

REPORT TO: Education Committee

MEETING DATE: 21 March 2017

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Inspection of Knox Academy by Education Scotland

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Committee on the inspection of Knox Academy by Education Scotland.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to: -
- (i) Note the content of the Education Scotland report (Appendix 1).
 - (ii) Congratulate the Head Teacher and staff on the good practice identified.
 - (iii) As a result of the inspection findings Education Scotland think that the school needs additional support and more time to continue making improvements. Education Scotland's Area Lead Officer will work with East Lothian Council to build capacity for improvement, and will maintain contact to monitor progress. Education Scotland will return to carry out a further inspection within twelve months of publication of the letter to parents. Education Scotland will then issue another letter to parents on the extent to which the school has improved.
 - (iv) Note the steps taken by the Department to address the areas for improvement identified within the Education Scotland report (see paragraph 3.4).

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Knox Academy was inspected in November 2016 and the Education Scotland report was published in March 2017.
- 3.2 The report noted the following key strengths:

- The Head Teacher 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 to enhance learners' experiences and their engagement in learning.

3.3 Education Scotland agreed the following areas for further improvement with the school and education authority:

- 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.

Post Inspection Support

3.4 The Council has taken forward a number of steps to address the areas for improvement identified within the report, these include:

- An additional Depute Head Teacher seconded from Preston Lodge High School to support the improvement of processes and practice relating to equality, inclusion and wellbeing.
- Additional support for identified subject areas to improve the delivery of the curriculum.
- The development of an action plan to take forward the areas for improvement.

- Regular meetings with senior managers and Head Teacher to ensure necessary actions are being taken forward.
- Visits to schools highlighted as having effective practice in identified areas for improvement.
- Planned support from Education Scotland in relation to equality, inclusion and wellbeing.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Education Scotland report on Knox Academy Report dated 14 March 2017 (Appendix 1).

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DATE	14 March 2017



14 March 2017

Dear Parent/Carer

In December 2016 a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Knox Academy. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the quality of leadership, learning and teaching and young people's achievements and wellbeing.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- 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 to enhance learners' experiences and their engagement in learning.

The following areas for improvement were agreed with the headteacher and a representative from East Lothian Council:

- 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.

Quality indicators help schools, education authorities and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved in the work of the school. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is our school*¹? Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of quality indicators to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for **Knox Academy**

Leadership of change	Satisfactory
Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
Raising attainment and achievement	Good
Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Weak

The letter and a more detailed summary of inspection findings will be available on the Education Scotland website at <http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/inspectionandreview/reports/school/primsec/KnoxAcademyEastLothian.asp> .

What happens next?

We will liaise with East Lothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of publication of this letter. We will discuss with East Lothian Council the details of this inspection. Following our return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents/carers informing you of the progress the school has made.

Carol McDonald
HM Inspector

¹ How good is our school? (4th Edition) 2015 [How good is our school? \(fourth edition\)](#)

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