



## Rutherglen High School



## Curriculum Strategy

*Framework for multi-sensory approach with highly individualised teaching and learning opportunities to support young people with a range of individual needs*

The curriculum in the Supported Base Classes follows Milestones for Complex Learners, Curriculum for Excellence and Scottish Qualifications Authority guidelines and is designed to offer young people learning experiences tailored to meet their specific needs. The curriculum is underpinned by lifelong learning skills and a focus on promoting positive outcomes for young people with individual needs. We do this by linking closely with business and academic partnerships to support our young people to become a valuable part of their community.

In S1-S3, pupils follow a broad general education working at Milestones for Complex Learners and Pre-Early, Early and First level of Curriculum for Excellence. The base class teacher is responsible for teaching Numeracy, Literacy and Health and Wellbeing. Pupils also have daily access to a wide range of other subjects delivered by specialist subject teachers.

## **The Curriculum**

### **Milestones for complex Learners**

Milestones are important points in development and demonstrate progression. Young people who are not able to achieve any of the benchmarks within Early Level still require tracking and monitoring of their progression. Whilst many young people will move on to work at Early Level, some will continue to make progress at the pre-early stage.

Milestones support teachers to track the progression of young people with severe and complex needs. Planning continues to be based on the Experiences and Outcomes from Curriculum for Excellence, with a learner-centred approach which celebrates the differences of all young people.

### **Curriculum for Excellence**

Experiences and outcomes are a set of clear and concise statements about young people's learning and progression broad general education. They are used to help plan learning and to assess progress across the years.

Benchmarks provide clarity on the national standards expected within each curriculum area at each level. They set out clear lines of progression in broad general education, and across all other curriculum areas from early to fourth levels. Their purpose is to make clear what learners need to know and be able to do to progress through the levels, and to support consistency in teachers' and other practitioners' professional judgements.

In S4 – S6, pupils undertake a range of SQA units specific to their needs.

## **National Qualifications**

Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) is one of the four partner national organisations involved in the Curriculum for Excellence. It works with partners on all strands of the development.

SQA has joined with Universities Scotland, QAA Scotland and the Scottish Government to create the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework or SCQF. Every Scottish qualification—from the Access level (designed for young people with individual learning needs) to a Doctorate and including vocational as well as ESOL and BSL qualifications—is allocated a level and credit value within this framework, which all partners have agreed to recognise.

There are the many qualifications often imperfectly referred to as vocational, though these are frequently stepping-stones for students at Scottish Colleges of Further Education to pursue one- or two- year programmes tailored from a wide-ranging catalogue of National Units. The actual programme may be very rigidly prescribed or be entirely freely chosen by the young people to meet particular needs.

These include specific qualifications for those with severe to moderate difficulties (Access), the right to aid in completing assessments (for example, a scribe) and the right to challenge any unfair or artificial barrier in the rules for any qualification.

SQA produced new qualifications which have clearer focus on skills development. There is also a greater emphasis on deeper learning by encouragement for young people to think for themselves; to apply and interpret the knowledge and understanding they have developed and to demonstrate the skills they have learned.

National 1-4 will be assessed internally by through a rigorous verification system in conjunction with Sanderson High, subject to regulation by the SQA.

### **How do we ensure we are getting it right for all of our young people?**

Rutherglen High School offer a Total Approach to Communication. Young People use a wide range of multi-sensory supports including I.C.T., Boardmaker, Makaton and sensory objects to enable them to focus and progress in their learning. We offer our young people a range of age and stage appropriate resources, including edible resources for young people that explore learning with their senses.

Learning and growth happens quickest when young people are able to devote their full attention to a topic, especially if that topic poses an age-appropriate challenge. Experiential learning offers a fun alternative to traditional classroom teaching that can improve the following areas of growth and learning:

- Memory retention: gaining a deeper understanding of content when allowed to act on it, and when young people are fully interested in the content. This causes synapses (nerves in the brain) to create stronger connections when someone associates motor functions to new information, which leads to higher memory retention.
- Experiential learning demands effort and attention, simply by being an activity that young people can participate in. Therefore, the lesson becomes a more personalised exercise of hands-on exploration.
- Life-skill development: Practical knowledge is typically gained when young people encounter obstacles and are given the opportunity to develop their problem-solving skills to overcome these challenges. Allowing young people to actively participate in daily processes can establish life skills that will benefit their future growth and learning.
- Emotional growth: Experiential learning gives young people a sense of accomplishment that will develop their self-esteem and fuel their desire to learn. When they take ownership of a situation, with help from support staff, young people learn how to follow their ambitions without being afraid to try something new or struggle at first.

For years research has shown that brain processes affect a person in their ability to process sensory information. Researchers have demonstrated unique ways in which young people with learning difficulties organise and process sensory input. Their lower ability in central coherence can impair their ability to integrate information across a variety of contexts. Young people who process information differently, prefer to use touch and smell instead of audition and vision, relying on varying aspects of sensory cue, in particular repetitive movements to cope with sensations in their environment.

One support strategy we are researching within Rutherglen High School is Sensory Profiling - planned, controlled sensory input, with the aim to create an optimum state of learning environment and the use of characteristics of Sensory stimuli. Research worldwide has shown that this form of support has been shown to reduce stress levels as participants respond to activities, offer communication, demonstrate lack of withdrawal and increased relaxation.

We work collaboratively as a team, assessing and monitoring the young people's sensory profile and use a variety of sensory supports to help counterbalance under responsive, over responsive, sensory seeking and general presentations. We use transitional back packs for regular use with a selection of items to support young people, to help sustain emotional regulation.

## **How do we ensure we are providing rich learning opportunities that prepare our young people for transitions into adult life?**

Within the department we have fostered effective links and partnership working with outside agencies and the local community. Being able to learn and develop skills in these surroundings provides the pupils with opportunities to learn from real – life contexts and facilitates transferability of skills.

In everyday life, the development of life skills helps young people to:

- Find new ways of thinking and problem solving
- Recognise the impact of their actions and fosters responsibility
- Build confidence both communication skills and for group collaboration and cooperation
- Analyse options, make decisions and understand why they make certain choices outside the classroom
- Develop a greater sense of self-awareness and awareness of others

In addition, young people are equipped with the skills to recognise to:

- communicate their likes and dislikes
- recognise that the likes and dislikes of others may differ
- make choices and to communicate their choices
- to recognise and respect the choices of others
- to communicate feelings and thoughts
- communicate needs and wants
- understand supports which can facilitate personal choices and decisions
- know how to access supports and who can help them to do so
- understand the nature of choice and the rights and responsibilities which go with choice
- the consequences of choice and the importance of making appropriate choice

**“Giving every child a chance to reach their full potential is the best work anyone can do”  
(Hillary Clinton)**

## **How do we ensure we are providing rich learning opportunities that prepare our young people for transitions into adult life?**

Rutherglen High School is a pillar of the local community having built partnerships with several businesses and providing opportunities for young people to exercise their right to reach their full potential.

Currently Rutherglen High School have been developing a new strategy to further support local business in their development of diversity and inclusion practices within the local area. This strategy, referred to as Developing Young Workforce, Diversity & Inclusion (DYWD&I), operates in close partnership with business offering professional advice, resources, and virtual training for an unlimited number of employees.

Outcomes of the strategy include supporting businesses to create opportunity for young people, with additional support needs, to have access to work placements, both virtually and in person, and participate in virtual interview experience training. The strategy is underpinned by an ethos of raising awareness of mental health and fostering inclusion within the wider society. The narrative promotes the development of networking with local businesses to create the dynamic relationships required to achieve core aims.

Consultation with our existing partners has revealed that there is a core set of skills which, if young people possessed, would hugely improve their likelihood of maintaining a successful work placement.

There is therefore a need for us, as a school, to seek out providers who can teach these bespoke skills to our young people in a targeted and individualised way.

Glasgow: the Caring City – will be one of our main partners to source provisions for bespoke skills training.

Training will be based at the main Project Campus in Govan. One Skills Coordinator will work exclusively with the school's Developing Young Workforce (DYW) coordinators in creating bespoke programmes for targeted young people for two days per week over the course of a year. We anticipate that all young people in the upper school will have some access to training over the course of the project.

The project will be comprised of modules that will be person centred. They will remain open to additional elements intended to meet the individual needs of the young people identified through the pupil pathway senior transition.

The Project intention is to deliver Lifelong skills that will support developing the Young Workforce. It will offer sessions to young people on:

- Hygiene and Food Handling,
- Basic Food Preparation,
- Catering and Hospitality,
- Bikeability, Cytech training and Bike Maintenance,
- aspects of engineering,
- event management,
- warehousing skills,
- Computer maintenance
- Commercial joinery
- Manual Handling Skills
- Sound Engineering
- Film and video production
- Beekeeping
- Musical Instrument maintenance

### **DYWD&I initiatives**

Another project Rutherglen High School has been developing is making connections in the community and finding meaningful work experience placements for young people with additional support needs. One way in which we have been driving this initiative is through business and academic partnerships. Last year we launched our Developing Young Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Business and Academic Partnership campaign. We work with local organisations and offer our expertise for partnership links with theirs. We collaborate with businesses in supporting them to understand a total approach to communication, brain and sensory processing, creating a visual environment and de-escalation strategies. We also work in partnership providing additional resources that enable our young people to be a valuable contribution to their business profile.

One example is our pallet planter initiative. We worked collaboratively with a joinery business, local gardening company, representatives from the local church organisation and a local school. We create 4 groups for the afternoon session and each group would be run with our young people from Rutherglen High alongside our business partners.

- Teaching Group – learning about plants and finding plants in the surrounding garden (this supported our young people who are interested in exploring childhood studies as a career)
- Art Group – printing leaf patterns onto recycled plant pots (this supported our young people who are interested in exploring arts and crafts as a career)
- Vocational Group – planting potted plants into pallets to be joined together to create break away spaces for use in the primary school garden (this supported our young people who are interested in exploring horticulture as a career)
- Sensory Group – touch and taste different herbs and plants, using Alternative and Augmentative Communication Aids to find out about scents. Mini mocktail making with the

scents and textured herb plants (this supported our young people who would engage with a sensory experience within work placement)

These afternoon sessions last around 1 hour. 2021-2022 we delivered 4 sessions (of different topics) to one school. 2022-2023 we are delivering these same topics to multiple schools, fostering diversity and inclusion for all.

We are planning sessions with Police Scotland to roll out cyber security and the Scottish Fire Brigade to roll out fire safety.

### **Scottish Enterprise**

Many of our young people have unique interests and skills and require bespoke learning environments that support them to process information and learn new things. Rutherglen High School has established connections with Scottish Enterprise, supporting our young people to become an entrepreneur in Scotland. They can offer specialised, one-on-one advice to help us to develop young people's interest and skills as a unique business and to grow and develop. Their services open up opportunities Scottish Enterprise offer, including:

- Funding and grants
- Export support
- Intellectual assets protection
- Scaling support
- Innovation support

They also support unique businesses to understand the market and competitors. They provide reports on:

- Competitor insights
- Global market intelligence
- Credit rating checks
- Industry trends and forecasts
- Consumer demographics
- Supplier databases

#### **A focus on inclusive growth**

Scottish Enterprise are committed to supporting inclusive growth in Scotland. This means helping businesses become more diverse, inclusive and purpose driven. They can support us to understand how to use unique businesses for good, to make positive impacts on customers, community, employees, sector and the wider economy.

#### **Positive Outcomes for Young People with Individual Needs – POYPIN**

Rutherglen High School aim to provide learning opportunities, experiences and pathways for all of our young people to reach their full potential and become an active valuable part of their community. We have established a charitable trust POYPIN that enables us to access additional funding for specialist provisions so we can explore every avenue and create new ones to meet our aim. We support our young people for a short time of their lives but we aim to foster ethos of diversity and inclusion that will have long lasting impact on positive outcomes.