functional skills

Students will learn functional skills such as,

- social and communication skills
- self help and independence skills i.e. dressing, eating or personal hygiene
- developing practical literacy & numeracy skills
- social and leisure skills including sports and out in the community.

Functional curriculum

Such a functional curriculum gives students the skills to undertake everyday tasks, for example teaching and understanding of literacy and numeracy by following a recipe to prepare a simple snack or meal, or teaching how to shower and dress after swimming.



Pauline's son transformed from a highly anxious boy to a happy, confident young man – thanks to Cavendish High Academy

Pauline Shanks lives in Runcorn with sons James Birchall, 19, Christopher 21, Kieran 12 and Cameron, nine.

Change for the better

James transferred to Cavendish High Academy in 2009 following a change of admission policy at his former school. "At first James was very anxious about the move and there were lots of challenges," says Pauline. "For example he would often try to hide in bins, cupboards or the toilets. However, the staff were great, and really helped him to settle. James is no longer anxious, he's very happy."

Pathway to success

James transferred to the Pathways system at Cavendish, which provides a personalised curriculum and one-to-one support. "James has an amazing relationship with his key worker, Ellen," says Pauline. "He is electively mute and the staff have worked on all kinds of ways to communicate with James. He has a cracking sense of humour and Ellen works so closely with him that she seems to know instinctively what he wants to say."

Enterprising students

Pathways prioritises a Core Functional Curriculum to help students become active, engaged members of the school, home and community. James has progressed so well that he now has his own catering business. "James is so settled and happy that he now has a little business at the school, selling and making bacon butties," says a delighted Pauline. "James goes round the school taking orders, and together with Ellen makes the butties, and then he takes the money, which he can keep."

He really enjoys this – particularly when he gets the money! The staff take pictures to show me and I can see that James always has a big grin."

Independence days

Cavendish has a fully functional independence bungalow, where students learn many skills needed for employment and independent living.

"Children are taught the basics of looking after themselves in the bungalow," says Pauline. "For example they learn how to safely make a simple meal or a hot drink. I am delighted with the progress James has made."



“Cavendish High Academy is the place where dreams come true. I love my school!”

Libby Grimwood

Contact details and Cavendish High Academy Aims

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The staff are absolutely amazing and have the time, patience and skills to get the very best out of your child. I can honestly say that James has loved every minute. He has done so well at Cavendish that I couldn't recommend any other school higher.

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Pauline Shanks

Cavendish High School respects the dignity and worth of each individual student. We will formulate inclusive education that maintains individual identity and ensures that individual children and their families may choose when, where, how and even if they want to be included. Through an environment sensitive to the needs of all we ensure the highest quality educational provision which will support the learning and development of every young person. Our aim is to provide an entitlement to equal opportunity so that they are able to participate in society as valued and contributing members.



Caring for our students throughout the years

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