



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

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

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.

"James was four years old and severely autistic with severe learning difficulties. I was so sure that Cavendish was the right school for him that I moved to a house in Runcorn so that we could be nearer."



Dealing with change

Although James found his early school days challenging, the staff soon helped him to settle in.

"It was hard for James at first because he didn't like change," says Gill. "But then he got to know and like the teachers and gradually settled in."

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," says Gill. "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."



Finding a voice

Staff are quick to react to problems and do their best to help children achieve their full potential.

"At one point last year James lost his speech," recalls Gill. "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!"

A helping hand

"If I've ever needed any help the staff at the school have always been there for me," says Gill. "All the staff are lovely and have done wonders for James. There is an open door policy at Cavendish, and the school recently achieved an outstanding OFSTED report."

"I'm very involved with the school now. I've been a governor for three terms, and I'm also a dinner lady so I see a lot of what happens at Cavendish. I honestly think that it's a fantastic school!"

Children say

When asked what he likes about Cavendish, James says: "It's a wonderful school!"