

Sensations Nest Annual Trustee's Report 2024

Name of charity: Sensations – NEST Limited

NI charity no: NIC107615

Company registration no: NI666632

Address: 1 Clontonacally Road, BT8 8AG

Names of Trustee's: Dr Clare Caughey
Mr. Nicholas McKee

The trustee's listed above are the trustee's that have approved the contents of this report and all the individual's that have served as trustee's during the year. The stated trustees can appoint new trustees to the governing body when both parties are in agreement over the proposed trustee.

Constitution details:

Sensations Nest constitution is detailed in our Articles of Association, which was written and co-opted in December of 2019. This acts as our governing document and supports the trustees in the operation of the charity.

The charity's purposes/objects are laid out in Section 1 of the Articles of Association for Sensations Nest Limited. The articles also outline the powers, benefits and conflicts, roles and powers of the trustees, as well as information pertaining to liabilities, membership and reporting/accounting practices.

The objects of Sensations Nest Ltd are:

- 1.1 Advance the education of children and young people with learning disabilities in Northern Ireland.
- 1.2 Relieve the need of children and young people with learning disabilities and mental health problems and their families in Northern Ireland

The public benefit of the objects are to young people with learning disabilities living in Northern Ireland. We have a wide catchment area with pupils coming from Belfast, Newry and Armagh. We provide education to young people with learning disabilities including Autistic Spectrum Disorders, Downs Syndrome and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. We provide support to their families through updates on progress in school, therapies (including relaxation, Speech & Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy) and parent training sessions on a wide range of strategies including behaviour management, sensory processing, communication and play skills. The pupils enrolled at the Nest and their families are the charities beneficiaries.

Parents pay a monthly fee and these funds are used to further the objects of the charity namely the advancement of education for children with learning disabilities. Additionally, the Education Authority of Northern Ireland funds pupil placements at The Nest and these fees are paid on a termly basis.

Financial Report December 2023-24

Our accounts for the stated year have been completed by DTNC Accounting by Michelle Staerke. The accounts were filled on 02/09/24 and are now available on Companies House. This section will include more accurate accounting figures when the report has been completed.

The Nest has been banking with online provider, Tide. Tide have provided us with a secure and easily accessible account however, there are limitations, for example, money lodging. For this reason, the Trustee's felt it would be better to secure a new banking provider. This is continuing to be problematic with banks appearing unwilling to open accounts for charities. We have continued to look for a new banking provider, however, many institutions seem unwilling to open a charity account. In light of this Mr McKee contacted the Charity Commission to seek their advice. The commission responded on 30/01/24 to say that this was a problem they are being contacted about regularly and is a specific problem for small charities. The commission also provided us with information regarding banks which do open accounts for charities. This information has been studied and the Trustee's will decide on which bank we will apply to.

By the end of December 2023, Sensations NEST received a total income of £24,370 (2022: £34,670). The difference in figures is explained by a drop in the number of privately paying families, which has subsequently increased for the academic year of 2024/25. This money was used for a range of products and services that ensured the day-to-day activities of the charity for the benefit of our stakeholders and the public. For example, monies were used to purchase a new printer for staff to use and make resources for children. We also used monies to pay for sub cover as we had an increase in sickness levels. Overall, Sensations Nest income decreased, however, so did total expenditure to £34,614 (2023: £35,779). One of the reasons for this has been an increase in costs related to the cost of living crisis, electricity, home heating oil and internet bills all increased dramatically as did payments to cover staff shortages. The biggest drain, however, was a reduction in privately paying families which has been rectified for the academic year of 2024/25.

Additionally, the trustees would like to share information regarding The Nest's operational headquarters at 1 Clontonacally Road. This property was originally purchased for Sensations Learning Support (a CIC) for it to be used as a special needs school. It was purchased by Mr Joe Curran and an agreement was made whereby Sensations Learning Support would make monthly repayments to payoff his outlay, which was £250,000. Sadly, Mr Curran passed away in January 2022. His estate transferred to his wife, Mrs Alice Curran and Sensations Learning Support continued to repay the debt. However, in May 2023 Mrs Curran sadly passed away.

In the execution of Mr & Mrs Curran Will, the property at 1 Clontonacally Road would be bequeathed to Sensations Learning Support and the debt written off. Since then, we have been through probate are awaiting deed of release, meaning that the building now belongs to Sensations Learning Support, with plans to transfer Deed of Title to Sensations Nest.

Summary of the Charities Activities & purposes

The main activities of the charity are education of children and young people with learning disabilities. The purpose of this education is to improve the lives of young people with learning disabilities and their families.

We aim to provide an outstanding standard of education using a variety of educational practices that benefit young people with learning disabilities. In our team at Sensations Nest we have number of professionals to provide a multi-disciplinary approach. We have a Psychology lead team which includes specialist teachers, classroom assistants, behaviour therapists, and speech & language therapists. With a range of professionals working collaboratively we aim to provide a holistic and nurturing education to all our young people that will enable them to learn, grow and thrive in school, at home, and in the community.

Our main activities include those activities that could be found in an Education Authority controlled special school including learning activities such as learning through play, communication sessions, for example, circle time, functional literacy & numeracy, outdoor & physical education, animal therapies & care, and personal development & mutual understanding. We used an adapted version of the NI Primary Curriculum.

We use a range of teaching & learning strategies/programs. Our pupils engage in several different activities including:

- Attention Autism. This program is designed to build pupils concentration and attention skills, so they can learn to focus on less preferred tasks or follow a schedule that is more adult led.
- Animal care. We have a companion Horse named Billy and our pupils often visit him and learn to groom and care for him.
- Circle time. The purpose of circle time is primarily a communication and personal development task. They engage in different tasks and activities that incorporate cross curricular skills.
- Outdoor education. We are fortunate to have a large outdoor space for our pupils to explore and engage in. Outside we have a jungle gym, swing set, trampoline and sand and water play areas. We also use this space for physical development by incorporating nature and with specific movement programs such as balancability.
- Music, the arts & relaxation. As our pupils follow an adapted version of the NI curriculum, we plan artistic activities throughout our week including art and music. Often our pupils need time to destress so that they are ready to learn, so throughout the week we use relaxation therapies to encourage calm. These include use of sensory oils, massage and aromatherapy and yoga.
- Sensory integration. Often our pupils can be under or over sensitive to different stimuli so we use our sensory room to engage the senses and as a means to calm, awaken or energise our pupils for their day.

In conjunction with our specialist Speech Therapist, Katie Pears, we have been trying to boost the communication skills of our learners. Over the past year we have started to solidify and

improve the use of two communication strategies, HANEN and the use of AAC devices namely Core Boards.

Throughout the year we provide free training sessions to families of our young people and hope to open this up to the wider community at some point in the future or expand the range of topics we deliver to include the Statementing Process, Behaviour management and sensory integration.

The purpose of the charity is to improve and enrich the lives of young people with learning disabilities and help them enjoy school by providing them with a safe, secure learning environment and give them access to materials and resources to enable them to learn, thrive and grow.

Achievements & Areas for Improvement

This section outlines the main achievements of the charity since January 2023 until publication of this report in February 2024.

Some of our achievements this year include the following:

- During the year, we ran online training sessions for parents on a number of topics including behaviour basics, sensory processing & communication. We hope to expand the range of topics this year and offer them to other professionals and the wider community.
- Following on from a successful pupil placement funded by the Education Authority, we have increased the number of pupil places which are funded by the Authority. This has increased from two pupils in the 21/22 academic year to eight for the academic year 2024/25. Additionally, following Annual Review meetings with these families, the eight funded pupil places will continue at Sensations Nest for the 2024/25 academic year. We are also discussing bringing one more pupil to be funded by the EA from January 2025.
- At the end of the 2023-24 school year we supported the transition of two pupils to other educational establishments in collaboration with parents, the Education Authority and Educational Psychology.
- Plans have been drawn up about a potential expansion to Sensations Nest that would involve turning two unoccupied outbuildings into classrooms so we could increase pupil capacity.

Areas for development include:

- Continuing to improve the practice of special education for the benefit of our pupils and their families. Specifically, extending communication strategies with support from SLT. Additionally, we will strengthen the assessment procedures to ensure we are reflecting on practice to help improve outcomes for children.
- Developing a comprehensive staff development program to enable staff to become the best practitioners they can be.

- The development of grant applications to expand on the number of programs we can offer to our pupils and the wider community. Mr McKee will explore the possibility of taking part in a course to develop knowledge related to successful grant applications.
- Following discussion with architects and town planners about potential extension of Nest outbuildings, Mr McKee will try to find potential funding sources.

Statement regarding to the Commission's Public benefit requirement

This section is written following guidance issued by the Commission under section 4(b)' of the Charities Act (the public benefit requirement statutory guidance). This report has referred to our purposes/objects, beneficiaries, the activities we engage in, our achievements.

We currently have no private beneficiaries benefitting from our purposes or activities, nor are we aware of any harm stemming from our purposes.

As our families are fee paying, we understand that this will restrict some families from accessing our services. However, these fees enable us to cover some of the costs involved and are necessary for our operation. Additionally, there are other educational facilities that are funded by the Education Authority.

Financial Position – February 2024

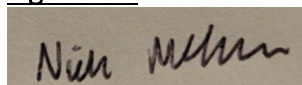
In September 2024 the Nest's main source of income comes from parents paying fees. Currently full-time fees are charged at £850 per month and part-time are charged at £650.00 per month, we currently have one full-time placement and one part-time placement. We are also receiving funding from the Education Authority for eight pupils. We will explore the possibility of securing funding from the EA for more pupils this school year if the opportunity arises and it may happen because of high numbers of pupils that have not received a placement in a suitable school as of September 2024.

Any funds that the Nest generates are used for the running of the school. This includes payment of utility bills including internet connection, resources to improve teaching and learning outcomes, maintenance and upkeep of the school grounds and buildings.

The charity has no fund that is materially in deficit and is currently developing a reserves policy that will stipulate how funds held over are used. In the future the Nest hopes to create it's own payroll and pay the staff members that work daily at the school on the Clontonacally Road. This maybe possible at some point in the 2024/25 school year depending on the final number of pupils we have.

Report Author: Nicholas McKee

Signature: Nicholas McKee

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in dark ink. The signature appears to be 'Nik McKee' written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.