

Summarised Inspection Findings

Knox Academy

East Lothian Council

SEED No: 5555930

28 March 2017

School Name **Knox Academy**
Council: **East Lothian Council**
SEED number: **5555930**
Roll (Sep 2015): **763**

Attendance, 93 per cent in 2014/15, is generally in line with the national average (92 per cent in 2014/15).

In February 2016, 5 per cent of pupils were registered for free school meals

In September 2015 fewer than 5 of the pupils in the school lived in the 20 per cent most deprived datazones in Scotland

In September 2015 the school reported that 25 per cent of pupils had additional support needs

The school is located in Haddington and serves the town of Haddington (an accessible small town) and surrounding area.

The school includes Meadowpark, a local authority communications provision catering for young people with communication difficulties. This facility opened in August 2015 and is now located in a separate building located 5 minutes' walk from the school. The facility has capacity for 30 young people. There are currently 6 young people attending Meadowpark.

1.3 LEADERSHIP OF CHANGE

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on collaborative leadership at all levels to develop a shared vision for change and improvement which is meaningful and relevant to the context of the school within its community. Planning for continuous improvement should be evidence-based and linked to effective self-evaluation. Senior leaders should ensure the need for change is well understood and that the pace of change is appropriate to ensure the desired positive impact for learners. The themes are:

- Developing a shared vision, values and aims relevant to the school and its community
 - Strategic planning for continuous improvement
 - Implementing improvement and change.
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- The vision, values and aims of Knox Academy have been in place for a number of years. The school plans to refresh these in the near future to take account of the views of all stakeholders, as well as the school's context. Whilst the values of wisdom, respect and engagement are evident in the majority of classes, mutual respect is not always encouraged and upheld consistently. The school should continue with the planned work to refresh the vision, values and aims across the cluster and within the context of the Haddington community. The headteacher values the involvement and empowerment of all stakeholders. Young people's views are encouraged through their ongoing participation in departmental reviews and the pupil council. Senior leaders should continue to develop strategies to engage with and listen to the views of all staff. The school has succeeded in its stated objective to improve its engagement in the community. Positive and productive relationships have been established with a range of partners including local community organisations and businesses. Through East Lothian Community Planning Partnership a local Area Partnership model has been established. The Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership, on which the school is represented, has a very good collective understanding of the social, economic and cultural context of the local community. An Area Profile has been produced containing comprehensive information on the local economy and population including details of educational attainment and employment to support partners to develop their shared plans. The school is valued as an active partner in the local community. This has resulted in young people gaining opportunities to volunteer and develop leadership skills through working with local organisations. Work by young people and school staff with community groups has had a positive impact on the local community. Members of the school senior leadership team intend to develop a more systematic approach to joint self-evaluation with partners to inform their plans for improvement more effectively. The school is at an early stage in making appropriate use of and implementing the Careers Education Standard and Work Placement Standard.
 - Although planning is now more focused, and reflects national, local and school priorities, there are weaknesses in the whole school approach to strategic planning. The school should develop a coherent and progressive improvement plan which uses and builds on rich data which the school has collected as part of its self-evaluation. The plan should be developed collaboratively with all stakeholders to underpin and inform the school's future work, including provision at Meadowpark Communications

Provision. Greater alignment between the school improvement plan and faculty plans would help to achieve coherence and reduce bureaucracy. The school improvement plan needs to articulate how priorities to improve health and wellbeing are being taken forward.

- Senior leaders need to take a more strategic approach to change whilst promoting a culture with high expectations of all, in a learning environment that is supportive and nurturing. Teachers value current development work related to learning and teaching and talk positively about its impact. However other key areas of work have not been taken forward. Teachers highlight that many policy changes have been implemented recently which could have taken greater account of a range of other workload demands. The pace of change has been fast in some areas and in other areas the pace of change is not sufficient. To avoid fragmentation in leading change, the senior leadership team should work and plan together to take forward key aspects of school improvement. Self-evaluation is beginning to have a higher profile in the school through the implementation of structured faculty reviews and more regular sharing of practice. In order to ensure that all members of staff value these initiatives, members of the senior leadership team must ensure their practice and expectations are applied consistently. Recently restructured management team meetings are increasing communication and the sharing of practice between members of the senior leadership team and faculty heads. There is scope to develop these further. Most faculty heads speak positively about their increasing leadership role in school initiatives. However, they would benefit from more time to collaborate, share practice, plan, and learn from one another. Assisted by more focused school improvement and robust professional review and development processes, middle leaders should ensure that all staff are enabled to develop further their leadership skills. This would promote ambition and enhance learning, teaching and assessment leading to improved outcomes for learners. The school shows commitment to teachers' professional learning. This is exemplified by the significant number of staff who participate in SQA procedural duties, local authority leadership courses, and cooperative learning activities. Teachers are also encouraged to enhance the school's capacity for improvement through leading initiatives such as redesigning the school's website and Eco Schools. These practices should continue in order to develop the school's capacity for improvement. Whilst staff in Meadowpark reflect on their current practice to improve their work in the provision they would benefit from working more collaboratively with their colleagues across the school. There is significant scope to include Meadowpark more fully in whole school improvement.

2.3 LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

satisfactory

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Learning and engagement*
 - *Quality of teaching*
 - *Effective use of assessment*
 - *Planning, tracking and monitoring.*
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- In most classes relationships between learners and teachers are positive. Learners are motivated by their experiences and most report that they enjoy learning at school. Young people within the senior phase demonstrate a strong motivation to maximise their attainment. Within the broad general education, learners would benefit from developing greater resilience to overcome challenges that they encounter and a more positive approach to learning. In a minority of lessons low-level misbehaviour disrupts learning and teaching. On a few occasions the disruption can be more significant. Valuing learning, and respecting the learning process should be promoted as key tenets of the school.
 - Learners are playing an increasing role in the school and the community with leadership roles particularly assumed by young people in the senior phase. The provision of opportunities for leadership of learning in all year groups should now be extended to build on the positive input of the Pupil Learning Team. This will support all young people to engage in improving further their experience of learning. While in some classes young people take responsibility for aspects of their learning and often work effectively in small groups, this is not sufficiently common across the school. There is a need to develop approaches that encourage independent learning more widely.
 - Young people's learning is being enhanced through the use of digital technology. The school has begun to establish contexts where digital learning promotes the development of skills and provides opportunities for inter-active engagement in classrooms. Positive examples of this include widespread use of mobile devices and emerging innovative use of inter-active digital approaches. Digital technology is also used to support independent learning by making lessons and resources available on a platform that can be accessed at home. Parents can also support this learning by accessing the school website particularly the section "Supporting Your Learner." The school can now build on these approaches to develop a strategic approach to digital learning.
 - The quality of teaching is variable. Most lessons are whole class and teacher directed, with too few opportunities for young people to lead learning. While some teachers create positive contexts for independent and cooperative learning, at other times learners' experiences are too passive. The school's recently introduced policy on learning and teaching has the potential to lead to improvements in the consistency

of high quality learning and teaching. There is emerging evidence that young people are more aware of what they are learning and what success looks like. This practice can now be shared more widely.

- At times experiences are not planned to meet young people's varying needs. Staff should continue to develop their approaches to differentiation to ensure that learning is planned at an appropriate level for all learners. Ensuring the pace of learning is sufficiently challenging for all young people and embedding differentiation are key targets. This will ensure learners are appropriately supported and challenged. To complement the school's commitment to Growth Mindset, learners would benefit from teachers planning more consistently for the development of higher order thinking skills. The school has also identified questioning and feedback as aspects of professional learning to take forward as part of their professional learning programme. Young people receive regular feedback on their progress in almost all curricular areas from teachers through tracking and learning conversations. This feedback is supporting them to set targets. The timing of the conversations is linked to the reporting cycle. Young people, particularly in the senior phase, welcome the advice which they are receiving when reviewing their targets. However, targets agreed during learning conversations are not always accessible to learners and are not re-visited with sufficient frequency. Teachers should continue to develop the quality of their feedback to ensure it clearly identifies in which aspects of their learning young people need to improve and the specific steps they need to take to bring about improvement. Sharing the language of learning with young people will help them develop ownership more fully of their learning needs and next steps.
- The SLT consulted widely with pupils, staff and parents and recently launched an assessment policy, with a shift in focus to develop a clearer understanding of the role of assessment in supporting learning. In the senior phase young people are aware of their target grades for National Qualifications and speak positively about the way in which learning conversations support their awareness of strengths and development needs. The learning conversations furnish aspirational targets and feed into the tracking, monitoring and reporting cycle. This is supporting early intervention for young people not on track with their learning which is monitored at department and whole-school level.
- In the broad general education, the school is working to develop a clearer understanding of how assessment is supporting learning and teaching across the BGE. At present faculties indicate varying levels of confidence in the robustness of their assessments and the evidence which is being used. All staff are working towards a secure understanding of what it means to achieve a level at planned in-service events. The school should continue to develop its practices, taking account of new national benchmarks where appropriate, to ensure assessment evidence covers breadth, depth and application of learning and provides a sound basis for planning future learning. In some subjects there is emerging strong practice and the school should, as planned, share this at the upcoming in-service events. The school should also ensure clarity in the distinction between the effective use of assessment to plan learning and meet needs and the use of assessment information to track progress. In some subjects outcomes of assessment include clarity of next steps to support further learning and how successful young people have been in developing particular

skills. Such effective approaches now need to be extended across the school.

- The school has recently developed a broad general education database which provides useful information on young people's attainment in literacy and numeracy, standardised assessment information, ASN, SIMD. Teachers should continue to develop their use of data, including data from Insight and achievement of a level information from associated primary schools. When supported by robust assessment judgements, this will provide clear information about attainment and support planning to ensure all learners, including those with additional support needs, build on prior learning and make appropriate and well-paced progress.
- There is a positive nurturing ethos in Meadowpark. Relationships between staff and young people are positive and there is a clear commitment to respecting children's rights. Young people are motivated and engaged in well-planned learning activities most of the time. Most learning activities are relevant, enjoyable and well matched to young people's needs. Staff provide rich learning experiences which support the development of young people's skills for learning and life with particular focus placed upon independent living skills. There is scope to further differentiate learning activities to provide increased challenge for some young people.
- The school is at the early stages of developing effective processes to track and monitor of young people's progress in Meadowpark. Staff now need to develop robust assessment, tracking and monitoring processes which provide reliable evidence to measure young people's progress. The school also needs to plan to ahead to ensure young people move successfully from the BGE into the Senior Phase.

2.2 CURRICULUM: Theme 3, Learning Pathways

- Across S1 and S2 learning is planned using third and fourth curriculum level experiences and outcomes (E&Os). The current approach focuses on planning units of work which are delivered in the same way to all learners at Knox Academy. This lack of differentiation is resulting in learning pathways which are not always articulated to the needs of young people, including those with additional support needs. The course choice arrangement at the end of S2 encourages young people to decide on the subjects they wish to study for S3 and S4. While this provides appropriate progression through the BGE into the senior phase for most young people, senior leaders recognise that not all young people access third level Es & Os in all curricular areas by the end of S2. Staff are aware of the need to ensure that all young people receive their full entitlements. There is specialisation at fourth level for young people in S3 which is supporting them to progress to learning in the senior phase. The school recognises that some young people would benefit from continuing with third level experiences and outcomes in S3. The school has made a sound start in collating the progress made by young people across the BGE. This assessment information should inform pathways and better support young people in making informed choices.
- The senior phase offers young people clear progression pathways for all curricular areas and subjects. There are a range of qualifications from National 3 to Advanced Higher for young people. A strength of the school includes the wide range of Advanced Highers. In recent years, the school has broadened the number and range of National Qualifications for young people. The introduction of new courses such as environmental science, computer games development and engineering systems is helping to meet the needs of young people. In planning for appropriate progression, consideration now needs to be given to further develop a broader range of flexible learning pathways in the senior phase to support all young people to achieve the best possible level of qualifications and accreditation. This might include courses leading to qualifications over a more flexible time frame.
- Partners contribute effectively to learning pathways for young people in senior phase. These pathways include work placements with local organisations, attending college courses and a wide range of accredited awards. The school is actively seeking ways to increase subject choice in the senior phase including options for young people to take up vocational learning opportunities. At present there are a number of constraints on senior phase subject choice. Discussions of developing a common senior phase timetable and consortia arrangements with other East Lothian secondary schools have not yet resulted in a clear plan for implementation. As a result the few young people who take up the opportunity to study other subjects at neighbouring schools risk missing some classes in Knox Academy depending on specific arrangements. The school recognises that further work is required to ensure that young people sustain and complete college courses.
- The school is at the early stages of developing literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing across the curriculum as a responsibility of all. There have been positive steps to share literacy across the school with training session during in-service days and common approaches to correction. Members of the numeracy committee should proceed as planned with their strategy for the development and assessment of

numeracy across learning within the school. This has the potential to raise further attainment and improve progress for young people across the school.

- Meadowpark is at the early stages of developing flexible learning pathways. There is scope to increase the involvement of the wider Knox Academy community and its facilities to ensure young people access high-quality learning experiences in all curricular areas.

2.7 PARTNERSHIPS: Theme 3, Impact on learners and families – Parental Engagement

- The Chair of the Parent Council (CPC) reports a positive partnership with the school, with an open and transparent dialogue at Council meetings. Communications between school and parents have been improved with the re- designed school website. The useful electronic calendar provides helpful information to inform parents of key dates of for example, assessments and enables them to support their children with their learning. The regular bulletins keep them well informed about various activities and events in the school. Social media also provides a useful means of communication.
- Areas that the Parent Council would like to improve include the level of parental engagement with the school. While parental responses were mostly positive in the pre-inspection questionnaire and in meetings with the inspection team, the response rate for the pre-inspection questionnaire was 18%. The Parent Council reports that around 20% of parents regularly engage with the school and Parent Council and they want to see this increase.
- There is scope to engage parents more fully in their children’s learning. For example, the school should involve parents more in school improvement planning. This should also include opportunities for parents to engage in activities which evaluate the quality of the school’s work.

2.1: SAFEGUARDING

- The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and where appropriate, young people. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school/centre and the education authority that need to be addressed as a matter of urgency.

3.1 ENSURING WELLBEING, EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

weak

This indicator focuses on the impact of the school's approach to wellbeing which underpins children and young people's ability to achieve success. It highlights the need for policies and practices to be well grounded in current legislation and a shared understanding of the value of every individual. A clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and protected characteristics supports all learners to maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

- *Wellbeing*
 - *Fulfilment of statutory duties*
 - *Inclusion and equality.*
- The headteacher is committed to ensuring that the school provides a kind, caring environment for every young person. She welcomes parents and community partners who feel highly valued by the school. The school works effectively with third sector partners and community learning and development staff to meet the needs of a few young people at risk of disengaging from learning. The majority of young people are benefiting from positive relationships. Pupils are well supported by their peers and senior young people in the majority of classes. Classroom assistants provide effective support and help to ensure that young people remain on task and progress in their learning. At times, when expectations are too low, young people disrupt the learning of others and do not always demonstrate mutual respect. All staff need to set clear expectations and boundaries for young people.
 - For a few young people at intervals and lunchtime, the Base provides a safe nurturing environment, where literacy and numeracy learning is also promoted and encouraged. Pupils identify guidance staff as friendly and approachable. Guidance staff value teaching their own caseload and consider that this provides regular opportunities to get to know young people as individuals. A few young people lack sufficient confidence to raise concerns. Further work is required to ensure that all pupils are benefiting from their entitlement to high-quality personalised support. A comprehensive overview of incidents of equality (including through social media) is required to ensure all young people feel included and well-supported, and that the number of incidents is reduced. A few young people, who have attended family therapy within the school believe that it has improved their performance, positively increased their chances of remaining at school and reduced family stress. Most young people benefit from strategies to support mental wellbeing around examination pressures, such as additional help from teachers at lunchtimes , supported study, sitting exams in separate rooms and being given extra time.
 - The school has effective learning, teaching and assessment strategies in place to raise attainment and achievement. Many teachers are working hard to find out and respond to the individual needs of young people. Professional learning has supported staff to meet some additional support needs better, for example autism. However outcomes for learners with additional support needs requires improvement through the systematic identification and sharing of appropriate information to help staff plan their learning and build on prior attainment. Information sharing protocols require to be updated. Meetings at which support and proposed interventions are discussed lack clear outcomes or plans for review. The school is not making

effective use of the staged assessment and intervention process. The school should ensure that young people who identify as being carers are appropriately supported. Overall for young people with additional support needs, the school's approach to targeted support has important weaknesses, including poor communication, and the lack of well-planned, evaluated and monitored interventions.

- The school plans to introduce the wellbeing indicators to S1 and develop the use of the wellbeing web approach to self-assessment. Young people completed a health and wellbeing survey (2014) which identified a number of strengths and areas for action. These have not yet been addressed. Staff have reviewed whole-school approaches to staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic wellbeing. From this a number of areas for school improvement were proposed. The school improvement plan does not articulate how these and national priorities to improve health and wellbeing are being taken forward. Staff have an awareness of the wellbeing indicators through GIRFEC training, but little other learning, and varying levels of understanding. Overall, staff understanding of their own roles and responsibilities to improve the wellbeing of all young people is too variable. As a result, young people are not sufficiently well-informed about factors which impact on their own wellbeing. Young people need more information and signposting to help themselves. The school should take forward a strategic plan for wellbeing, equality and inclusion to improve outcomes for all young people, their families and staff.
- The personal and social education (PSE) programme does not provide young people with enough opportunities to explore equalities and diversity, including ethnicity, disability and gender stereotypes. It is not sufficiently based on the experiences and outcomes to ensure progression in learning. An audit of the curricular coverage of health and wellbeing has been conducted. This showed gaps in the curricular provision which have not yet been addressed or taken forward. Work has been done through assemblies with young people to explore attitudes to homosexuality and diversity.
- The school should consider reviewing policies and procedures to ensure that current legislative requirements are met. Procedures around Looked after Children require review. Prevention and management of exclusions should take account of the rights and wellbeing of young people. School interventions to address attendance issues, late-coming and un-authorized absence require to be monitored and evaluated in a robust and rigorous manner. Young people whose needs are best met through a temporary reduction in the number of hours at school should have this carefully negotiated, recorded and monitored. Improvements require to be made to the provision of food and drinks in school to ensure all aspects of the Health Promotion and Nutrition Act are being met, including promoting appropriate food choices within the dining hall. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and catering service.
- In line with national expectations there is a need to develop and implement a plan to improve provision for religious and moral education (RME) in S5/S6 to ensure all learners have their entitlement to a high-quality continuing element of RME until the end of S6 met. The school is not in line with current statutory requirements regarding

religious observance.

- Young people who are based in Meadowpark are welcomed and included in the school dining room. There is scope to include young people based in Meadowpark more regularly, and more often, and vice versa when it is appropriate to do so.
- The learning environment in Meadowpark provides a positive learning space. The rooms are well equipped to support the development of young people's skills for learning, life and work. Young people attending Meadowpark are treated with dignity and respect and enjoy their lessons. Staff respond well to the wellbeing needs of each young person. For example when supporting them physically to complete artwork or eating in the Knox Academy food court. The school should now develop further Meadowpark staff's understanding and use of the language of the wellbeing indicators.
- Young people attending Meadowpark access a limited range of subjects in the mainstream setting in Knox Academy including music, technology, PE, art and the school library. The school needs to develop further Meadowpark young people's experience of being a member of the wider Knox Academy school community. The school, with the support of the local authority, should strive to ensure all young people attending Meadowpark receive their full entitlement to education.
- Young people and their families are well supported by staff in Meadowpark and feel welcome and included in the life of the provision. Parents state they are treated with respect and are involved in decisions regarding their young person's wellbeing. Attendance at Meadowpark is leading to positive outcomes for young people. For example an improvement in young people's engagement in learning and increased levels of independence.

3.2 RAISING ATTAINMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT

good

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

- *Attainment in literacy and numeracy*
- *Attainment over time*
- *Overall quality of learners' achievement*
- *Equity for all learners.*

Attainment in literacy and numeracy

BGE

- The school provided the following data: In 2016, by the end of S3 almost all young people achieved third curriculum level in literacy and almost all achieved third curriculum level in numeracy. These figures are also published on the Scottish Government website. Most young people achieved fourth level in literacy and a majority achieved fourth level in numeracy by the end of S3.

Senior phase

Leavers

- **Attainment of young people in literacy by the time of leaving school:** the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF levels 5+ and 6 in literacy has increased between 2014 and 2015. Trends are positive over the 5 year period at SCQF levels 3+ to 6, although there is not a consistently improving trend. The school performs significantly higher than the virtual comparator (VC) at SCQF 3+,4+ and 5+ in the latest year and is overall in line with, or significantly higher than, the VC over the 5 year period.
- **Attainment in numeracy by the time of leaving school:** the percentage of young people attaining at SCQF levels 4+ and 6 in numeracy has increased between 2014 and 2015 (maintained at SCQF level 5+). Trends are positive over the 5 year period at SCQF levels 3+ to 6 although, like literacy, there is not a consistently improving trend. The school performs significantly higher than the VC at SCQF 3+, 4+ and 5+ in the latest year and is overall in line with or higher than the VC over the 5 year period.

As young people move through the school from S4 to S6:

In S4, the percentage of young people attaining **literacy** at SCQF levels 3+, 4+ and 5+ is significantly higher than the VC in 2016. Almost all young people attained literacy at SCQF level 4+ in S4 in 2016 and **by S5** most attained at SCQF level 5+ (although not as a course). The school performs in line with or significantly higher than the VC across stages and SCQF levels, performing significantly much higher than the VC by S5 in 2016 at SCQF levels 3+ and 5+.

In S4, the percentage of young people attaining **numeracy** at SCQF levels 3+ and 4+ is significantly much higher or higher than the VC in 2016. Almost all young people attained at SCQF 4+ (though not as a course) in S4 in 2016. **By S5**, a majority attained at SCQF level 5+. The school performs in line with or significantly higher than the VC across stages and SCQF levels, performing significantly much

higher than the VC in 2016 in S4 at SCQF 3+ and by S5 at SCQF levels 3+ and 4+. The school should continue to provide progression for young people in literacy and numeracy skills to ensure that these skills continue to be developed throughout their senior phase.

Attainment over time

BGE

- The school is developing a useful tool that will track progress across all areas of the curriculum in the BGE. Information currently being included relates to achieving levels in all subjects along with information on standardised test scores, activities for personal achievements, SIMD and aspirational destinations on leaving school. There is currently no data showing progress over time collated at a whole school level as the tracking and monitoring is a recent development. Data on attainment in literacy and numeracy from primary schools has been made available for last school session.

Senior phase

- The school is continuing to develop the tracking and monitoring system for young people in S4 to S6. This useful tool includes agreed target and working grades which teachers discuss with individual pupils. Staff then plan interventions, such as assertive mentoring, which support learners to make better progress.
- The average total tariff score and average complementary tariff score of all leavers has increased in 2015 to the highest in 5 years and has been in line with the VC over the past 5 years. In the lowest attaining, middle attaining and highest attaining groups, the school is overall in line with the VC for most of the past 5 years. In S4, complementary tariff scores for the lowest attaining 20% and middle attaining 60% have been significantly higher than the VC for the past two years. This is carried forward into S5 in the latest year.

Breadth and Depth

Across breadth and depth measures there are a number of improving trends.

- **At S4**, the percentage of young people attaining 2+ to 6+ courses at SCQF level 5C+ is showing an overall improving trend. The percentage of young people achieving at these levels is significantly higher than the VC in 2 or more of the past 5 years. There are important improvements at SCQF 5A+ in the latest year with the percentages attaining at these levels the highest in the past 5 years for 1+ to 6+ courses.
- **By S5**, the percentage of young people attaining 1-5 courses at SCQF levels 5C+ course is showing an overall improving trend. In 2016 the percentage of young people attaining 1- 4 courses at 5C+ is significantly higher than the VC. The percentage of young people attaining 1- 3 courses at SCQF level 6C+ is showing overall improving trends. At 4+ and 5+ courses the overall trend is declining. The school performs in line, and occasionally significantly higher or much higher than the VC.
- **By S6**, the percentage of young people attaining 1 – 5 courses at SCQF level 6C+ is overall in line with the VC. The percentage of young people attaining 3+ courses at SCQF level 6A+ is significantly higher than the VC in the past two years. The percentage attaining 1 or more courses at SCQF level 7C+ is significantly higher than the VC in 3 of the past 5 years.

- In S4, at National 4 in 2016 the school performs lower than national figures in around half of subjects. At National 5, in most subjects, most young people presented passed at A-C.
- In S5/6, at National 5 and at Higher in 2016 the school performs in line with national figures across almost all subjects. Performance at Advanced Higher is in line with national figures across subjects.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- The school works well with partners to support young people's achievements. Many young people are developing confidence through participation in sporting and musical events. There are a few particularly strong examples of high quality personal achievements in rugby and hockey. The School of Rugby builds team working skills, enhances confidence and provides young people with links to local clubs within their community. High levels of participation in a broad range of out of school hours learning activities are supported by partner organisations and by teachers who run groups and clubs. Young people are encouraged to develop leadership skills and contribute to the local community through volunteering. The school was recently awarded a Saltire trophy for having the largest number of volunteers amongst East Lothian Schools. The neighbouring Bridge Centre, with which the school works closely, was also awarded a trophy for the quality of support to volunteers. Many young people gain important leadership skills and an awareness of the needs of people who are less advantaged than themselves, through volunteering. Young people raise significant funds for local, national and international charities.
- Young people in the senior phase demonstrate a strong ability to articulate the skills they have gained through working with community organisations and participating in out of school learning activities. However, their experience of linking their skills to their classroom based subject learning is mixed. There is inconsistency in how effectively learning conversations are used to support young people link skills developed out-with school to the totality of their learning.
- The school celebrates young people's achievements in assemblies and events and through newsletter and website posts. Young people are encouraged to inform staff of their personal achievements. A "wall of fame" in the school foyer publicises significant achievements and a merit system is in place to acknowledge achievement within the school. The school does not yet have a full or comprehensive overview of accreditation or certification of achievement. A number of young people are gaining the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and other forms of accreditation through participation in out of school community groups and organisations. The school should now work with partners to collate more accurate information covering the extensive range of achievements gained by young people in order to build a clear overview. This would also enable the school and its partners to identify trends in participation and achievement and proactively take steps to identify those young people at risk of missing out through taking part in few or no out of school learning opportunities.

Equity for all learners'

- The school aims to promote equity of success and achievement through work such as the Rights Respecting Schools. The school was awarded a Level 1 Award in May

2016. The monitoring and tracking database has the potential to provide a better sense of the equity of provision (equity of access to e.g. planned opportunities for personal achievement).

- **Attainment vs Deprivation:** The SIMD distribution is quite broad. According to the 2012 SIMD data there are very few young people living in the most deprived deciles 1 and 2. Most young people live in deciles 4,5,7,8, and 10. Overall, the total tariff and complementary tariff scores of leavers in each of the deciles is in line with the national figures and occasionally significantly higher than national figures in deciles 5, 8 and 9.

Destinations

- Over the past 3 years, almost all young people have entered a positive destination on leaving school. The percentage going to higher education has increased in the latest year and is in line with the VC over the 5 year period. The percentage of young people leaving school for employment has been significantly higher than the VC in 2014 and 2015. The percentage leaving for FE has been lower than the VC in 2 of the past 5 years and is below the VC in each of the past 5 years. The percentage staying on at school after S4 has been increasing and the school aims to ensure that young people stay on at school, when appropriate, to improve the breadth and level of their qualifications.
- The school now intends to undertake further work with partners to identify ways to improve the quality of opportunities for those young people entering employment on leaving school. Successful partnerships with Haddington Business Association and Canon have resulted in young people gaining employability skills and an enhanced understanding of the world of work. East Lothian Works and other senior phase partners are well informed on young people's post school progression routes and intervene with appropriate programmes to support those young people identified at risk of not achieving a positive post school destination.
- The school should continue to use Insight as an improvement tool. This will allow identification of areas that require more understanding in order to secure improvements for all young people and ensure equity of provision.

SCHOOL CHOICE OF Q.I. 2.7 PARTNERSHIPS

This indicator aims to capture the school's success in developing and maintaining strong partnership approaches which improve outcomes for learners and lead to continued self-improvement for the school and community. All partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect for the particular contribution each partner brings.

Partnerships are integral to the way a highly effective school works. The themes are:

- *the development and promotion of partnerships*
 - *collaborative learning and improvement*
 - *impact on learners.*
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- Partnerships with other establishments, organisations and businesses are used to broaden and deepen young people's learning and to enable them to achieve success in wider contexts. This work is planned by senior leaders to enhance the curriculum. Community links are becoming increasingly part of the life and work of the school. The school is developing a higher and positive profile within the community.
 - Partners working together with the school enjoy highly positive relationships and communicate well at both formal and informal levels. The school is represented on the local Area Partnership under which a children and young people's sub-group has recently been formed. CLD partners are engaged in regular headteacher cluster meetings and Multi-Agency Meetings (MAM Group) are held amongst several agencies to focus on improving outcomes for identified children and young people. The school should build on these relationships by working with other professionals in providing integrated services to support young people. Staff could make better use of multi-agency working to meet the needs of their young people.
 - Management information systems should be systematic and enable all partners to have access to the information they need to ensure young people's wellbeing and improve their learning. Young people and their families should be fully aware of any information held about them and with whom it might be shared. Consideration should be given to how partners, young people, families and stakeholders are actively involved in decision making at all stages.
 - Structured opportunities for collaboration amongst partners in the local community have been established through the Area Partnership. There are clear examples of shared self-evaluation although partners recognise that they now need to take a more systematic approach to jointly monitoring and evaluating their work. Their capacity to develop a clearer shared overview of the impact and outcomes of their work on learners could be further improved by combining information and analysing the data they have on needs, participation and achievement. For example, surveys of young people's involvement and achievement have been undertaken and there is strong awareness of high levels of volunteering. However, the school is not yet able to provide a comprehensive overview of levels of accreditation and achievement gained by young people in out of school settings. There is scope to further develop a shared understanding of the skills young people are gaining through their engagement with partner organisations and ensure that young people are more consistently provided with opportunities to discuss their learning and achievement in school.

- The school is well represented on East Lothian's partnership arrangements for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW). A few young people are benefiting from the establishment of the skills academy model as part of East Lothian's approach to local economic development. Four are engaged in the construction academy and 11 in the creative industries. The school intends to expand opportunities in the skills academies as part of its improvement plan.
- Work experience is offered for one week at the end of S3. A few young people are able to take up more flexible opportunities at other stages. The school recognises that it needs to improve its approach to work placement in order to meet the current standard. Through developing relationships with partners the school is building the capacity to take a more personalised, tailored and flexible approach to work placement.
- Young people benefit from participation in a wide range of learning opportunities delivered by partners working with the school. A recent survey completed by 463 young people from S1 to S6 found that 85% of young people took part in out of school hours learning activities. Young people's participation in sport and music has resulted in some very high quality examples of personal achievement, including individual success at national level. Young people reported the impact of successful partnership working with local clubs through the School of Rugby. A recent partnership initiative focused on targeting a few young people at risk to enable them to re-engage in learning and benefit from a drugs education programme delivered by Crew 2000. Partners working together in the senior phase work well together to develop skills for employment including through engagement with local organisations to provide opportunities to develop leadership, team working and skills for work. A paired reading initiative engaging University of the Third Age and volunteers from local churches has contributed to improvement in literacy.
- CLD partners have worked with early years' centres and primary schools to engage parents in their children's learning. There is scope to explore how this capacity could be used to help the school engage all parents more fully, particularly those parents who currently find it difficult to attend parents' meetings and parents' evenings.
- There are examples of transition arrangements working in partnership with other local associated primaries. The mathematics department is planning collaboratively to develop a shared understanding of progress both within the school and with primary partners. There is scope for these arrangements to be extended to ensure young people continue to build their knowledge and skills to maintain an appropriate pace of progress.
- The school should continue building on its links with global partners to develop young people as global citizens with an appreciation of Scotland's place within the world. Examples such as the school's twinned school in France at Aubigny and fundraising activities for nations such as Rwanda could be linked more widely to international education. This has the potential to further develop young people's understanding of different cultures and diversity.

PARTICULAR STRENGTHS OF THE SCHOOL

- The headteacher is successfully engaging with a range of partners in the local community, including businesses. These partnerships successfully enhance the curriculum and increase young people's successes and achievements. As a result of the school's increasing community links young people are engaged in volunteering and develop their leadership skills through working with local organisations.
- From S4 to S6, the curriculum offers young people a wide range of courses leading to qualifications. There are a commendable number of courses leading to Advanced Higher. Young people are attaining well in National Qualifications.
- There is emerging practice in digital technology which is extending young people's learning. Examples include using digital platforms for learning conversations and giving access to courses and materials.

AGREED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT FOR THE SCHOOL

- The school should involve all stakeholders in revisiting the vision and values of Knox Academy to ensure that there is a shared understanding of respect and the value of learning. This work should underpin improvements in collaborative self-evaluation and school improvement planning.
- A new re-invigorated whole school approach to equalities and inclusion is required. The school should review policies and procedures to ensure a clear focus on ensuring wellbeing entitlements and high-quality support.
- The school has consulted widely to develop a very helpful learning and teaching policy. While implementing this policy, the school should continue to focus on ensuring young people experience consistently high quality learning that meets their needs.
- Staff should build on the approach to discussing progress with learners in S4 to S6 to support all young people across the school to know their own strengths and next steps in learning.