

Press Release

8 January 2009



## **Donaldson's celebrates first year in new school with major funding boost**

As Donaldson's celebrates the first anniversary of its new school in Linlithgow, news of two funding boosts marks the culmination of a highly successful year which saw an official opening by Alex Salmond and the screening of a major BBC TV documentary on the school's move from its landmark building in Edinburgh.

The grants have been made in support of the school's superb transition work, helping pupils integrate into the community after they leave school. A sum of £50,000 has been awarded by the Scottish Government Equality Unit, with a further £10,000 given by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland.

Donaldson's is one of the seven Grant Aided Special Schools supported by the Scottish Government and is Scotland's national school for children who are deaf or have speech and language difficulties. The school provides a bilingual environment for the pupils enabling them to learn in an environment which was designed specifically to meet their complex needs.

Transition is an important part of the curriculum as for many of the pupils the most difficult part of their education can be after they leave school and aim for jobs or further education. Using a combination of advice sessions, workshops and role play, the transition project at Donaldson's helps the young people develop communication and life skills. The programme is run for young people between the ages of 16 and 24 and for many has been a life changing experience.

Speaking about the funding awards, Principal Janice MacNeill said, "Transition is one of the most important parts of our curriculum and these awards celebrate our first year nicely. Donaldson's pupils thrive within our bilingual environment, but for many it is the support they receive here which helps them to get the confidence to move on, which is valuable for years to come. Much of the work we do on transition is in co-operation with the RNID (Royal National Institute for the Deaf) so for both of us to receive this recognition and funding boost, is terrific."