

The Cavendish School


enabling the self

Application pack
Therapy assistant
April 2025



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**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.**

Welcome from Stephanie Smith

Head of School

Thank you for your interest in joining The Cavendish School. While we have only been open a short time, we are proud to have built a vibrant, inclusive, and forward-thinking community of pupils, staff, and families. In March 2024, we were delighted to receive an Outstanding Ofsted rating, and we are honoured to be recognised as the world's first International Baccalaureate (IB) special school — a reflection of our commitment to innovation and excellence in autism education.

The Cavendish School is Cambridgeshire's first state-maintained special free school for autistic pupils. Our mission — enabling the self — is rooted in empowering our pupils with the skills, confidence, and self-awareness to take their place in the world. We have a strong ethos and culture that drives everything we do and underpins the positive impact we are able to have on our pupils and their families.

Our core aim is to provide a safe, nurturing environment paired with inclusive, high-quality education and support. We are committed to enabling all pupils to thrive academically while progressing in their personal development journeys. What makes The Cavendish School truly unique is our enriching curriculum and educational environment, specifically designed to meet the needs of autistic pupils. We continually ask ourselves why each element of our provision matters — both for education and for lifelong learning — to ensure every policy and decision is purposeful and impactful. As a trauma-informed school, we embed a therapeutic thinking approach throughout our practice, enabling pupils to feel safe, valued, and supported to engage fully in learning.

Our learning environment is designed to meet a wide range of needs. It includes therapy rooms, sensory regulation and relaxation spaces, life skills areas, and fully equipped facilities for the sciences and the arts. Pupils also benefit from our outdoor learning areas and forest school, ensuring that education extends well beyond the classroom.

We are now seeking a therapy assistant to join our team — someone who is passionate about working within a whole-school, inclusive approach and contributing to a supportive, positive school community. Whether you are aspiring to move into the field or highly experienced, we will provide the right supervision and professional development to help you grow and thrive in your role.

We want the child to be at the centre of everything we do no matter how challenging that may be. Autism must be viewed as a different way of thinking and processing the world; one that provides unique insights and skills that we need in an ever-developing climate of society and work.

If you are as passionate about providing and maintaining an inclusive and whole person educational environment as we are, if you are motivated to make a lasting difference in the lives of autistic pupils and their families, and if you are ready to be part of a unique and ambitious specialist school, then I would be delighted to receive your application.

We welcome applications from individuals with a range of backgrounds and experiences. If you would like more information about the school or the role, please feel free to contact us at HR@tcs.tela.org.uk.

We are open to applications from a variety of backgrounds.

Stephanie Smith
Head of School and Director Autism for ELA



About The Cavendish School

The Cavendish School (TCS) is a pioneering Autism Specialist school located in Cambridgeshire. As the county's first state-maintained special free school for autistic pupils, we were founded with a clear vision: to offer families a truly inclusive, local school where autistic young people can thrive in a therapeutic, enriching, and specialised environment.

Our ethos is encapsulated in the phrase 'Enabling the Self', which speaks to our belief in the potential, agency, and individuality of every pupil. We know and recognise that too many autistic children and adults face considerable challenges — not just in education, but in building independence, self-esteem, and a meaningful place in society. Many struggle to come to terms with their identity in a world that too often misunderstands or excludes them. We are determined to change that narrative. At The Cavendish School, we aim to ensure that each of our pupils grows in confidence, self-awareness, and strength — walking tall and proud, knowing that their voice matters and that they have real, exciting opportunities ahead of them. Our pupils are not defined by their diagnosis, but empowered by the support and recognition they receive.

We provide a unique curriculum and educational environment, specifically tailored to meet the needs of autistic pupils. At the heart of our approach is the International Baccalaureate (IB) framework, which promotes inquiry-based, holistic learning. Pupils in Years 3 to 8 follow the Primary Years Programme (PYP), a transdisciplinary model that encourages real-world connections, independent thinking, and the development of international-mindedness. The curriculum is underpinned by a belief in pupil voice, choice, and ownership — giving learners the tools to engage meaningfully with their education and the wider world.

From Year 9 onwards, pupils begin a curriculum focused on preparing for adulthood (PfA), designed to support their development into independent, confident individuals. This continues through Years 10 and 11, where pupils can access up to nine qualifications, including GCSEs and Level 1/2 courses, carefully selected to reflect their interests, strengths, and aspirations.

Our Post-16 provision is both bespoke and aspirational. Through a collaborative model with The Open University, our pupils are able to specialise in areas of deep personal interest and begin studying towards a Certificate of Higher Education, equivalent to the first year of a degree. This innovative approach ensures that pupils can pursue ambitious academic goals in a supportive, autism-specialist setting — preparing them for further study, employment, and lifelong learning.

Our physical environment is just as unique. Purpose-built to support regulation, wellbeing, and engagement, our school includes therapy rooms, calming sensory areas, individualised learning spaces, and specialist rooms for life skills, science, and the arts. Outdoor learning is an integral part of our offer, with forest school and recreational spaces helping pupils reconnect with nature and develop important personal and social skills. We are a trauma-informed school, guided by a therapeutic thinking approach that underpins every decision we make — from curriculum design to policies and daily interactions. We continuously ask ourselves: Why is this important to education and lifelong learning? This reflective practice ensures that our support is meaningful, inclusive, and genuinely impactful.

Our team is made up of passionate, skilled individuals from a range of educational, therapeutic, and clinical backgrounds. We value flexibility, creativity, and a deep respect for neurodiversity. We see autism not as a limitation, but as a different way of thinking and processing the world — one that offers unique insights and skills that are increasingly essential in today's evolving society.

As part of the Eastern Learning Alliance, we work closely with a network of like-minded schools and colleagues, strengthening our offer and ensuring continued innovation in special education.

To find out more, visit our website: www.thecavendishschool.org.uk



About the Eastern Learning Alliance



The Eastern Learning Alliance (ELA) was formed in 2020 following the merger of Cambridgeshire Educational Trust (CET) and Morris Education Trust (MET), creating a strong local multi-phase/setting MAT rich in our distinctive values.

The ELA Trust is a small purposeful family of schools, each with its own distinct identity which, combined, offer more choice than any other group of schools, enabling every student to pursue their dreams and passions. As our Trust grows, each school will retain that identity but share the same values and standards of academic rigor, excellent extra-curricular opportunities and exceptional arts and performing arts.

What makes ELA so very different is that it is born out of an alliance between two existing trusts, not out of a need for one school to grow. Our joint commitment is to being proudly international and internationally minded, serving a diverse community of families from Cambridge, across the UK and overseas, facilitated by our host family network, with a broad, specialist and inclusive provision.

We are a trust with an excellent track record in inclusion and special needs that has as its core vision the drive to 'build a better world through education'.

ELA-Active

Our schools are proud of their community work. This includes on-site sports/leisure provision, adult learning and lettings which bring in many varied groups across the year. We recognise that the 'non-school' elements of the village college are no less important than the 'school' and require their own leadership and management. Therefore the Trustees have created a subsidiary company (which is still part of ELA) called 'ELA-Active to oversee and operate the 'non-school' elements. To ensure this works well, an agreement is put in place to manage the facilities best for the benefit of both 'school' and 'non-school'.

What we can offer you

You will be joining a relatively new MAT at an exciting stage of its growth and development. We are passionate about the environment we create and how we look after our staff.

As a newly appointed member of staff, we can provide you with:

- ∞ A **minimum of 20% non-contact time** (equivalent to one day)
- ∞ A vibrant and supportive community of staff and parents.
- ∞ Support from a wide therapeutic team and close working relationships with our colleagues in health.
- ∞ A **Well-being directory** for all staff offering financial supports and to improve wellbeing and work-life balance.
- ∞ **Free school meals** are provided for dining with our pupils.
- ∞ A **50% discount to our trust sports centre** membership
- ∞ A brand new and autism-friendly innovative learning environment
- ∞ A **forward looking, evidence informed, CPD programme** with Trust wide CPD which includes reduced contact time and **collaborative time for teachers (every Friday afternoon)**.
- ∞ Opportunities for **sponsorship on university** or professional qualifications.
- ∞ An additional **bookable holiday** "Eastern Family day" for you to take when you require
- ∞ A modern **flexible working** school, with the opportunities for home working and reduced hours.

Job Description

Post: Therapy assistant for The Cavendish School – negotiable approx.3 days per week

Salary: Scale 3 on Local government scales £25,183 - £27,269 Pro rata (13,017 – 14,095)

Responsible to: Principle Therapist (EP)

Primary Purpose of the Role

You will be the therapeutic support at The Cavendish School, alongside our current therapeutic team offering support to OT, SaLT and other disciplines. The purpose of the team being the support of our pupils, their families and school staff to ensure barriers to functional activity and learning are removed.

The aim of your role will be to make a major contribution to the therapeutic team and therapeutic provision of the school, to share knowledge, expertise and resources to support the educational provision in line with the school strategic vision. You will strive to improve the outcomes of pupils for their futures and act on pupil voice.

You will be responsible for the delivery, monitoring and assessment of pupil's speech and language therapy. This role will include training appropriate to your remit and joint management of the therapy budget.

This role will include liaison with other schools within the trust where deemed appropriate by the Head of School

Post commencement date: **June 2025**

Main responsibilities

CLINICAL

- ∞ To provide sessions independently under the direction of a qualified therapist.
- ∞ To work as part of the therapy team, advising the therapists of individuals' progress in sessions and document the same clinical notes
- ∞ Observe general behaviour, functional ability and response of individuals and report and record information, as directed by the therapists.
- ∞ Provide and produce resources that will allow the pupils to achieve their potential.
- ∞ Support and facilitate the planning, delivery, and evaluation of therapy activities and interventions
- ∞ Support the multidisciplinary team by communicating relevant information based on how pupils have engaged and participated on an individual and group basis.
- ∞ Contribute to the assessment and treatment of both individually and in groups, undertaking therapeutic work and supervising Individuals in activities relating to their therapeutic input
- ∞ Maintain the upkeep, organisation and storage of relevant resources used within the therapy department, and to report the need for repair/replacement.
- ∞ . Evaluate the effectiveness of personal work and learning from experience through support and management/clinical supervision with a therapist.
- ∞ Undertake any other duties which may reasonably be required of you. To provide individual or small group therapy, as required through EHCP allocation and individual identified needs.
- ∞ To liaise with all team members and family/ carers in order to provide a coordinated approach, this could include accompaniment on home visits and monitoring meetings/phone calls
- ∞ To contribute to training for both school staff and parents.

- ∞ To work closely with the class team, including the occupational therapists, Art therapy, play therapy, counsellor and wilderness therapist to ensure provision is child centred and the environment enables them to realise their potential and maximise their academic, social, physical and emotional development.
- ∞ To use IT and other alternative methods of communication to overcome barriers to communication e.g. simple clear language, Makaton, symbols and photographs.

Administration & management

- ∞ To input in to the management of a caseload and use time effectively, prioritising work as required, in conjunction with school priorities.
- ∞ To contribute to the writing professional reports to be shared at review meetings, and to attend review meetings where appropriate.
- ∞ To address issues of confidentiality, consent and sharing information throughout assessment and intervention according to GDPR regulations.
- ∞ To utilise standard School documentation as required.

Professional

- ∞ To be accountable for own professional action and recognise own professional boundaries, seeking advice where appropriate.
- ∞ To be aware of the sensitivity required to work closely, effectively and in a professional manner with children, parents/ carers and other professionals.
- ∞ To respect the confidentiality, individuality, values and cultural and religious diversity of pupils.
- ∞ To undertake school induction programmes and on-going training, including child protection and safeguarding, health and safety and risk management training.
- ∞ To participate in staff meetings, department meetings and liaison meetings with other professionals.
- ∞ To maintain personal development through use of off- site and in-house training, contact and involvement with relevant special interest groups, attendance of in-service training, and review of literature as required.
- ∞ To review and reflect on own practice and performance through effective use of professional and operational supervision and appraisal measures.

Keeping pupils safe

- ∞ Ensure the welfare and safeguarding of pupils across the whole school through rigorous application of the school child protection, behaviour management and pupil well-being policies.
- ∞ Promote excellent standards of pupil safety and positive behaviour through application of schools behaviour principles. (Including specific training)

General

- ∞ To be aware and comply with the School Health and Safety Policy and Procedures and implement any policies that may be required to improve the safety of the work area, including the prompt recording and reporting of accidents and ensuring that equipment used is safe.
- ∞ To comply with and promote the Academy and School Equality and Diversity Policy.
- ∞ To be aware of and comply with all other School policies and procedures.
- ∞ To undertake such other duties of a similar nature from time to time as may be required by the Head of School

NOTES

A number of children have complex emotional or mental health needs and may demonstrate challenging behaviour. The post holder is expected to respond to challenging behaviour inline with a therapeutic approach and the schools behaviour communication and well-being strategy.

This job description should be seen as enabling rather than restrictive and will be subject to regular review.

These duties and responsibilities should be regarded as neither exhaustive nor exclusive as the post holder may be required to undertake other reasonably determined duties and responsibilities commensurate with the grading of the post.

You will be required to attend meetings outside of school working hours to support school governance and other school functions.

Person Specification

Job Title:	Therapy Assistant
Reports to:	Principle Therapist (EP) / Head of School

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications and Training	GCSE in maths and English at Grades A*-C or equivalent Knowledge of the Statutory requirement of IEPs and EHCPs.	Relevant additional qualifications in BSL, Makaton or PECS or similar and willingness to undertake further study
Experience and Knowledge	Knowledge of evaluating outcomes of interventions and ability to critically appraise own performance. To demonstrate understanding of the roles of other professionals and the principles of partnership-working with all staff working at the Link School. Knowledge of confidentiality and Data Protection.	Experience of working with pupils with complex needs as a result of Autism and co-occurring conditions Experience of working within a SEND setting Knowledge of working with children with Autism, Special Educational Needs
Knowledge /Skills (Ability to)	Previous experience of working in a therapy, care or education setting Skilled in carrying out both individual and group interventions. Excellent planning and organisational skills. Familiarity and skill using IT systems and information packages. Ability to communicate effectively with children, parents/carers and other professionals. Ability to operate effectively as part of a multi-disciplinary team. Ability to support teaching teams in a range of identified techniques to support children within the class environment and in the use of specialised equipment. Ability to demonstrate a commitment to and responsibility for own CPD (continuous professional development) To demonstrate excellent verbal and written communication skills. A high level of emotional resilience and emotional maturity.	Willingness and motivation to develop own skills and work towards professional training qualifications

	<p>Ability to work independently, take on responsibility and manage change.</p> <p>Ability to use initiative, problem solve and be pro-active.</p> <p>Ability to cope effectively with competing demands and pressurised timescales and deadlines as required by the service on a day-to-day basis using systems of prioritisation as appropriate.</p> <p>Adapt and respond to requests or requirements at short notice.</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively with all members of the school including children and wider community to facilitate partnerships.</p> <p>Is able to positively contribute to The Cavendish school team</p> <p>Ability to organise one's own work, to prioritise tasks and keep to deadlines</p> <p>Ability to deal with confidential information sensitively and appropriately in line with school and trust policies.</p> <p>Clear and successful decision making skills and a proven track record of problem solving and conflict resolution.</p> <p>Is prepared to undertake training appropriate to the role and position as Staff within a specialist ASD environment</p>	
Personal Qualities	<p>Empathy with the ethos and values of ELA and TCS a commitment to working collaboratively with the Trust and embedding the Trust ethos and values in the school.</p> <p>Is enthusiastic about children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and has a high level of commitment.</p> <p>Commitment to young people's wellbeing, safeguarding and development</p> <p>A positive 'can do' attitude, shared with pupils and colleagues to build and sustain a great team ethos</p> <p>High levels of resilience and determination</p> <p>Demonstrable experience of highly effective communication skills, both orally and in writing and as an active listener</p> <p>Role model of best practice, with a professional manner that motivates others and inspires confidence, trust and respect.</p>	<p>Minibus driver, or the willingness to complete D1 License and minibus training (MIDAS)</p> <p>Full UK Driving license and business insurance</p>

	<p>Be highly organised and able to plan and prioritise work within timeframes and to meet deadlines.</p> <p>Creative approach to problem solving</p> <p>Flexibility and willingness to adapt quickly and effectively to changing situations/circumstances.</p> <p>Open minded and good sense of humour</p>	
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The post holder will have a shared responsibility for the safeguarding of all children and young people. The post holder has an implicit duty to promote the welfare of all children and young people and to be committed to promote diversity and equality for all.



Interviews and application process

The interviews will take place at The Cavendish School and will include a range of activities and interviews. The interview day will consist of

- a tour of the site
- interview with students
- Interview Panel of TCS leadership

If you would like to apply, please complete the **application form** and a **letter** (no more than 2 sides of A4) outlining:

- ∞ your reasons for applying
- ∞ what you will bring to the role
- ∞ why you believe you might be suited to this particular challenge/opportunity.

Please ensure your form and letter is returned to HR@tcs.tela.org.uk

Applications close: **Noon on Monday 19th May 2025**

We reserve the right to end this advertisement early upon successful appointments.

