

Summarised inspection findings

Knowetop Primary School

North Lanarkshire Council

24 March 2020

Key contextual information

Knowetop Primary School is located in the south of Motherwell. The school covers an area which predominantly sits within SIMD areas 9 and 10. Around 7% of the school roll reside in SIMD areas 1 and 2. The current roll is 475 arranged over 18 classes. The Visual Impairment Service (VIS) base is co-located on the school campus. The VIS was not inspected during our visit. The VIS serves children with visual impairment across North and South Lanarkshire Council. A few children with visual impairment are supported in mainstream classes in Knowetop Primary School. The school's staffing complement includes a headteacher, and a depute headteacher for the school. The depute headteacher who has responsibility for the VIS is line managed by the headteacher. There are two principal teachers in the school, and 9.5 FTE teachers assigned to the delivery of the peripatetic VIS.

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

- The much respected and experienced headteacher has been in post for 12 years. Her close attention to the social, emotional and mental wellbeing needs of children, parents and staff is evident in children's resilience and their positive attitudes to learning. The headteacher is supported ably by the efficient and highly effective depute headteachers and principal teachers. They are diligent and tireless in delivering their extensive and demanding remits. In moving forward, the headteacher should lead more strategically, and ensure a consistently challenging pace of improvement. The headteacher needs to develop more robust approaches for evaluating the work of the school. In particular, improving the school's approaches for raising attainment, through consistently high quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- The school's vision and values were refreshed two years ago. They were created through meaningful engagement with children, their parents and staff. The vision and values are still relevant to the current needs of children and their families. They reflect the specific context of this large primary school very well. The vision states that through "Education with Imagination we will challenge, achieve and excel". The set of values place a strong emphasis on building children's confidence in themselves to excel and achieve as learners. Children are familiar with the school's values, proudly bringing them to life during assemblies and in their everyday activities in the school. As a result, children are effective contributors and successful ambassadors for their whole school community. As a next step, the headteacher should involve a wider range of partners in any future revision of the school's vision and values.
- Senior leaders empower staff well at all levels to reflect on their practice. Teachers are becoming more aware of the importance of self-evaluation as the catalyst for change and identifying areas for improvement. Teachers should look outwards at best practice in other schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings. A specific focus would be to learn from establishments that have developed successfully play pedagogy across the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). With support from senior leaders, teachers are gaining

confidence in using the quality indicators within national guidance to evaluate the quality of their teaching practice. Teachers need to compare their practice with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) standards for full registration.

- Almost all staff demonstrate a willingness to take part in professional learning opportunities linked to the school's improvement priorities. Senior leaders provide some opportunities for teachers to share skills and expertise. Facilitating further professional development opportunities will help teachers gain new skills and deepen their existing curriculum knowledge. Support staff should have access to training opportunities related to their work with children.
- The majority of teachers embrace additional leadership responsibilities and most undertake professional reading, which is leading to positive outcomes for children. Staff's knowledge of the health and wellbeing indicators is a good example of a positive impact on children's outcomes. Staff are generally supportive of each other. There are however, some weaknesses in sharing relevant information across staff teams, and with parents. Senior leaders need to review the effectiveness of the arrangements for communicating with teachers and support staff. They should continue to improve communications with parents.
- Staff's commitment to the wellbeing of all children is evident in the nurturing ethos which they continue to foster. Relationships within the school are good and built on mutual respect between staff and children. Children show great respect and tolerance for each other. Within the empowering nurturing ethos, staff are successfully promoting children's participation in matters that are important to them. As a result, children articulate very clearly their views on what needs to change and why. The pupil council is empowered by senior leaders and staff to identify areas for improvement. Their activity resulted in parts of the school being refurbished.
- The local area has much to offer the school community. Senior leaders and staff have forged productive partnerships with a small number of partners who offer their professional expertise and entrepreneurial skills. Partners are welcomed by the whole school community and value the relationships they have with staff and children. These partnerships are enhancing children's learning. Partners plan jointly with the school and evaluate the effectiveness of their work. They plan next steps and developments together. Senior leaders should extend their links with the community. They should seek out a wider range of business links as part of their approaches to developing children's skills for learning, life and work. The Parent Council has recently been reformed.
- Teachers and support staff work in close collaboration with teachers from the VIS. Senior leaders and staff ensure that children who spend time in mainstream classes are fully included in school improvements.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

good

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

- Throughout Knowetop Primary School, there is a nurturing and welcoming ethos. Children are articulate and respectful towards each other, and their behaviour is exemplary. There is a whole school focus on children's rights, with articles of the United Nations Convention of Rights of the Child (UNCRC) evident in classroom displays and in planned learning. Almost all children follow classroom routines diligently and most demonstrate their ability to work independently when given the opportunity to do so.
- Children experience a number of motivating contexts for learning in literacy, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities. In the majority of lessons, children are active and engaged in their learning. They are encouraged regularly by teachers to apply their learning in different contexts. This should help them to be more independent and take more responsibility for their own learning. When children are given opportunities to challenge themselves, for example through chilli challenges, they demonstrate confidence and enjoy trying out new concepts.
- Children's learning across the early level is beginning to be facilitated through play. Teachers are beginning to explore the possibilities that play pedagogy can provide for children. Prompt improvements to the open-plan area are needed if children are to benefit from play and enquiry-led activities. For this to happen effectively, senior leaders need to facilitate access to relevant professional development activities.
- Children have regular opportunities to access digital technology which they use very well. This is enhanced currently through clubs such as digital leaders and coding. Children at the upper stages embrace enthusiastically challenges such as using matrix barcodes to extend their skills in using digital technologies.
- Most children know that teachers help them to understand how they are progressing in their school work. The majority of children report that their teachers ask them about what they would like to learn. Teachers respond positively to children's interests and opinions during lessons. They need to make better use of children's interests when planning learning.
- Teachers use a few learning and teaching approaches to engage children in learning tasks. In the majority of lessons, teachers are well prepared, organised and give clear instructions and explanations. At the end of a lesson, teachers often involve children in discussions about what they have been learning. In a minority of lessons, there is too much teacher-directed input, which slows down the pace of learning. Teachers need to extend and vary their teaching approaches to give children more opportunities to think, plan, and choose where and how they will learn. Whilst teachers plan mostly differentiated learning in literacy and numeracy, this is less evident in other curricular areas. They need to plan suitably challenging activities in all curricular areas across the school. Children are capable of setting themselves more

challenging targets, which are linked to their existing strengths and skills and capabilities in all areas of the curriculum.

- Almost all teachers share regularly the purpose of learning activities, which they plan for children. Most children know what they need to do to be successful. Most children work well with peers and engage purposefully in self and peer assessment. This is particularly evident when they are assessing each other's pieces of writing.
- Teachers and support staff encourage children to believe in themselves and that they are capable of achieving success. Teachers need to support children more to know themselves as learners, and to understand their developing skills in learning, life and work.
- Teachers use a variety of assessment approaches, including formative and standardised assessments. They have access to a range of data about children's learning. Teachers and senior leaders should use this data more effectively to plan next steps and identify any gaps in learning. This should increase the pace of learning and level of challenge for children.
- Approaches to moderation are at an early stage. Teachers across stages of the school, need to work with the moderation cycle to ensure a consistent and shared understanding of the standards children are expected to achieve at each level. Staff should continue with plans to work more closely with the cluster on moderation and look beyond this. This should increase the reliability and validity of teacher professional judgements.
- Senior leaders have regular forward planning meetings, with all teachers at each stage. During these meetings they discuss children's progress in relation to their achievement of CfE levels. Senior leaders, principal teachers and teachers discuss children's progress and the needs of all children. At present, these meetings focus primarily on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing information. Senior leaders need to ensure that tracking and monitoring information is well understood and used effectively to improve outcomes for all learners.
- The headteacher holds twice yearly tracking meetings with individual class teachers. She gathers information on, for example, the attainment of children who may be affected by the poverty-related attainment gap and those with visual impairment. She uses this information to discuss the attainment of individual children with the class teachers. Senior leaders, working with teachers need to analyse this data effectively, to determine whether outcomes for identified groups are improving and if there is a poverty-related attainment gap.

2.2 Curriculum: Learning pathways

- Senior leaders recently revised the curriculum rationale to take account of the views of staff, parents, and children. The revision includes a focus on children's rights and the wellbeing indicators, as well as features of the local community.
- Learning experiences take account of the four contexts of learning. Detailed North Lanarkshire progression pathways are in place for literacy and for numeracy and mathematics. These are supporting teachers well to plan differentiated learning experiences in these areas.
- A number of partners enhance children's learning in areas such as Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) and health and wellbeing. Partners provide engaging opportunities to develop children's learning in STEM and enterprise. Senior leaders and teachers should consider how to develop children's creativity in a progressive way.
- Detailed planning which takes account of prior learning in technologies is beginning to support children to develop their digital literacy skills. Examples include children independently using QR codes with tablets and conducting research on laptops.
- Children in P7 have begun to access the World of Work website to learn about employability skills. Teachers are beginning to develop progression pathways for skills for learning, life and work. Senior leaders and teachers should consider, when implementing these, how to help children to recognise the skills they are developing through wider achievements.
- Children experience two hours of physical exercise (PE) on a weekly basis. One hour of this is delivered outside every week. Progressive learning pathways which take account of the wellbeing indicators support learning in health and wellbeing learning, including PE. The clear focus on these aspects is evident in classrooms, in displays around the school, and articulated by children at all stages.
- Yearly overviews include all curriculum areas and include visits to learn outwith the school. Children in P5 take part in the John Muir Award at Barons Haugh, the local nature reserve. Children in P7 have the opportunity to go to Kilbowie Outdoor Education Centre. Children do not yet have regular opportunities for outdoor learning. Senior leaders, working with staff need to develop a progressive and consistent approach to outdoor learning across the school.
- The school is following national guidance on language learning using the 1+2 approach. Children are learning French across the school. Spanish is taught in the older classes.
- Senior leaders and staff have developed a well-planned programme for religious and moral education (RME). This helps children understand their rights and the rights of others.
- Senior leaders and early stages teachers need to plan together to ensure continuity across the CfE early level. They need to plan collaboratively with staff in associated ELC settings to help children experience progression in their learning when starting school.
- Transition arrangements from P7 to S1 are well established. Enhanced transition arrangements are in place for children who need additional support to settle well in secondary school.

2.7 Partnerships: Impact on learners – parental engagement

- Most parents know about the work of the Parent Council and are encouraged to be involved. Around a third of parents were not satisfied with the quality of the information they received from the school. While the school makes use of a wide range of communication approaches, parents need to receive information timeously.
- The 'snapshot' jotters contain examples of children's work and are shared with parents on a regular basis. Parents are encouraged to review work with children and comment on their learning. The school's use of a social media platform complements these snapshots and increases parental engagement in their children's learning.

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, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

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

- Children's wellbeing is a priority for the headteacher and staff across the school. Staff and children recognise the importance of positive wellbeing. Most children have a very good understanding of the wellbeing indicators. Teachers' focus on promoting and supporting children's social, emotional and physical wellbeing is leading to improved outcomes for most children. Almost all children are able to discuss the impact of the wellbeing indicators on their lives in a variety of contexts. They can reflect on their strengths in relation to each of the indicators. Teachers have begun to help children record how they are feeling with regard to each indicator and to help them develop appropriate strategies. Most children recognise that they have someone they can talk to if they are upset or worried about something. As a next step, staff should continue to develop work around the wellbeing indicators, to include all staff, and across all areas of the school.
- Teachers follow health and wellbeing planners, linked to the 'indicator of the month' to ensure that there is appropriate coverage of the CfE experiences and outcomes. They are doing this across CfE levels to make sure that children's experiences are relevant and coherent. Senior leaders enhance this with their very clear focus through, for example, assemblies. As a result of this, almost all children are able to make better connections across their learning. This is evident in children's considerate approach to each other and the respect shown to staff.
- A range of partners such as Police Scotland, Motherwell Football Club and local businesses support the health and wellbeing programme. This helps children to recognise how to keep themselves safe on and off-line. This results in almost all children feeling safe in school.
- As part of their continuing work based on the UNCRC, children in each class have developed their own specific class charters. This approach helps children to focus on courteous, caring relationships with others in and outwith the school. 'Marvellous mornings' have been introduced to encourage and model calm morning routines. Staff welcome children with a smile each morning and a friendly greeting as they come into school, which is helping children feel valued and settle into their morning routines. Staff should continue with their plans to help children develop a charter for how children and adults move around the school. This should encourage all to be considerate of the noise levels, aware of interruptions to learning environments and to move safely around the building.
- Almost all children feel that the school teaches them how to lead a healthy lifestyle, and that there are lots of chances at school to get regular exercise. Children are encouraged regularly to consider their skills within health and wellbeing. These include, predicting the impact on their fitness levels or comparing and contrasting different factors influencing their participation in daily activities.

- Most staff have a good understanding of statutory duties relating to wellbeing and inclusion. All children are encouraged to consider and reflect on their strengths and areas to improve as they move from one stage to the next. This includes, where appropriate, reference to specific strategies to help children learn. This is helping to ensure a smooth transition for almost all children. Staff follow a staged intervention process; involving parents and children appropriately, for those who require further detailed plans to support them in school. Staff use the Getting It Right For Me (GIRFme) approach for planning to meet the needs of children well. Teachers are becoming increasingly confident in working alongside children and their families to set and review their targets. Teachers should continue to develop the quality of these plans to ensure that targets are meaningful and progressive for children.
- Senior leaders and staff work closely with partners, including educational psychologists, to meet a few children's identified additional support needs (ASN). Staff are using an increasing range of strategies, often outwith the classroom environment, to enable children to access their learning. Teachers should continue to monitor closely the effectiveness of these strategies to ensure that all children benefit as intended.
- Senior leaders recently introduced a nurture area, 'the Brightside', which is used by children independently and with adult support. This has helped a few children develop social skills and self-esteem. They have then been able to return successfully to mainstream classes or to access the playground with their peers. Staff should continue to develop further approaches to promoting wellbeing. This should include supports available within the classroom.
- Senior leaders have developed a helpful 'Support for Pupils' policy and associated parent guide detailing how children are supported in school. Senior leaders have an overview of children who have identified ASN. They should use this information more fully to enable them to monitor the progress of specific individuals and groups of children and subsequently meet all children's needs more effectively. This should also help to inform bespoke professional learning for all staff and develop their understanding of the full range of barriers to learning which some children face.
- Children learn about the importance of respecting differences in a variety of ways. They are developing an understanding of equalities through the rights-based approach to learning. The majority of children feel that other children treat them fairly and with respect. Staff promote the understanding of what it is like to be visually impaired through awareness raising sessions with children. This helps children with visual impairments be fully included in the life of the school. They move about the school independently, and are very well-supported to attend mainstream lessons. Senior leaders need to develop further the school's approaches to equality and diversity.
- Children experience democracy in action as they prepare to take on roles such as house captain. As they develop their manifesto, canvas for support and deliver speeches to their peers children develop a wide range of skills for learning and life.
- Most children feel that their views are sought by staff and that their opinions are taken into account. This is evident in the recent enhancements to the playground and in the development of an indoor space to meet during the lunch break. Children who access this area have the opportunity to be buddies, supporting others who appreciate their friendship.

- The headteacher needs to work timeously with North Lanarkshire Council to improve children's dining experiences. There are ways in which the current use of the main hall could be adjusted to offer a more pleasant dining experience for all children. This is particularly relevant for those who choose to bring their own lunch or snack to go.

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

- Overall attainment in literacy and numeracy is good, with most children, including those who have additional support needs, making appropriate progress. A minority of children are working beyond expected levels. Our evaluation is based on observations of learning, the sampling of children's work and discussion with focus groups of children and staff. The data provided by the school does not accurately reflect children's attainment. The school is still at the early stages of moderating teachers' judgements of children's progress against the National Benchmarks, standardised assessments including the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, commercial assessments and CfE levels. Further professional learning and development around moderation and teacher professional judgement of a CfE level should be undertaken as a matter of urgency at stage level, as well as at whole school level. Whenever possible, teachers working with senior leaders should engage regularly in moderation activities with colleagues from other settings across the cluster, and beyond.

Literacy

- Overall, most children are making good progress in literacy. A minority of children are making very good progress.

Listening and talking

- Across the school, when working in pairs, almost all children build on the contributions of others and use these to develop their own thinking whilst listening respectfully to each other. However, when discussing in groups and at class level, a minority of children talk over each other in their enthusiasm to contribute their ideas and opinions. Children need to develop their skills in turn taking. At early level, children listen well to stories. They are gaining skills in self-regulation during small and large group discussions. At first level, most children select and share information, using appropriate vocabulary in a logical order and recognise simple differences between fact and opinion in spoken texts. Most select and use appropriate resources to engage with others during solo talks. At second level, most children ask and answer a range of questions, including inferential and evaluative questions. Children need to develop more complex questioning skills, to include analytical questions.

Reading

- Attainment in reading is good for most learners. At early level, the majority of children read accurately from their reading book. They answer correctly simple questions about the sequence and the main ideas in a story. A few are still hesitant readers and need support to sound out less familiar words in unseen texts. At first level, most children explain well a preference for a particular text, and describe the main idea of a range of texts. Most children read aloud confidently, and with expression. At second level, most children make relevant comments about features of language, and recognise techniques used to influence the reader. Most children are developing a range of reading strategies to support their understanding of different types of text, including predicting, clarifying and summarising. They

relate well the writer's theme to their own and others' experiences. The school should build on this positive progress and continue to develop children's interest and enjoyment in reading.

Writing

- Attainment in writing is good for most learners, with a minority of children working beyond the expected levels. Teachers place considerable focus on their structured approaches to the teaching of writing, following the local authority progression pathway. This is impacting positively on almost all children's engagement, enjoyment and development of writing skills. At early level, most children form confidently sentences or have their ideas scribed by an adult. They have a go at writing, making marks and trying to spell common words correctly. They know when to use a full stop and a capital letter. At first level, most children spell commonly used words and punctuate sentences correctly. Almost all children use accurately, their knowledge of phonics and spelling strategies when spelling unfamiliar words. A minority of children do not yet present their writing in a clear and legible way. At second level, a minority of children use well a variety of sentence openers, varying openings and lengths. Most present their ideas and information in a logical way. A few children, across the school need to write at greater length. The quality of handwritten presentation in jotters needs to improve.

Numeracy and mathematics

- Overall attainment in numeracy and mathematics is good. Most children at early level, the majority at first level, and most at second level are achieving expected levels. A minority of children are working above expected levels in numeracy.

Number money and measure

- At early level, most children identify and recognise numbers 0-20 and identify accurately missing numbers in a sequence. At first level, most children have a good sense of place value. They round to the nearest 10 and 100, and apply this knowledge when working with money. They need to develop their skills in applying this in real life contexts in order to estimate answers. Most children use the correct notation for common fractions to tenths. At first level, children make simple conversions between units of measure. They use a picture to represent a number to solve simple algebraic problems. At second level, most children round whole numbers to the nearest 1,000, 10,000 and 100,000. Almost all children explain the link between a digit, its place and its value. Most children use knowledge of equivalent forms of common fractions, decimal fractions and percentages to solve problems. Most children convert confidently between 12 hour and 24 hour time and calculate mixed time into minutes. Children make reasonable estimations of length and area.

Shape, position and movement

- At early level, most children are correctly using positional language, for example in front, behind, above, below, forwards, backwards. At first level, the majority of children identify and describe properties of a range of simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects. They find right angles in two-dimensional shapes and use lines of symmetry to create pictures. At second level, most children use confidently mathematical language to identify and describe a range of angles including acute, obtuse, straight and reflex. They talk about angles in a triangle, and how supplementary angles add up to 180 degrees and use this knowledge to calculate the missing angle. Children's need to use digital technologies to develop further their skills in position and movement.
- At second level, most children describe circles using radius, diameter and circumference. Most children know that the radius is half the diameter. Children describe and classify correctly angles using appropriate mathematical language.

Information handling

- At the early level, most children match and sort objects. At first level, children create bar graphs and answer simple questions about information displayed on them. At second level, most children analyse, interpret and draw conclusions from data displayed in different ways. Children need to develop further their skills in drawing graphs using axes and scales accurately.

Ideas of chance and uncertainty

- Older children identify a range of strategies they use in numeracy and mathematics and explain their thinking to others.

Attainment over time

- Attainment data was provided by the school for literacy and numeracy for the past three years. The school has no reliable evidence of improvement over time in attainment in either literacy or numeracy. Senior leaders are aware that the data is not robust. Senior leadership should gather information more effectively about how well children are attaining and progressing based on reliable assessment information and teacher judgements. Moderation activities looking beyond the school will support teachers to make more confident and reliable judgements. Senior leaders are not yet tracking attainment over time across all areas of the curriculum.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

- A wide range of achievements in and outwith school are recognised, recorded by class teachers and celebrated at assemblies and on social media. These range from sporting successes to enjoyment of reading. Children are proud of their wide ranging achievements and talk confidently about how they feel the school celebrates their own successes, as well as those at a class and school level.
- Children are keen to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Most children engage in a range of opportunities to support their developing leadership skills. These include pupil council, digital leaders and buddies. As a result, children are growing in confidence and developing valuable skills in teamwork and leadership. Children feel they are listened to and their opinions valued. They are very proud of changes in the playground that happened as a result of the 'Equal Play' work of the pupil council. Children worked out and developed plans and costings, and worked with partners such as the Gardening Grandparents, to enhance their ability to improve further the playground environment.
- The school works with partners to develop planned achievement opportunities in areas such as finance, coding and STEM. Children benefit from a range of activities which promote their understanding of business and enterprise. These activities are enhanced by business links with local employers, which support children to make links with the world of work. Staff are making use of the Career Education Standards (3-18) to support them in taking this work forward. Children should be encouraged to articulate how the skills and attributes developed as a result of these achievements are improving their skills for learning, life and work.

Equity

- Senior leaders have added areas such as finance and enterprise to the curriculum and the wider achievement programme. Participation in clubs in and outwith school is recorded by class teachers and used to identify those children who may have a gap in their learning opportunities. Staff use their knowledge of children to provide access to a broad range of experiences. This promotes equity of opportunity for all learners.

- Staff have an understanding of the varied barriers individual children have to learning. Using their Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) they identify and plan interventions to address the individual circumstances of children. Some interventions, such as the reading programme and the buddy programme in P4 and P6, are evaluated to measure the impact for children over time. These evaluations show improvements in children's attainment in literacy. Senior leaders should continue to evaluate the impact on outcomes for children, for these and for other interventions not funded by PEF. Senior leaders need to ensure that where appropriate, interventions are time-limited and meet the needs of the learners. This includes taking account of the cost of the school day.

School Empowerment

■ Empowering learners

- The school actively and successfully promotes children's participation. Children are purposefully involved in making changes through their roles as members of the pupil council, as house captains and members of class and school committees. A good example of their positive influence on school improvement is their work with 'Knowe Top Teams'. These groups provide a useful mechanism to involve a large number of children in influencing school improvements. Senior leaders intend to involve children in the refresh of the school's anti-bullying approaches.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

Context

The Visual Impairment Service (VIS) is based within the campus of Knowetop Primary School. The service is managed by a deputy headteacher and 9.5 FTE teaching staff. Staff from the VIS support children in Knowetop and around 280 other children on a peripatetic basis across establishments in North and South Lanarkshire Council.

Leadership of change

- The VIS has in place highly appropriate aims that reflect staff's practice to ensure visually impaired (VI) children are independent and have opportunities to attain as highly as possible. The vision, values and aims are reviewed annually by staff. Staff work very well together and use their expertise in specific areas to create a highly effective service that supports VI children across North and South Lanarkshire. Moving forward, staff should continue to use their expertise to build the knowledge and skills of staff in mainstream schools.
- The deputy headteacher provides effective leadership for the VIS. She has a strong focus on ensuring VI children in Knowetop Primary and in other mainstream schools have equal opportunities to access the curriculum. She coordinates very well the support needs of children and ensures appropriate resources and staffing are in place to enable children to access the curriculum and attain well.
- Staff in the VIS are reflective about their practice and work collegially to identify improvement priorities. For example, staff are improving practice in Braille learning and teaching to ensure all children across the service have equity of resources, and access to high-quality teaching and learning.
- Children, parents and staff in other schools have good opportunities to evaluate the work of the VIS through regular questionnaires. Feedback shows that partners and stakeholders are very positive about the work of the service. Issues highlighted within questionnaires are dealt with effectively by the DHT and staff team.
- Teaching staff within the VIS have very good opportunities to develop their professional knowledge and understanding of issues related to supporting VI children. Teaching staff are qualified teachers of the visually impaired (QTVIs) or are working towards this qualification. In addition, staff have developed a range of skills in areas such as Braille and digital technology.
- Staff in Knowetop Primary School and other mainstream schools benefit from participating in professional learning delivered by staff from the VI service. This learning enables class teachers to understand key strategies that will promote the inclusion and independence of visually impaired children.
- Children within the VIS are members of the "Knowe Top Teams" and have opportunities to develop skills in leadership and working together to take forward school issues. Visually impaired children are effectively involved in designing awareness-raising programmes to help other children in the school understand visual impairment.

Learning, teaching and assessment

- The quality of learning and teaching in the VI service is very good. Children benefit from positive and supportive relationships with staff. All children are included in mainstream classes for almost all of the time. Staff across the school and VIS have a strong focus on ensuring children are fully included in all activities. Joint planning and delivery of lessons between mainstream and VIS teachers results in an inclusive learning environment.
- VI children benefit from small group and individual high-quality teaching for specific aspects of their learning such as braille or touch typing. A good use of feedback and praise, together with interesting resources, results in high levels of motivation and enjoyment.
- Children are provided with very good opportunities to develop independence skills. Teachers have high expectations of children's abilities to organise their resources and move around the school independently. Children have a good understanding about the level of support they receive and can talk about the impact of this support. They are encouraged to make decisions about their learning and resources.
- Children are developing skills in using a range of technologies to support them in their learning and to access the curriculum. For example, tablets, braille output devices and classroom cameras allow children very good opportunities to use specialist technology, access information and become more independent in their learning.
- Staff across the VIS have a thorough understanding of the progress and attainment of VI children. Assessment approaches used in the mainstream school are adapted to meet the needs of VI children. In addition, children's progress in specific aspects of their learning such as braille, use of large print materials and use of low vision aids is appropriately assessed. Information is used well to plan next steps in learning.
- The depute headteacher, together with staff, track and monitor very well the progress children are making and attainment. Appropriate interventions are in place for children who are not making expected progress.

Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

- Children in the VIS benefit from positive relationships with staff who have a very good understanding of their strengths and needs. Information about children is recorded well in GIRFme plans. Targets within these plans are highly appropriate, and relevant to the specific social and emotional needs of children or to a specific barrier to learning. For example, targets are focussed on helping children move independently around the school or to understand social cues that can present challenges for VI children.
- Staff are aware of the social and emotional needs of children. There are meaningful opportunities for children to discuss their own needs using the My World Triangle. Staff have participated in mental health professional learning to support children. Children are encouraged to explore issues related to their own visual impairment through My Vision books. Staff work well with children to help them understand how their visual impairment will impact on their learning. They encourage children to confidently explain their visual impairment to others, and explain strategies that they need to be included.
- The school works very well with partners at times of transition to meet the need of learners. Visual impairment assessment team meetings (VIATs) are held at key times such as pre-school, P6 and P7 to ensure resources and support are in place.

- Children in the VIS are fully included in all aspects of school life. They work alongside their mainstream peers and participate in all activities with support that is well planned to their needs. Children take part in residential outings in P7 and have opportunities to develop skills in an unfamiliar and challenging outdoor setting.

Raising attainment and achievement

- Children in the VIS who attend Knowetop Primary School are making very good progress in their literacy and numeracy. Most children are attaining appropriate CfE levels. A few children with additional support needs and visual impairment are making suitable progress.

Literacy

- Children are making very good progress in developing literacy skills through braille. They have a good understanding of letters, contractions and shortforms. They are able to read fluently and with expression.

Other information

Curriculum

- Children in the VIS follow curriculum pathways within their mainstream schools. In addition, progressive and well-planned programmes are in place for children who are developing literacy through braille. Appropriate programmes are in place to support children develop skills in using specialist technology, and low vision aids such as magnifiers.

Parental engagement

- Staff engage very well with parents to help them support their child's learning at home. Parents are provided with written information, and workshops are offered to help parents understand their child's visual impairment, the impact on their learning and strategies to support them. For example, parents of visually impaired babies who are new to the service are provided with an informative new referral baby pack.
- Commendably, NHS led clinics such as the developmental vision clinic and the low vision aid clinic are run from the school. This allows parents and staff to work together and discuss strategies for supporting children's learning.

Practice worth sharing more widely

The effectiveness of the VIS in supporting the needs of children with visual impairment within Knowetop Primary School. The skills demonstrated by staff from the VI base are highly effective and have a direct positive impact on outcomes for visually impaired children.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.