



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

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

## 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."

## Ten years on

Libby has made fantastic progress during her time at Cavendish.

"She's now in the Flexible Learning Department, for children aged 12-16," says Mel.

"It's hard to believe how far Libby has come. She has problems with global communication and couldn't talk at first, but now she chats from the moment she gets up until she goes to bed!"

## Parental support

Mel and Rob are keen to point out how much parental support Cavendish provides.

"Cavendish helped me as much as Libby," explains Mel. "For example staff helped me to get Libby out of nappies, when I was at a complete loss. She also didn't want to eat, so they provided lots of taster sessions and now she eats better than me."

"The staff are amazing. We love them and never want Libby to leave!"

## Independent living

Cavendish aims to help children gain maximum independence.

"The staff are always willing to listen," says Mel. "For instance I told Libby's form tutor that I was worried Libby didn't understand the value of money and they've now made that a learning target. This is all part of making her as independent as possible."

## 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."

## Fantastic facilities

Facilities at Cavendish are outstanding.

"They have all kinds of facilities, including a hydrotherapy pool," says Mel. "There is also a fully equipped bungalow for lessons and sleepovers. There is a big playground, and a brilliant cybercafé where children can eat lunch and socialise."

## 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!"

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