

4 November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

In September 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Rutherglen High School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and South Lanarkshire Council. Recently, as you may know, we visited the school again. During our visit, we talked to young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff. We heard from the headteacher and other staff about the steps the school has taken to improve. We looked at particular areas that had been identified in the original inspection. As a result, we were able to find out about the progress the school has made and how well this is supporting young people's learning and achievements. This letter sets out what we found.

Senior leaders and staff need to create a strong, welcoming school culture based on positive relationships between themselves, young people, parents and partners. Senior leaders should improve their approaches to communicating with the school community, ensuring all communication is regular, clear and effective.

The school is making good progress in improving its culture. The recently appointed headteacher has worked well with staff, pupils and the wider school community to create a clear and positive vision. This vision is well understood by all adults and is helping to improve relationships across the school. Senior leaders should make sure that staff revisit the school vision regularly. This will help everyone to keep it at the heart of their work and ensure it continues to have a positive impact. Senior leaders now need to work with the school community to agree a set of values and aims that reflect what is unique about the school.

The senior leadership team has improved the school website and strengthened communication with parents and partners. Most parents and all partners feel more involved in the life and work of the school. They appreciate being welcomed in and having more opportunities to contribute to school improvement. As a next step, senior leaders should continue to review how they communicate with parents and improve how they report on young people's progress and achievements.

Staff and senior leaders are working more closely together. Communication across the school has improved. Staff feel more confident discussing learning and behaviour with leaders and report a positive atmosphere. Going forward, senior leaders should continue to work in partnership with the school community to promote and embed the shared vision.

Staff need to provide all young people with appropriately challenging and purposeful learning activities throughout the school day. They should ensure that learning activities take account of the strengths and needs of all learners.

Almost all young people are engaging well in their learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers are providing activities that are at the correct level for learners. This is helping young people stay motivated and make satisfactory progress. Staff are working more closely together to plan purposeful learning experiences. In most lessons, teachers match activities well to young people's individual needs, strengths and prior learning. In a minority of lessons,

staff should raise their expectations and provide learning that challenges young people more effectively.

The majority of young people in base classes now experience learning and support that is better matched to their strengths and needs. In a minority of lessons across the school, teachers should link learning more closely to young people's individual targets.

Together with young people, staff are creating a calmer environment for learning. As a result, most young people are sustaining learning for longer periods. Young people have better opportunities to understand things more deeply and make stronger connections in their learning. Teachers should continue to build on this further by raising expectations of what young people in base classes can achieve.

Staff support most young people well to attend lessons with their peers, however for a few young people these opportunities are limited. Staff and senior leaders are working effectively to support the most distressed and disengaged learners to return to learning alongside their peers. Staff are providing opportunities to help young people learn and interact with their peers. Senior leaders should continue to work with the local authority to find suitable interventions for the few young people who are not yet able to learn alongside their peers.

Senior leaders and staff need to improve approaches to promoting positive relationships and behaviour across the school. In doing so, they should adopt consistent approaches to support young people displaying distressed behaviour.

Senior leaders and staff have taken positive steps to improve how they meet the needs of young people. In line with the new school vision, staff are working well together, offering each other support in helping meet young people's needs. Most staff are skilled at helping learners stay focused and on task.

Staff across the school have a better understanding of individual young people's needs. When young people show signs of distress, staff respond quickly and with sensitivity to help them self-regulate. On a few occasions, young people continue to show highly distressed behaviour. As a priority, the school should work with partners to provide training for staff. This should include training in ways to prevent young people from becoming distressed and ways to keep everyone safe.

Where appropriate, young people have detailed behaviour assessment support plans. These help staff understand learners' needs and respond effectively. This is supporting staff to meet the diverse needs of young people more consistently. As a next step, all staff, especially support for learning assistants, should access these plans regularly. This is particularly important when updates are made.

The school should continue to raise young people's attainment across the broad general education and senior phase.

Senior leaders have improved the curriculum for young people from S1 to S6. Most young people are making satisfactory progress in literacy and English. The majority are making satisfactory progress in numeracy and mathematics. Staff are now providing individual

support and programmes in literacy and numeracy. These are helping teachers to plan learning more effectively.

Senior leaders should continue to support staff to develop their understanding of the levels young people are working at in S1-S3. Staff are working with colleagues to improve their understanding of standards. They should continue to take part in activities with other schools to help make accurate judgements about young people's progress.

At S4-S6, staff have strengthened how they track and monitor young people's progress. This is allowing staff to provide individual support to help young people make better progress. As a result, young people's outcomes are improving.

The school has recently appointed a principal teacher responsible for young people's attainment. This role is helping staff to understand and share information about young people's learning and progress more effectively. Staff are beginning to use this information to raise their expectations of what young people can achieve.

A few young people have low attendance. Senior leaders should continue to monitor this and find ways to help these learners engage more fully with their learning.

Senior leaders need to develop more robust processes to monitor school performance, with a clear focus on improving young people's attainment, achievement and wellbeing.

The headteacher has strengthened the school's capacity to identify what is working well and what needs to improve. He has set realistic goals and is supporting staff well to evaluate the work of the school. This is already having a positive impact.

Senior leaders now have clearly defined roles. Teaching staff have set up working groups to lead improvements linked to the school improvement plan. This plan focuses on key areas such as attainment, achievement and wellbeing.

Staff support each other well and observe each other teaching. The school has in place a clear plan that helps all staff to be involved in looking at the quality of aspects of the school. This is helping to drive improvements in learning and teaching.

As part of a pilot, staff in base classes are using an online platform to share information and report on young people's progress. This is improving communication and tracking for those learners. Senior leaders should now ensure there is a robust reporting system in place across the whole school.

Teachers have a better understanding of national standards and are more confident and consistent in their assessment approaches. The headteacher should continue to lead improvement at a pace that reflects the school's priorities.

What happens next?

The school has made good progress since the original inspection. We are confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and so we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. South Lanarkshire Council will inform parents about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

Tracie McEwan
HM Inspector