

Equality Report

April 2023

Introduction

The Donaldson Trust is committed to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and respect in all aspects of school life. The Sensational Learning Centre (“Donaldson’s School”), as a grant aided school, is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010 and the associated specific duties in Scotland. We are required to consider how our policies, practices and decision-making advance equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

We recognise that equality and inclusion are fundamental to creating a positive, supportive and ambitious learning environment where all children, young people, colleagues, families and stakeholders are valued and able to participate fully. We are committed to embedding equality into our day-to-day operations, including our educational provision, employment practices, leadership, governance and engagement with the wider community.

This report demonstrates how we mainstream the equality duty across the school and outlines the steps we are taking to continually improve our performance in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. It also supports transparency and accountability in meeting our statutory responsibilities.

The report includes information on:

- how equality is integrated into our functions across the school and our employment practice
- progress towards achieving our equality outcomes
- employee information and board diversity
- gender pay gap information

In carrying out our duties, we are guided by the principles of fairness, dignity, respect and inclusion. We aim to ensure that no individual or group experiences barriers to participation, achievement or opportunity on the basis of protected characteristics, socio-economic disadvantage or additional support needs.

We will continue to review our practices, engage with stakeholders and use evidence and data to help ensure that equality remains integral to the culture, values and continuous improvement of our school.

Mainstreaming the Equality Duty

School context

The Sensational Learning Centre is a grant-aided special school (GASS) providing education for primary and secondary aged pupils. The school supports learners with a wide range of additional support needs, including communication differences, neurodiversity and social, emotional and wellbeing needs.

All pupils require highly personalised approaches to learning, communication and support. The school places a strong emphasis on creating an inclusive, nurturing and structured environment in which pupils feel safe, respected and able to engage fully in their learning.

A key feature of the school context is the use of adapted communication approaches and individualised learning pathways to ensure that all pupils can participate meaningfully in school life. Wellbeing is central to the school's approach, recognising that pupils achieve best when their emotional, social and communication needs are effectively supported.

Commitment to Equality

The Sensational Learning Centre is committed to providing an inclusive, equitable and rights-based learning environment where every pupil is valued and supported to achieve their full potential.

Our approach is underpinned by a strong ethos of inclusion, where diversity is recognised as a strength and barriers to participation are actively identified and removed. We promote a culture of respect,

belonging and high expectations, ensuring that all pupils experience positive relationships and meaningful opportunities.

Children's rights are central to our practice and we work to ensure that pupils are supported to express their views and are actively involved in decisions which affect them. We are committed to embedding equality across all aspects of school life, ensuring that it informs our curriculum, our relationships and our systems.

Through this approach, we aim to ensure that all pupils can access learning, develop confidence and participate fully in their school and wider community.

Understanding Equality in Our Setting

At the Sensational Learning Centre, the General Equality Duty is central to how we support pupils with additional support needs to access learning and achieve positive outcomes. The General Equality Duty is reflected in all aspects of school life and are embedded in learning and teaching, wellbeing and support systems, communication approaches and pupil voice and participation.

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

We take a proactive approach to ensuring that all pupils feel safe, respected and valued. This includes:

- Creating nurturing, structured environments
- Promoting positive relationships
- Responding effectively to any behaviours or incidents which may impact on pupils' wellbeing

Our approach ensures that all pupils are protected from discrimination and can learn in a supportive and inclusive environment.

2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not

We recognise that pupils begin with different needs and starting points and therefore require different levels and types of support. We work to:

- Remove barriers to learning and participation

- Provide personalised learning pathways
- Adapt communication and teaching approaches
- Ensure access to meaningful and engaging learning experiences

In our context, advancing equality means enabling every pupil to achieve their potential through tailored support and inclusive practice.

3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

We aim to build a strong sense of community where all pupils feel included and respected. This is achieved through:

- Promoting understanding of diversity and individual differences
- Supporting pupils to develop positive relationships
- Providing opportunities for shared experiences and collaboration

Through our curriculum and wider school experiences, we support pupils to develop confidence, empathy and a sense of belonging.

Equality in Daily Practice (Pupil Experience)

1. Curriculum and Learning

In daily practice this includes:

- Personalised learning pathways that reflect individual needs, interests and aspirations, including opportunities for accreditation where appropriate
- Learning and teaching approaches that recognise and celebrate neurodiversity, ensuring practice is adaptive and inclusive
- Purposeful links between learning and the wider world, including curriculum experiences that build life skills, independence and confidence

2. Inclusion and Support

In daily practice this includes:

- Integrated planning that brings together learning, wellbeing and support needs so colleagues can respond consistently and effectively.
- A strong emphasis on wellbeing, with targeted support and nurturing approaches that help pupils feel safe, included and ready to learn.
- Partnership working with families and professionals, recognising parents and carers as key partners in pupils' learning and planning

3. Communication and Accessibility

In daily practice this includes:

- Developing and embedding approaches that support Total Communication, including the use of appropriate communication supports and strategies tailored to individual pupils.
- Ensuring learning environments, routines and expectations are communicated in ways that pupils can access, supporting engagement and emotional regulation
- Strengthening colleague confidence and consistency in communication practice, recognising that shared approaches reduce barriers for pupils across the school day

4. Pupil Voice and Participation

In daily practice this includes:

- Planned opportunities for pupils to give feedback on school experiences, learning activities and events, and to see how their views lead to change.
- Pupil consultation that supports participation in shaping the environment and wider aspects of school life

5. Wider Experiences and Opportunities

In daily practice this includes:

- Community-based learning experiences that support pupils to generalise skills and build confidence in real-world contexts
- Inclusive school events and programmes that promote belonging, celebration of achievement and opportunities for participation

Equality in the context of employment

We are committed to providing equal opportunities in all aspects of employee lifecycle. We aim to create a workplace that is supportive, accessible and reflective of the communities we serve, ensuring everyone can reach their full potential.

We are committed to ensuring that **recruitment and selection** processes are fair, transparent and based on merit and ability. Recruitment

procedures are regularly reviewed to help remove barriers and reduce the risk of discrimination or unconscious bias.

Role profiles and selection criteria are reviewed to ensure they are relevant and proportionate to the requirements of the role. Job advertisements are written using inclusive language and are promoted to a wide and diverse audience to encourage applications from underrepresented groups. Managers involved in recruitment are supported to understand inclusive recruitment practices and the impact unconscious bias can have on decision-making.

We are committed to accessible recruitment and offer reasonable adjustments and collecting confidential equality monitoring data to improve representation.

All colleagues have access to **learning and development opportunities**, with training needs identified through regular discussions and reviews. Mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training helps promote a respectful and inclusive culture across the organisation, and managers are equipped to apply fair people-management practices. Promotion opportunities are based on merit, suitability and experience and we aim to ensure all colleagues have fair access to development opportunities.

Employment policies, benefits and working conditions are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain **fair, inclusive and accessible**. Disciplinary, grievance and redundancy procedures are applied consistently and without discrimination. We monitor the experiences of fixed-term and part-time staff to ensure equal access to opportunities and benefits.

We are committed to supporting disabled colleagues and applicants by making **reasonable adjustments** wherever possible. Colleagues are encouraged to discuss support needs, and specialist advice may be sought to identify appropriate adjustments. Accessibility across workplaces and practices is kept under review to reduce barriers and improve inclusion.

Progress towards our Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025

Outcome 1 – Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded across the curriculum and wider learning experiences

- Early stages of embedding inclusive curriculum approaches
- Curriculum beginning to incorporate life skills and real-world learning
- Initial opportunities for pupil voice within learning contexts

Inclusive approaches are beginning to be embedded within the curriculum. Pupils are starting to access a broader range of learning experiences, including early opportunities to develop life skills and apply learning in practical contexts. We will continue working on ensuring this practice is consistent across the school.

Outcome 2 – Barriers to participation for pupils and colleagues with protected characteristics are reduced through inclusive practice and personalised support

- Initial personalised approaches to supporting pupils
- Early development of wellbeing supports
- Support systems in place but variable in consistency

Personalised support systems are in place and supporting pupils to access learning. Early improvements in engagement and participation are evident. We plan further development to ensure our approaches to inclusion and support are consistent across all contexts.

Outcome 3 – Pupils, families and colleagues are actively involved in decision-making and have a meaningful voice in shaping the school

- Opportunities for feedback from pupils and families
- Emerging colleague collaboration structures

Opportunities for consultation and feedback are available for pupils, families and colleagues. Stakeholders are beginning to contribute to

school development. Systems for ensuring meaningful participation and demonstrating the impact of their input are still developing.

Outcome 4 – A positive, inclusive culture is promoted where diversity is respected and good relations are fostered

- Inclusive ethos present
- Positive relationships between colleagues and pupils

Positive relationships between pupils and colleagues provide a strong foundation for inclusion. Pupils feel supported within a nurturing environment. Further developments are planned for the school's inclusive culture to be fully explicit and consistently embedded across all areas of practice.

Outcome 5 – Inclusive communication approaches are developed to support engagement, understanding and participation

- Communication supports in place
- SALT input present

Communication supports are in place and enabling pupils to access learning and participate. Colleagues are beginning to develop confidence in using a range of approaches. Further development is required to achieve consistency across the school.

Outcome 6 – Colleagues demonstrate understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion through ongoing professional learning

- Equality, diversity and inclusion training in place
- Content reflects current legislation and protected characteristics
- Monitoring of training completion established

Equality, diversity and inclusion training is in place for all colleagues and supports awareness of relevant legislation, including the Equality Act and protected characteristics. Colleagues complete regular refreshers, with content regularly updated to remain current. Completion rates are monitored and reported to the executive leadership team and trustees. We

will continue to strengthen engagement and ensure consistent understanding and application of learning across all areas of practice.

Outcome 7 – Equality and diversity data is used to inform planning and support inclusive practice

- Data systems in place to record equality and diversity information
- Regular updating and monitoring processes established
- Use of data to inform planning is developing

Equality and diversity data is collected and maintained to support organisational awareness. Systems are in place to update and monitor this information regularly. This data is beginning to inform planning and decision-making. Further development will focus on strengthening analysis and ensuring consistent use of data to support inclusive practice and continuous improvement.

Employee Information

We collect and use equality monitoring information to help us understand the diversity of our workforce and job applicants, identify potential barriers, and support the development of fair and inclusive employment practices.

Equality information is gathered throughout recruitment and employment processes, including during application and induction stages. Providing this information is voluntary (which means we may not have data for every applicant and employee), confidential and separate from recruitment decision-making processes. Equality monitoring data is not visible to recruiting managers or interview panels and is used solely for monitoring, analysis and reporting purposes.

We regularly review and update colleague information, including where new information is shared during employment, such as through workplace adjustment requests or wellbeing support processes. This helps us better understand the needs of our workforce and ensure appropriate support is available.

The information collected supports us to monitor the diversity and composition of our workforce, identify underrepresentation or potential inequalities, review the fairness of recruitment, development and employment practices, inform equality outcomes and improvement actions and better meet our responsibilities under the Equality Duty.

We recognise that some colleagues and applicants choose not to disclose personal information relating to protected characteristics. We continue to encourage voluntary disclosure and review our systems and processes to improve the quality, consistency and retention of equality monitoring data while ensuring confidentiality and data protection requirements are maintained.

Employee and gender pay gap information in this report relates to Sensational Learning Centre employees only.

Composition of our employees at Sensational Learning Centre

As of 31 March 2023, the Sensational Learning Centre employed 15 members of staff, out of whom 11 (73%) worked full time and 4 (26%) worked part time. The headcount is similar to 2021, when the school employed 13 members of staff.

The breakdown of our employee, job applicant and trustee data is included in appendices 1, 2 and 3. It is worth highlighting that our overall colleague numbers are very small, and therefore percentage figures should be interpreted with caution, as small numerical changes can result in proportionally large fluctuations that may not be indicative of wider trends.

Gender Pay Gap Information

Gender	Number of employees	Average hourly rate	Pay gap
Female	14	£19.58	
Male	1	£12.54	
			-56.2%

	Female	Male
Management	2	0
Teachers	3	0
Learning and Wellbeing Practitioners	7	1
Other	2	0

The gender pay gap information for the school is impacted by our very low numbers overall. All management and teaching roles, which are higher paid roles, were filled by females at reporting time. We only had one male employee working at the school, which significantly impacts on this figure and it should therefore be interpreted with caution.

The pay gap reflects distribution of roles rather than issues with equal pay.

We are confident that our pay arrangements are appropriate and robust, supported by a clear and transparent pay scale. There is no provision for bonus or commission payments, which helps ensure consistency and fairness in pay decisions. As a result, there is no opportunity for discretionary pay awards that could disproportionately favour one gender over another.

Appendix 1

Employee Composition Data at 31 March 23

Age

29 or under		30-39		40-49		50-59		60 and over	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0%	0%	0%	46.7%	0%	20%	0%	26.7%	6.7%	0%

Disability

Disabled	Not disabled / not known
33.3%	66.7%

Gender reassignment

Cisgender / not known	Transgender
100%	0%

Marriage and civil partnership

Cohabiting	Divorced	Married	Separated	Single	Unknown
0%	13.3%	66.7%	0%	20%	6.7%

Race

Black	Asian	White	Unknown / prefer not to say
0%	0%	86.7%	13.3%

Religion and belief

Christian	Humanist	Agnostic	No religion or belief	Prefer not to say
13.3%	0%	6.7%	13.3%	66.7%

Sex / Gender

Female	Male	Other
93.3%	6.7%	0%

Sexual Orientation

Heterosexual	Gay	Not known
33.3%	0%	66.7%

Part or full-time

Full-time (male)	Full-time (female)	Part-time (male)	Part-time (female)
6.7%	53.3%	0%	26.7%

Board of trustees

Male	Female
55.6%	44.4%

29 or under	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 and over
0%	11.1%	44.4%	33.3%	11.1%

Appendix 2 Recruitment Monitoring Data 2023

Gender

	Applied	Offer
Male	19.1%	2.1%
Female	74.5%	4.3%
Trans Person	2.1%	0%
In another way / Prefer not to say	4.3%	0%

Ethnicity

	Applied	Offer
White - Scottish	57.4%	6.4%
White - British	0%	0%
White - Other British	27.7%	
White - European	0%	0%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	2.1%	0%
Asian	10.6%	0%
Other ethnic group	2.1%	0%
Prefer not to say	0%	0%

Sexual Orientation

	Applied	Offer
Heterosexual/Straight	76.6%	2.1%
Gay/Lesbian	2.1%	0%
Bisexual	8.5%	0%
Other	2.1%	0%
Prefer not to say	10.6%	4.3%

Disability

	Applied	Offer
Yes	12.8%	4.3%
No	72.3%	0%

Prefer not to say	14.9%	2.1%
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Religion and Belief

	Applied	Offer
Muslim	4.3%	0%
Hindu	2.1%	0%
Roman Catholic	4.3%	0%
Church of Scotland	6.4%	0%
No religion or belief	66%	2.1%
Other	6.4%	0%
Other Christian	4.3%	0%
Prefer not to say	6.4%	4.3%

Age

	Applied	Offer
29 or under	21.3%	0%
30-39	34%	0%
40-49	14.9%	2.1%
50-59	25.5%	4.3%
60 and over	4.3%	0%

Disability

	Applied	Offer
Yes	12.8%	4.3%
No	72.3%	0%
Prefer not to say	14.9%	2.1%