

# Rutherglen High School

## South Lanarkshire Council

1 March 2011

HM Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) inspects schools in order to let parents<sup>1</sup>, young people and the local community know whether their school provides a good education. Inspectors also discuss with school staff how they can improve the quality of education.

At the beginning of the inspection, we ask the headteacher and staff about the strengths of the school, what needs to improve, and how they know. We use the information they give us to help us plan what we are going to look at. During the inspection, we go into classes and join other activities which young people are involved in. We also gather the views of young people, parents, staff and members of the local community. We find their views very helpful and use them together with the other information we have collected to arrive at our view of the quality of education.

This report tells you what we found during the inspection and the quality of education in the school. We describe how well young people are doing, how good the school is at helping them to learn and how well it cares for them. We comment on how well staff, parents and young people work together and how they go about improving the school. We also comment on how well the school works with other groups in the community, including services which support young people. Finally, we focus on how well the school is led and how staff help the school achieve its aims.

If you would like to learn more about our inspection of the school, please visit <http://www.hmie.gov.uk/>. Here you can find analyses of questionnaire returns from young people, parents and staff, and details about young people's examination performance. We will not provide questionnaire analyses where the numbers of returns are so small that they could identify individuals. Where applicable there will also be a report on the learning community surrounding the school.

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#### **1. The school**

Rutherglen High School is a non-denominational school which provides education for 84 pupils who have additional support needs arising from a range of learning difficulties and autism spectrum disorders. The school mainly serves the Cambuslang and Rutherglen area of South Lanarkshire. Young people's attendance was in line with the national average in 2008/2009. Three young people had coordinated support plans.

## **2. Particular strengths of the school**

- Young people's motivation and enthusiasm for learning.
- The supportive ethos and positive relations among staff and young people.
- Preparation of young people for the world of work, skills for life and college.
- The range of business partnerships within and beyond the local community.

## **3. How well do young people learn and achieve?**

### **Learning and achievement**

Across the school, almost all young people are motivated and engage well in their learning. They feel safe and happy in school. During lessons, some staff do not always share with the young people what they will learn during lessons. Young people would benefit from more opportunities to learn independently. They are not involved enough in reflecting on their own progress and in identifying how they can improve. Young people's learning experiences are enhanced by the use of technology and games in the active mathematics sessions. Young people need more opportunities to use information and communications technology to support their learning.

Young people are learning about taking responsibility for others through contributing to sporting and charity events, such as, the Special Olympics and fundraising for charities. The house system gives young people a sense of belonging and helps build relationships within and beyond the school community. A few young people have benefitted from taking part in aspects of South Lanarkshire's Youth Learning Programme. They are developing skills in coaching sports successfully. Young people in the senior part of the school help nursery school children with reading skills which help develop their own social and communication skills. Groups of young people benefit from an annual residential trip. They learn social and team building skills by interacting with peers from other additional support needs establishments.

By the end of S2, the majority of young people make appropriate progress in their learning. Young people attain well in a broad range of national qualifications units at Access 1, 2, 3 and Intermediate 1 and 2. Some young people are not attaining awards at course levels. Over the past two years, the pattern of young people's attainment has remained steady. However, across all subjects, the number of young people who are presented and are successful in gaining national qualifications is inconsistent. The school tracks young people's progress but it is not clear how this information is being used to raise attainment. In English, almost all young people are making progress at Access level. The majority have well-developed listening, talking and communication skills when given appropriate support and aids to assist them. At S5/S6, many young people participate in group and class discussions independently. In mathematics, almost all young people are making progress both at Access and Intermediate levels.

### **Curriculum and meeting learning needs**

Young people have access to a broad curriculum. Staff are at the early stages of taking forward aspects of *Curriculum for Excellence*. The school is further improving provision for young people with more complex needs. Some young people are not fully challenged by their learning programmes. The curriculum helps to prepare

young people well for moving to life beyond school. All young people have very good opportunities to learn important skills for work through the world of work programme and the very well-managed transitions to college or employment. All young people have two hours of high-quality physical education each week. The school does not have suitable arrangements for young people, as appropriate, to undertake part of their learning in mainstream schools.

Tasks and activities are generally matched to the needs of young people. A few young people would benefit from more challenging activities and resources. Most teachers work effectively with partner agencies to meet learners' needs. However, they do not always put into practice suggested support strategies. Staff should plan tasks, activities and resources in collaboration with specialist support staff and involve them in drawing up individualised educational programmes. Support assistants provide valued support to classes and individuals.

#### **4. How well do staff work with others to support young people's learning?**

The school has positive relationships with parents. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through parents' evening and annual reviews. The Parent Council provides strong support to the school. The school recognises the need to involve parents more in the setting of targets for young people. Staff work well with a range of partners to support young people's learning. Young people benefit from accredited work experience at local businesses. Some have achieved part-time and permanent employment as a result of their performance. All young people progress to college or employment on leaving school.

#### **5. Are staff and young people actively involved in improving their school community?**

Young people have a say in improving the school. They express their views in class discussions and at house assemblies. Staff are involved in regular curriculum meetings and working groups to discuss aspects of learning and teaching. A number of staff at all levels take on additional responsibilities. A few staff are supporting and leading important developments that are bringing about better outcomes for young people. However, staff are not sufficiently involved in identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement and the quality of learner's experiences. Senior managers need to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning and teaching more effectively to ensure that young people are appropriately challenged in their learning. The school needs to have more focused approaches to recording and tracking young people's achievements.

#### **6. Does the school have high expectations of all young people?**

Relationships between staff and young people are very positive. Staff understand their responsibilities for the care and welfare of young people, including child protection issues. The school should promote healthy choices and healthy lifestyle more consistently. Some staff do not have high enough expectations of what young people can learn and achieve. Staff promote positive behaviour effectively and most young people respond well to their expectations. Staff celebrate young people's achievement at the house assemblies. The school promotes equality and diversity issues across all aspects of its work. The school provides appropriate opportunities for religious observance.

## 7. Does the school have a clear sense of direction?

The headteacher and management team have established a broad direction for the work of the school with a focus on preparing young people for life after school. Teamwork is not fully established. Staff are not always clear about their roles and responsibilities in bringing about improvements. The principal teacher of English demonstrates effective leadership for learning and has successfully introduced experiences and outcomes for *Curriculum for Excellence* in S1/S2 courses.

## 8. What happens next?

We are confident that, with support from the education authority, the school will be able to make the necessary improvements in light of the inspection findings. As a result, we will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. The school and the education authority will inform parents about the school's progress in improving the quality of education.

We have agreed the following areas for improvement with the school and education authority.

- Develop systems to improve learning and teaching, attainment and achievement and meeting learning needs.
- Raise expectations and promote challenge for learners.
- Improve effective links across the campus schools.
- Develop across the school approaches to self-evaluation.

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 HMIE publication *How good is our school?*. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers evaluations of three important quality indicators to keep track of how well all Scottish schools are doing.

Here are the evaluations for Rutherglen High School.

<b>Improvements in performance</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Learners' experiences</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>
<b>Meeting learning needs</b>	<b>satisfactory</b>

We also evaluated the following aspects of the work of the school.

<b>The curriculum</b>	<b>good</b>
<b>Improvement through self-evaluation</b>	<b>weak</b>

**HM Inspector:** Noreen Phillips

1 March 2011

When we write reports, we use the following word scale so that our readers can see clearly what our judgments mean.

excellent	means	outstanding, sector leading
very good	means	major strengths
good	means	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	means	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	means	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	means	major weaknesses

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### **Footnote**

1. Throughout this report, the term 'parents' should be taken to include foster carers, residential care staff and carers who are relatives or friends.