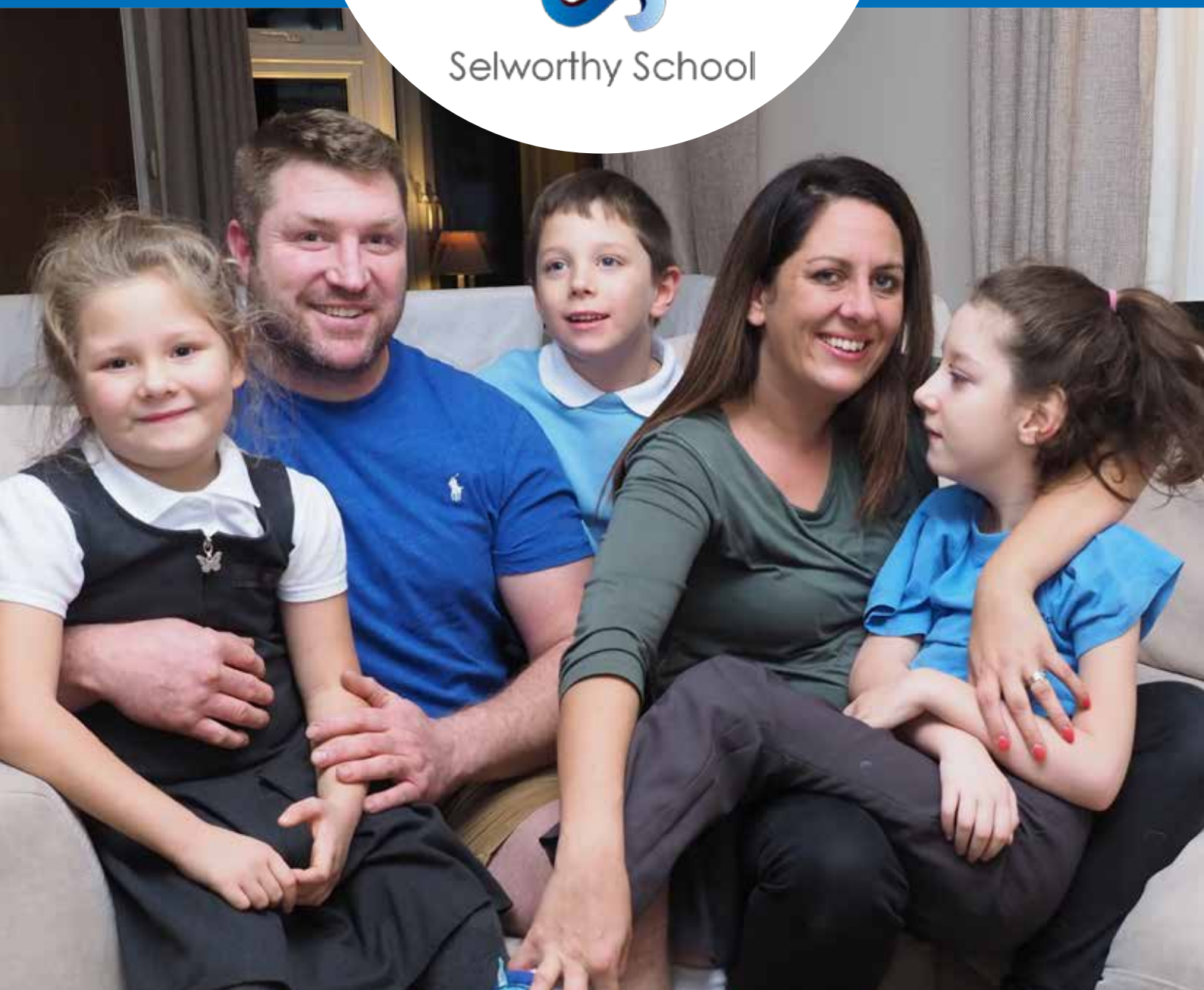




Selworthy School



Gemma and Garryn Basson live near Taunton with their three children. Georgia is nine and twins Jaden and Brooke are five.

Gemma and Garryn's daughter needed specialist care as well as the love and attention she gets at home, and that is why they chose Selworthy School

Care, consideration and kindness

Knowing that your child is safe and cared for at school is something every parent wants, but when that child has the extensive and complex additional needs such as Georgia's, it takes a very special school to reassure a parent. Georgia has quadriplegic cerebral palsy, partial hearing and sight loss, dystonia, epilepsy and a possible genetic disorder, as yet undiagnosed. She also has, says Gemma, a wicked sense of humour.

"I am very fortunate in that I trust Selworthy School 100% with my daughter's life, which they have several times helped to save. Given that she is at school for longer than she is with me, I really need to know that she is in safe hands but I have no doubts on that score. The staff really 'get' her; she is funny, mischievous and a very happy person but as she is non-verbal, alternative means of communication are very important. Her teachers and the support staff totally understand her and her personality, and they treat her just as I do, with care, consideration and kindness."

Adaptable, appropriate provision

Selworthy offers, and delivers, many things a mainstream setting could not provide. In addition to following the National Curriculum, adapted to each child's capabilities, the school has the facilities to address the requirements of children with wide-ranging and diverse additional needs. Teaching Assistants are always on hand to support the children academically and are also trained in personal and health care.

"Lots of things have been put into place for children like Georgia, such as EyeGaze software which means she can communicate via her laptop. She has a standing frame so she can get out of her wheelchair; access to physiotherapy and a defibrillator. The sensory room is amazing, a lovely, calming place where the children can take time out if they need a break, and Georgia even has her own sofa in her classroom – she tires easily and the school agreed we could put it there for her. They are very adaptable!"

Complete trust

Although Georgia is completely dependent upon other people for her safety she is perfectly aware of what is going on around her; so she needs to feel confident in the way she is cared for at school. "Yes, she is physically vulnerable but like me, she completely trusts her team. I know that everyone has a commonsense approach and that they will treat every situation as the circumstances call for, without risking Georgia's welfare and without hurting her. They know exactly what they are doing."

Home/school communication

As well as being able to speak to members of staff at any time should she need to, Gemma values the Daily Diary which is

a comprehensive record of Georgia's school day. "It covers absolutely everything; what she has learned, what she's eaten, her moods, her achievements, things she's done – it's invaluable as it helps us build a picture, and that was particularly helpful when it was the means by which her epilepsy was identified and subsequently treated."

Family support

Family support is a further aspect of the Selworthy provision, something Gemma has reason to be grateful for. "They know us very well as a whole family, and are great with us in lots of ways. They have offered occasional respite, and not only help Georgia to shower at school as we haven't the equipment at home, they even take her to a local facility so she can have a proper bath, which she loves. They really do provide a whole package, and go above and beyond for us."

A priceless feeling of freedom

What Gemma appreciates more than anything, however, is the hydrotherapy pool which gives her daughter a physical freedom she cannot find elsewhere. "I love it for Georgia; I love that it liberates her from her wheelchair, allows her the chance to kick her limbs without fear of hurting herself, and to feel weightless. She can play with her friends in a completely safe environment and for Georgia, that is something priceless."

The children come first

Having watched the staff with other children at Selworthy, Gemma knows how every child matters at the school. "I have seen how patient they are, how they instinctively know how to interact. I have seen them lying on the playground in the rain with a distressed child and calming them down, and how they so gently treat them. Everything I have seen has convinced me that Selworthy is absolutely right for my daughter."



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