



## CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Knox Academy is a coeducational comprehensive school in East Lothian. At present there are 760 pupils on the roll but the school has capacity for over 900 pupils at the moment. The roll has dropped steadily over the past five years but is predicted to increase in the next four years to the extent that an extension to the building will be needed. The school also comprises of a Communications Provision (Meadowpark) in a separate building that is five minutes' walk from the main building.

Pupils at Knox Academy mainly come from the associated primary schools: King's Meadow, St Mary's and Yester. Each year there are a number of placing requests that are granted depending upon the roll cap and the capacity in each year group for non-catchment pupils.

The school's values are Wisdom, Engagement and Respect, and these underpin our vision to make Knox Academy a school where everyone thrives. The aims of the school are to ensure that our young people will:

- Have a strong sense of who they are, where their strengths lie, and their role in a community.
- Realise that they have potential and how to go about realising it.
- Have been challenged and know how to go about meeting challenges in the future.
- Have been happy, having experienced positive relationships and will know how to form positive relationships with others.
- Have the qualifications and skills to move on to the next phase in their lives.

The school's vision, values and aims have evolved over the years to reflect the community of which it is a part. As a learning community, Haddington Cluster, is in the process of developing a holistic set of vision, values and aims that can incorporate the individual identity of each school within the learning "whole".

The school is very diverse and truly comprehensive – the SIMD range from 3 to 10. In session 2014-15 62.58% of leavers went into higher or further education, with 29.04% going into training, employment or volunteering. In total 91.61% of pupils went into a sustained positive destination from that leavers' cohort, which is consistent with previous years.

Exam results have shown an upward trend over the past five years. At, Knox Academy, our aim is that all pupils leave with 5 qualifications from their S4 year, and this session 58.06% of pupils in S4 achieved five or more National Five qualifications.

The priorities for session 2016-17 remain:

- Continue to Raise attainment in line with the National Improvement Framework Priorities.
- Ensure that Learning and Teaching would be rated as "very good".
- Develop people, and partnerships between parents, pupils and staff.
- Continue to develop strategies to ensure that young people are prepared for the world of work.



### **How good is our leadership approach to improvement?**

There is a developing culture of self-evaluation at Knox Academy. The culture of reflection is growing and we are developing approaches to ensure that all parts of the school community are involved. Next session we will implement feedback forms to strengthen the role of parents in the co-creation of ideas for school improvement, as we have determined that this has been lacking, as some opportunities have been better taken up than others.

Departments have worked on evaluating their S1 to S3 courses over the session to ensure progression, pace and challenge and to take into account Significant Aspects of Learning. Regular faculty reviews have been instituted this session as part of the Sharing Good Practice Policy. These have involved getting pupil feedback on the work of each faculty and this has formed part of faculty action plans. Pupil opinion on their experience in the school is sought a number of ways – via the Pupil Council, through the Pupil Learning Team, and via pupil surveys and focus groups. The feedback from pupils is mainly acted upon in the action plans for the Faculty Reviews and through Pupil Council Projects. We have fed back to pupils through “you said...we did...” assemblies. The Pupil Senior Leadership Team also report back to the Parent Council at every meeting on their projects and any issues brought up by the Pupil Council.

In May 2016, all faculties undertook a Health and Wellbeing audit to ensure that, in the future, all teachers are meeting this responsibility. DHTs and Faculty Heads meet to monitor how departments are ensuring that the responsibilities of all (Literacy, Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing) are being monitored. The issues raised from the Health and Wellbeing audit will be actioned in a subsequent School Improvement Plan.

Moderation is taking place within faculties, but this needs to be more formalised and consistent (particularly in the Broad General Education) in session 2016-17. We will be working on defining the achievement of a level, and what that looks like across individual subjects and curricular areas. Following a number of faculties working on curricular transition with the associated primary schools it has been decided that collaborating with primary colleagues will enhance moderation at Knox Academy. To this end teachers of English and Maths will take part in the Cluster Moderation process of Literacy and Numeracy. This should ensure that there is a clear understanding of levels and attainment from 3 to 18. It is hoped that this will be the model for curricular working across the sectors in the future.

Developing a robust and sustainable system for tracking and monitoring in the Broad General Education has been a particular focus of the school this session. We hope to develop this process to ensure that appropriate, proportionate and targeted support for youngsters is a feature of Knox Academy e.g. including SIMD, SOSCA and achievement data. The DHT with responsibility for this action has travelled to other schools to assess our progress and to discuss good practice and how Knox Academy can improve its systems. A particular strength in this area has been the development of Learning Conversations to discuss progress and inform next steps. All pupils in the BGE take part in two formal and recorded conversations a year where targets are set and shared with parents. This means that pupils should be more confident as regards what they have to do to achieve a level.



Following some early self-evaluation and reports from parents, we are aware that feedback to pupils is not consistent and we will make this a priority for session 2016-17.

This session we have improved our tracking, monitoring, reporting and interventions programme in the senior school following faculty reviews of attainment. We continue to develop our approach to supporting senior pupils throughout their exam career through early intervention and assertive mentoring.

Further developing the school's Learning and Teaching Policy has been another priority this session. This has led to pupils getting a wider variety of learning experiences, highlighted the need for better and wider use of resources, and the need for staff to share good practice e.g. how to write quality success criteria. There has been a particular focus on assessment, how it informs next steps and getting pupils to take ownership of their learning. Following queries from parents as to how they can best support their children, we have developed a "Support Your Learner" section on the school website. This will give parents some of the information that they will need to help their child succeed – especially in the Senior Phase. We plan on instituting a "Senior Phase Information Evening" early in session 2016-17 to ensure that we adequately inform parents about the Senior Phase, its rigours and requirements.

At present, the school has 29 members of staff involved in marking for the SQA and undertaking verifier roles. This means that the pupils benefit from first-hand experience of setting, marking and verifying good practice. The Head Teacher sees this as an investment in the pupils' success and whilst recognising the cost of this, knows that the benefits are considerable.

Distributing leadership has been a priority at the school. Working groups have contributed enormously to the improvement work this session. Approximately 50% of staff have chosen to be involved, over and above their contractual obligations. These groups are: Self-Improving Schools Partnership (working with Newbattle High school and St David's High School); Pupil Voice; Literacy; Learning and Teaching; Tracking and Monitoring; Behaviour; Developing Scotland's Young Workforce; Rights Respecting Schools Award; and Curriculum. The outcomes for our young people of these groups have ranged from sharing innovative classroom practice; to demonstrating effective feedback to pupils, to ensuring that we have embedded our values into the very fabric of what we do. Whilst the centralised funding for the SISP group is no longer available we have decided that this collaboration is sustainable and we aim to continue this, to facilitate observation visits and opportunities for collegiate working. These working groups have been led by both promoted and unpromoted members of staff and have included pupils and parents where appropriate (Learning Teams in the Learning and Teaching Group; Pupil Council in Pupil Voice, RRSA).

#### **Future Developments:**

- Weekly self-evaluation discussion at Management team meetings that will then be replicated in faculties and departments.
- Working groups looking at staff engagement, and increased openness, reflection and learning in self-evaluation leading to improved planning and collegiate working.



- More involvement of partners in self-evaluation to gain further insight on what we need to do to improve outcomes for young people and to take advantage of offers of help.
- Use of Pupil Council to take forward issues raised in SEE Survey.
- Plan of action based on Health and Wellbeing audit – to inform SIP session 2017-18.
- Maintain and develop tracking, monitoring and interventions in BGE and Senior Phase.
- Ensure feedback to pupils is consistent.
- Continue to develop pupil, parent and partner voices in planning and self-evaluation.
- Develop use of the Employee Engagement Survey data to improve staff welfare.
- Opportunities to evaluate and reflect on progress.

### **How good is the quality of the care and provision that we offer?**

#### **Partnerships to improve outcomes for learners**

The school actively seeks out partnerships to improve our pupils' experiences. Never has this been more useful since we have been unable to recruit a Food and Health Teacher. This will continue into session 2016-17. However, the school has developed partnerships with Edinburgh Cookery School, Edinburgh College, and Colstoun House to deliver pupils' entitlement to a full curriculum in the BGE, and better meet the needs of all children. We have worked hard over the past four years to develop partnerships with other agencies and companies as they enrich our provision.

We continue to work with Cross Reach and independent counsellors to provide individual and family therapy for our pupils and their families. We have received a substantial grant from the Scottish Government to maintain and, where possible, increase our offer of family therapy. Canon UK continues to work closely with us to develop our employability skills programme. Thanks to their input we are also able to pilot the use of Dragon Talk-To-Text software on computers for next session – this will help pupils who find writing more difficult to access the curriculum and some assessments. Colstoun House has provided us with a venue and opportunities to work with some vulnerable pupils in S3 along with East Lothian Works and Lead a Bright Future. This consortium will continue to work together to support these pupils in S4. The Rotary Club has supported pupils this session: they provided sponsorship for the school's F1 Team, and provided opportunities for pupils to attend RYLA Camp and Young Musician competitions. Next session the school is likely to be granted membership of Haddington Rotary Club. This means that the school becomes more than a partner to Rotary – rather we become part of it and they, part of us. The University of the Third Age has become closely involved with school, providing over thirty volunteers to the school's Paired Reading Programme. Pupils who find reading difficult, or who we feel might benefit from being "lightly" mentored are encouraged to join this programme where pupils read with an adult for between 30 mins and an hour a week. We have discovered that we can close the gap between actual age and reading age, pupils are better able to access the curriculum. A number of these partnerships have arisen as a result of our self-evaluation arrangements and determination of a range of intervention strategies to support young people both academically and pastorally. Our aim



is to get a more strategic and streamlined approach to our partnerships, to formalise and embed the planning, implementation and evaluation cycle.

### **The Curriculum**

The curriculum rationale is to provide youngsters the best opportunities to experience success, and as such, is designed to reflect that aim. Young people are given a free choice of subjects in S4-6, alongside opportunities to get advice on what subjects will best meet their needs once they have left school. All courses are differentiated to National 3 as a matter of course and this session we continue to be able to offer seventeen Advanced Higher courses. We have run Princes' Trust in S4 this session and are looking at other awards for youngsters e.g. CSLA in PE, John Muir Award as part of the S1 Activities' Week residential. We now intend to evaluate whether the learning pathways being delivered, particularly those delivered by partners, are appropriate, and enable all young people to transition to the next phase of learning, either within, or beyond, school. We will evaluate consortia agreements e.g. with college and the Academies programme who might be better placed to meet our needs.

### **Skills for learning, life and work**

This session the school has been given access to Wi-Fi. It is available to all pupils in all classes. As a result, the school has invested in 150 Chrome Books to ensure an equitable access to digital learning. Recognising that digital learning is important one of the part-time PTCs has been given this as their whole school remit. Next session it is hoped that, alongside a learning team of pupils, we will be able to further develop the role of ICT in the classroom to ensure an enriching experience for all pupils.

### **Learning and Engagement**

This session we were delighted to be accredited as a Rights Respecting School, achieving our Level 1 status in May. This has involved a group of pupils, parents and staff working together to raise awareness of rights and responsibilities. Our next step is to ensure that the Rights of the Child are embedded in all that we do from relationships to developing policies.

Our Activities' Week continues to be a much appreciated opportunity for pupils to extend their learning and challenge themselves. Every pupil has the right to a long-distance excursion during their time at Knox Academy. This year pupils have been able to go to London, Italy, the Ardeche, Paris, and Iceland. S1 pupils were also given the opportunity of taking part in a one-week residential trip to Wales that culminated in their achieving the John Muir Award. The in-school packages that were offered ranged from film-making, to cycling, to model-making, to starting a band, to learning yoga. These packages are set up based on staff interest and pupil preference, and have, in the past, involved pupils leading their own packages. On the Friday of Activities' Week the in-school packages make presentations to S1 pupils about what they have done and learned.

Meeting the needs of all learners is a priority at Knox Academy. The learning entitlements of pupils are clearly set out in the learning and teaching policy. All staff are expected to differentiate the learning for pupils. Learning and teaching approaches are evaluated through faculty reviews and, where necessary, action plans for improvement are put in place. The school is increasingly



successful in meeting the needs of the lowest 20% of learners, through intensive and targeted support either in school or through outside agencies. We need to focus more on challenging and supporting the top 20%.

Guidance staff work closely with pupils and parents, particularly at times of transition. Where pupils are on the Staged Assessment and Intervention system there are structured opportunities for pupils, parents and staff to meet to support pupils and to plan. However, the school needs to take a more strategic, and proactive approach to the range of services, agencies and resources available through partnership working to ensure that interventions are more targeted and appropriate. This will ensure that young people get the best possible interventions from those best skilled to provide them.

Completion of IEPs is an area targeted for improvement in session 2016-17. Paired Reading, extraction groups for literacy and numeracy are supporting pupils with ASN this session. This short-term extraction policy is aimed at improving the level of literacy and numeracy skills to support pupils to access learning across the curriculum. In-class support is in place based on need, however, sometimes alternative intervention strategies are required given the range and extent of the needs that young people have. The key to being inclusive is being as flexible as we can be to accommodate learners and, this is our ultimate aim in the approach that we take.

Family learning has taken place at Knox Academy through the family therapy service that we run, which provides targeted support to those with identified needs. Thanks to funding from the Scottish Government, the school has been able to offer sixteen families the opportunity to work together to resolve issues over the last session. We continue to provide counselling support to individual pupils – some 19% of the school cohort. We encourage families to engage with the school through, parents' evenings, information evenings, the website, literature, and the Staged Assessment and Intervention process. We engage outside agencies to support young people and their families. Our inclusion of families will be strengthened as we explore more ways of co-creating with them around planning change, curriculum development, and supporting learning.

We have made significant strides in our arrangements for actively engaging pupils, their parents and carers in transitions at all levels. We are instituting S4 transition interviews at the start of session 2016-17. Pupils who might require additional support and encouragement in S4 are being invited into school with their parents to meet with their DHT/Guidance Teacher and a representative from SDS. The purpose of the meeting is to plan for the session so as the young person achieves what they need to in order to move on to the next stage of their career.

The transition from P7 to S1 is becoming stronger, with a calendar of events being run on the themes of numeracy and health and wellbeing, with an additional event around literacy being planned for session 2016-17. The P7 Pathfinders Group has been particularly successful over the last three sessions in supporting pupils with ASN and anxiety to access the school as early on in their primary school career as necessary and possible.

The school plans to enhance its tracking and monitoring of pupils across the Broad General Education in session 2016-17. A spreadsheet is being developed that will enable managers and Guidance Staff, to identify groups of young people and examine their progress at a glance, and to



intervene as needed. Senior staff will then be able to run “case conferences” against the outcomes for young people in order to quality assure the work that is being done by the school as a whole.

Meadowpark has added to the richness of the school. While the pupils there are not all from the Knox catchment they are welcomed into the building and integrated through participation in some lessons and through the use of the mainstream facilities. Equally, senior pupils from the mainstream volunteer in Meadowpark and mainstream pupils can make use of the facilities there should this meet their learning, social and emotional needs.

As a cluster of schools, Knox Academy and its associated primaries will be working together to ensure a common approach our values, vision and aims. The schools will work together on moderation and curricular transition, ensuring that pupils have a seamless 3 to 18 experience and have a strong identity with their learning community.

#### **Future Developments:**

- More strategic approach to planning with partners.
- Revisit learning pathways within the curriculum to ensure programmes and courses delivered through partnership arrangements enable young people to build fully on their prior learning progress, and progress well.
- Continue to work closely with associated primary schools, especially regarding curricular transition.
- Develop digital learning and teaching.
- Embed the Rights of the Child into all aspects of the life and work of the school from planning to Activities’ Week.
- Ensuring that we meet the needs of the lowest attaining 20% of pupils by ensuring that curriculum pathways are clear so that we can add value as they progress through S4 to S6.
- Ensure that learning and pastoral support interventions are more targeted and appropriate for young people.
- Monitor and track young people’s progress in the BGE to ensure early intervention for particular individuals and groups, and to quality assure their outcomes.
- Improve arrangements for the completion of IEPs for the pupils who need them.
- Improve opportunities for co-creation with parents in terms of planning, curriculum and support.

#### **How good are we at ensuring the best possible outcomes for all our learners?**

Staff and managers use a number of systems to monitor and track young people’s progress to ensure and equity of success and achievement. The school recognises our responsibility to respond to pupils’ and parents’ needs to ensure that no one is left behind. This begins in S1 with tracking and monitoring pupil progress in the Broad General Education. We have trialled spreadsheets in the past gather information on progress in S1-S3 and are now using SEEMIS to track target-setting and progress against those targets. We are confident that we will get an overview of attainment in the BGE using the S1-3 Tracking spreadsheets so that timely, appropriate and individualised support can



be given to pupils. We will ask staff to indicate progress within the level they are working at, recognising the need to continue to work with staff on what “achievement of a level” looks like.

In a recent S2 survey 94.1% of pupils feel safe and secure at Knox Academy. Whilst this is a fairly high return, as a school community we strive to achieve 100% and we will be working with the Pupil Council to implement the changes that are needed to achieve our goal. A few of the 103 pupils who responded to this survey stated that they did not know who to go to in school if they are not happy about how someone is treating them – again this should not be the case and we wish to improve and ensure that all pupils have someone in the school that they can go to when they need help, advice or someone to listen to them. Only 77.7% of pupils felt that they are treated fairly, and the same number agree that people care about them at Knox Academy. We will improve these numbers through working with pupils and parents and sending out a consistent message, promoting positive relationships and encouraging active participation in the decision-making of the school.

Attainment at Knox Academy has shown a positive, upward trend over the last five years. We recognise that not all departments are attaining as well as each other and that there needs to be a consistent picture across all departments, but we are confident that pupils at Knox Academy are able to be academically competitive.

#### **Leavers attaining in Literacy and Numeracy qualifications.**

98.52% of pupils who left us this session attained Level 4 Literacy, with 94.07% of pupils attaining Level 4 Numeracy. Similarly 78.52% of pupils attained Level 5 Literacy, alongside 74.81% of pupils attaining Level 5 Numeracy. These results are higher than the Virtual Comparator.

#### **S4**

For the lowest performing 20% and the middle performing 60% Knox Academy compares favourably to the Virtual Comparator (VC). However, the Highest attaining 20% attain less well than the VC, East Lothian (EL) and National averages. The numbers of pupils achieving 3 or more awards at level 5 has increased by 9% on the previous year, compared to fairly stable EL figures over the last two sessions, and is significantly (19%) better. There has been a drop in the % of pupils achieving 5 or more at Level 4 on last year.

We perform positively in all deciles – particularly in SIMD 6, where we have performed better than the National Establishment. Pupils in deciles 3, 8, and 10 also did well, likely as a result of the intensive support on offer for our lowest attaining 20% (we identified the lowest attaining 20% in each class and developed appropriate, tailored support packages in subjects).

All pupils with ASN receive intensive support prior to the National Examinations. They performed well as compared to the VC and EL.



## S5

The S5 cohort have performed less well than our VC in all attainment cohorts, although we have performed better than EL and National averages in the lowest attaining 20% and the middle 60%. We have identified the need to focus on our highest attaining pupils.

The numbers of pupils attaining 5 or more at Level 6 decreased by over 6% on last session, despite an overall improvement of 1% in the EL average. This means that we tracked and monitored this yeargroup closely and that should bear fruit when their results come out.

Our key concerns with this year group are those who reside in SIMD 4 and 7. We have demanded more of these pupils by raising expectations and tracking their progress more effectively.

## S6

The S6 performed well in their examinations, with both the highest attaining 20% and the middle attaining 60% out-performing the VC, EL and National averages. A particular strength for this cohort was their attainment at Higher – there was a significant increase in those attaining 1+ and 3+ qualifications at this level, at around 8% and 5% respectively.

In S5 and S6 pupils with ASN did less well as compared to the VC and EL, particularly in the middle 60% and the top 20%. Once again, there is a need to raise expectations here and track pupils more effectively. We are hoping that the intensive support process that was begun with last year's S4 will be replicated in future so as to better serve these young people.

### Next Steps:

- Use assertive mentoring to improve outcomes for all.
- Focus on pupils who need help to make the jump between bandings (e.g. getting Bs to perm into As) – this should happen through more robust tracking and monitoring.
- Continue to make use of the October Benchmarking Assessments to ensure correct presentation levels early on in the session.
- Pupils with ASN achieve positive destinations. This will come about through improved, targeted support for youngsters and improving the general support that we can give to all (e.g. increase the number of Support for Learning Assistants, use of ICT to improve access to the curriculum, working with partners to provide opportunities for vulnerable young people to gain employability skills).

### Future Developments:

- Work with pupils, parents and staff to ensure that pupils feel included and valued.
- Develop the Pupil Voice across the school and the impact that it has on the work of the school.
- Develop pupils' digital literacy through the work of the pupil learning team and the PTC responsible for CLN.



- Develop tracking, monitoring and learning conversations to ensure that pupils are able to attain to the best of their ability.
- Implement the tracking and monitoring overview in the BGE to ensure that the school puts in place interventions as early as possible in a pupil's career.
- The Curriculum Development Group ensures that the curriculum allows for the attainment of all.
- Continue to use data to inform decisions about provision, curriculum and interventions.

**What is our capacity for continued improvement?**

- The Head Teacher and Senior Management Team will continue to provide a clear direction of travel for the school in accordance with its values, vision and aims.
- The Parent Council will continue with their enthusiastic and positive support of the school, whilst also challenging the SMT as and when required.
- The school will continue to seek out partnerships so that pupils have the best opportunities available to them to achieve positive destinations.
- Tracking and monitoring will be robust and will ensure that all pupils have the interventions that they need to ensure that they attain to the highest standards.
- Learning and Teaching will be judged to be of a high standard throughout the school, and opportunities will be presented to staff to ensure that they can develop their skills and abilities.
- Leadership opportunities will be available to all pupils, parents, staff and partners.



**Gradings**

1.1 Self-evaluation for self- improvement	3/4
1.2 Leadership of learning	4
1.3 Leadership of change	3
1.4 Leadership and management of staff	4
1.5 Management of resources to promote equity	5
2.1 Safeguarding and child protection	3
2.2 Curriculum	3/4
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	3/4
2.4 Personalised support	2/3
2.5 Family learning	2/3
2.6 Transitions	3
2.7 Partnerships	4
3.1 Improving wellbeing, equality and inclusion	3
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	4
3.3 Increasing creativity and employability	3/4