The Cavendish School

enabling the self

Application pack

Teaching Assistant

October 2026



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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 Teaching 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 pupil 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: **Teaching Assistant (Level 2 / 3)**
Salary: **£26,017 – £26,428 FTE (Approx £21,697 - £22,040 Pro-rata)**
(Encapsulating Level 2/point 4) or
£26,428 - £26,847 FTE (Approx. £22,041 – £23,493 Pro-rata)
Responsible to: **Class Teacher, Assistant Headteacher.**

Primary Purpose of the Role

You will be a member of our school teaching support team, as a key member of a class for 8 – 10 pupils all of whom have a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Condition. Teaching Assistants at The Cavendish school will be passionate about inclusion and providing high quality environments and provision to allow pupils to thrive with us and beyond. A good sense of humour, resilience, and ability to start each day fresh will be an integral part of classroom and school practice.

As classroom support you will play an integral part in the classroom promoting our mission of enabling-the-self through your part in providing a safe, nurturing space, alongside an inclusive and comprehensive offering of support so that all of our pupils thrive. You will form part a holistic approach to education, working alongside multiple professionals including specialist class teachers and a wide therapeutic team. As part of an inspiring, inclusive and impactful class dynamic you will support with an emphasis on pupils' social and emotional wellbeing, as well as communication development. All pupils at The Cavendish School have an Education, health and care plan (EHCP) with specific provision detailed, your role will be essential in ensuring that we get this exactly right to meet the needs of our pupils and fulfil our duties.

As a class teaching Assistant at TCS you will be involved in all aspects of the education for the pupils within your class. This will include input on setting pupil targets, preparation of classroom resources as well direct pupil support.

Learning in all aspects of the school day is particularly important to pupils at the Cavendish, staff will support pupils during a lunchtime provision.

Shaping the Future and strengthening the Community

- Ensure that The Cavendish School's vision is embodied and acted upon effectively within the school.
- Demonstrate TCS's vision and values in everyday work and practice and motivate and work with others to create a shared collaborative culture and positive climate
- Ensure creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate new technologies to achieve excellence.
- Promote and facilitate family participation in learning and life of the school and in particular your class
- Provide support for school events.

Supporting the pupils

- Model effective learning and positive social interactions for our pupils
- Under the direction of the teacher, carry out pre-determined tasks to establish and maintain supportive relationships with individual pupils or small groups to ensure they understand and can achieve the tasks.

- Help with the care and support for pupils including attending to their emotional and/or physical care needs
- Support inclusion in the classroom, ensuring all pupils have access to our high quality provision and feel involved.
- As directed by the class teacher to achieve EHCP targets and that all legal provision is always given.
- Maintain and promote the highest standards of pupil behaviour, discipline and attendance within the school in line with the school's behaviour and intervention policies
- Contribute to whole school and Class level events.
- In conjunction with the Class Teacher, adapt lessons to meet the needs of individual children and small groups. (Level 2&3)
- Take responsibility for delivering learning activities with small groups who would benefit from a different learning approach as agreed. (Level 2&3)
- Arrange and deliver special classes for pupils to improve the range of quality of learning as agreed. (Level 3)

Supporting the teacher

- Prepare the classroom for lessons as directed
- Undertake support activities as required, e.g., collating resources, photocopying, mounting displays, filing etc.
- Undertake pupil record keeping as requested.
- Contribute to reports on pupil progress and development as directed. (Level 2 &3)
- Contribute to the planning and evaluation of work programmes for individual pupils and groups (Level 2&3)
- Provide feedback on learning activities and contribute to school review and development planning. (Level 3)
- Under the guidance of the teacher, manage and organise the school environment efficiently and effectively to ensure that it meets the needs of the pupils and all health and safety regulations.
- Attend training as provided and support the implementation of agreed initiatives and changes.

Developing Self and Working with Others

- Treat people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive trusting culture that exhibits 'Humans first, professional second' (Myatt, 2016)
- Support a collaborative learning culture within the school
- Develop and maintain a culture of high expectations for self and others
- Attend relevant meetings and CPD training as required
- Support an inclusive and inspirational ethos within the school (aligned with that of the Trust) that enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes
- Participate in and support the professional development of other Teaching Assistants as required. (Level 2)
- Act as a mentor to and support the professional development of other Teaching Assistants as required. (Level 3)

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.
- Ensure that pupils with health and medical needs have their needs safely met in line with school, local and national policy.
- Undertake First aid training and refreshers in order to provide first aid and administer medications.

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:	Teaching Assistant – The Cavendish School
Reports to:	Class Teacher, Assistant Headteacher,

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications and Training	GCSE grade C/4 in English and Mathematics (or equivalent)	Teaching Assistant/Supporting Learning Qualification Relevant training in SEND and autism, specifically
Experience	Experience of working with children/Young people Recent experience (including as volunteer) of working in a school.	Experience of working with pupils with complex needs as a result of Autism and co-occurring conditions
Knowledge /Skills (Ability to)	Is able to positively contribute to The Cavendish school team Has a positive attitude towards inclusion in special schools and mainstream schools Knowledge of current child protection guidance, safeguarding, and health and safety requirements. Will respect parents and carers as partners and involve them in the education and learning community of their children Ability to communicate effectively with all members of the school and wider community to facilitate partnerships between school and home. Is prepared to work collaboratively with a wide range of professionals in order to provide the best possible education for pupils Ability to deal with confidential information sensitively and appropriately in line with school and trust policies. Is prepared to undertake training appropriate to the role Ability to use ICT/the internet and email to support pupils' learning. Able to work on own initiative with parents/carers and the child's community within an agreed framework and set of objectives. (L2&3)	A working knowledge of SEND interventions such as Makaton, Attention Autism, TEACCH, PECS Lego Therapy, Rebound Therapy, colourful semantics Successful teaching support in a special needs class /unit /school Experience in delivering first aid, medication, personal/intimate care, behaviour management strategies. (candidates must be willing to deliver these areas also take part in activities such as swimming) Some experience of planning, monitoring and assessment of pupils' work.
Personal Qualities	Empathy with the ethos and values of ELA and TCS a commitment to working collaboratively	Minibus driver, or the willingness to complete minibus training (MIDAS)

	with the Trust and embedding the Trust ethos and values in the school. Is enthusiastic about teaching children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and has a high level of commitment. Commitment to young people's wellbeing, safeguarding and development A positive 'can do' attitude, shared with pupils and colleagues to build and sustain a great team ethos High levels of resilience and determination Role model of best practice, with a professional manner that motivates others and inspires confidence, trust and respect. Creative approach to pupil support Flexibility and willingness to adapt quickly and effectively to changing situations/circumstances. Open minded and good sense of humour	Full UK Driving license and business insurance Confident swimmer and pool side spotter

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 on **Wednesday, 18th November 2026** and will include a range of activities and interviews. The interview day will consist of:

∞ A tour of the site
∞ Time in the classroom gaining an understanding of the school community and culture
∞ Interview Panel with Head of School and Assistant Head

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.

Applications close at **9:00am on Thursday, 12th November 2026**

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

Visits to the school are encouraged and welcomed.

