Gender Pay Report

Background:

At Castle School Education Trust (CSET), our people are our greatest asset, and 75% of our workforce are female. We are committed to a culture where recruitment is unbiased, pay is transparent, and professional growth is accessible to all. By addressing the barriers to equality today, we are building a more inclusive future for our staff and the students they inspire.

Summary:

This report provides a summary of the gender pay gap reporting requirements, as well as a considered analysis and explanation of the data and findings. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 as an employer with over 250 employees, CSET is required to publish statutory gender pay gap calculations every year.

The following gender pay gap information is required:

• Gender pay gap (mean and median averages).

• Gender bonus gap (mean and median averages).

• Proportion of men and women receiving bonuses.

• Proportion of men and women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure.

This report provides a transparent snapshot of our workforce as of 31 March 2025, available publicly on both the CSET and Government websites. It is important to distinguish between the Gender Pay Gap—which measures the difference in average hourly earnings across the entire Trust—and Equal Pay. While the pay gap often reflects the distribution of roles, Equal Pay is a legal and moral mandate to ensure equal pay for equal work. At CSET, we don't just comply with legislation; we are passionately committed to pay equity, ensuring every colleague is rewarded fairly for the vital value they bring to our schools.

Gender Pay Data:

At the time of reporting, 25% of employees were male and 75% were female. Our mean and median pay gaps are as follows:

Mean Pay Gap	Median Pay Gap
18%	40%

a. Mean Pay Gap:

The mean gender pay gap is 18%. This is the difference in average hourly pay for males compared to females at all levels across CSET. The average hourly pay rate for each gender is:

Female	Male
£26.95	£32.81

b. Median Pay Gap:

The median pay gap is 40 % and represents the midpoint across a list of values. If we list all females and males, the median is the middle number. The median pay gap is the percentage difference in average hourly pay for the middle male compared to the middle female working for CSET. The median hourly pay rate for each gender is:

Female	Male
£13.69	£25.02

c. Gender Pay Quartiles:

The distribution of male and females is shown in the pay quartiles. These are calculated by splitting the whole workforce into four equal parts based on hourly pay from lowest to highest. The percentage of male and female is then calculated for each quartile.

Quartiles	Female %	Male %
Lower	84%	16%
Lower Middle	81%	19%
Upper Middle	61%	39%
Upper	73%	27%
Total Percentage of workforce	75%	25%

Commentary and Benchmarking:

Our gender pay gap data presents a difference in the average hourly pay received by male and female employees at CSET as of 31 March 2025. The trust notes the gap has increased since the data was collected on 31 March 2024 with a mean increase of 4%.

Whilst there has been a small increase, it is important we benchmark ourselves against other similar organisations. A review of gender pay gap data (from 31 March 2024) for other multi academy trusts (with over 1,000 employees) show mean gender pay gaps from 12% to 27%. Our current gap is 18%, whilst we are disappointed this has increased, we recognise we still fall within the middle to lower part of this range. The same is true for the median which ranges from 14% to 48% in other trusts, ours is currently 40%. We are however committed to improving this in future reporting.

The overall workforce within our trust is predominantly female, which is consistent with the sector. Education has a predominance of women, and our trust with 75% of the workforce is not out of kilter with the sector. Our challenge is to see this percentage within each of the quartiles. Therefore, this becomes our benchmark when considering the pay quartiles. The snapshot data demonstrates the lower quartiles exceed the overall workforce benchmark data of 75% for women. Whereas the upper quartiles snapshot data is under the overall workforce benchmark data.

When benchmarking our pay quartiles against national education averages, a clear picture of our workforce emerges. CSET significantly outperforms the national average for female representation in

the Upper Quartile (Leadership) and remains consistently within the expected range for the Lower and Lower Middle quartiles. Our primary area for strategic focus is the Upper Middle Quartile, where our female representation currently sits 9% below the lowest national educational benchmark. This identifies a specific opportunity for us to support the progression of staff into senior professional and middle leadership roles.

Quartiles	CSET Female %	National Education Average Female %
Lower	84%	85-92%
Lower Middle	81%	80-85%
Upper Middle	61%	70-75%
Upper	73%	55-65%

Our quartile data demonstrates a divided picture. We are a national leader in female representation at the highest level (Upper Quartile), significantly exceeding sector benchmarks. However, we have identified a 'bottleneck' in our Upper Middle Quartile, where female representation sits 9% below the national average. Our focus for the coming year will be on understanding how we can better support the transition from middle to senior management, ensuring that the talented females in our 'upper middle' bracket have the clear pathways and flexible structures they need to progress into the leadership roles where we already see so much success.

Ironically, because we have so many females in the Upper quartile, but also a huge majority in the Lower quartile,, our average is being pulled in two directions. If we can address the 9% gap in the Upper Middle, our overall Pay Gap will likely drop significantly because it balances the distribution of females across the pay scales.

We are aware more generally, within the education sector there are a significant number of part time and term time positions available. These flexible working arrangements can often be accommodated in support roles which include centrally-based functions like HR and finance, and some school-based roles like educational support, lunchtime supervisors and teaching assistants, which can fall within our lower and lower middle quartiles. Generally, parents who wish to be employed, but also retain a work-life balance which enables them to care for their children, have sought these types of posts, which has historically attracted a higher proportion of women. The attraction of men to these roles continues to be a challenge but we remain in our commitment to achieve equal distribution of both men and women throughout our job roles. Our data for the lower quartile is just below national averages for the sector.

To help with the gender pay gap, our challenge is twofold, we need to dismantle any real or perceived barriers to progression for females looking to progress into middle management, whilst diversifying our lower-paid roles to ensure a more equitable distribution of gender across the entire Trust.

Actions for this year to address the gender pay gap:

- To understand why female representation in our Upper Middle quartile currently sits 9% below the national benchmark, we will consider completing a Career Progression Survey at the appropriate time, to identify whether the barriers are cultural (confidence/perception), structural (flexibility/childcare), or procedural (recruitment/TLR's). This targeted insight will allow us to move beyond data reporting and into meaningful action.
- Consider targeted actions to increase male representation, to provide our children with a diverse range of role models. By balancing our lower quartiles too, we can naturally reduce our Gender Pay Gap while building a more inclusive culture for everyone.
- Launch of Neonatal policy within our suite of family leave policies. By providing additional support during the most stressful family periods, we may reduce the likelihood of high-performing staff resigning or stepping down to lower-responsibility roles.
- Continuation of commitment of training and CPD for line managers on positive behaviours and expectations of middle leaders.
- Complete a review of the actions taken in response to the Sexual Harassment Mandatory Duty to consider impact and how we can continue to positively respond to and promote our position. A culture where staff feel safe and respected is a prerequisite for equity.
- Review our recruitment and selection strategy and trust's supporting policies.
- Considerable efforts have been made, since this data was collected, to adopt a proactive approach in supporting schools to respond to flexible working requests as favourably as possible, or to present creative alternatives, where operationally feasible. This work will continue and we hope will positively influence the data collection for the next gender pay report.
- As we continue our continuous improvement journey as a Trust we will continue to regularly challenge our perceptions and practices in line with expectations of employers in today's world of work. Key to this is a proactive response to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) agenda which has been identified as future trust priority.
- It is anticipated CSET will soon merge with TPLT to create a new family of schools called Pathway Trust. As part of this merger a People Strategy for the new Trust will be designed which will give us an opportunity to reassess the actions we will take collectively across our new Trust to close the gender pay gap.

Summary:

Our commitment to closing the gender pay gap is beyond one of compliance, we recognise it is a fundamental pillar of our identity as we strive to become an employer of choice. We recognise that gender pay gap is often a symptom of untapped potential and systemic barriers for both men and women.

Beyond the more simple actions identified above, we have ambitions longer term for targeted career and leadership pathways as well as continuing to consider ways of providing flexibility for a workforce with changing needs and priorities. We have also identified the importance of considering strategic ways to increase male representation in education. We are committed to building a workplace where career trajectory is defined by expertise and ambition, not by

gender, family commitments, or life stage. For our staff, this means equity; for our children, it means being led by the very best, most diverse team possible.

Feedback:

For any questions or comments on this report, please contact Kate Winsor (Director of People) at HR@cset.co.uk

Declaration
I confirm that the above information has been prepared from our payroll provider data on the snapshot date and fairly represents the Gender Pay information for CSET.

Signed: William Roberts, Chief Executive Officer