

26 November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In March 2024, HM Inspectors published a letter on Caldervale High School. The letter set out a number of areas for improvement which we agreed with the school and North 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 and at other aspects of the school's work, as proposed by the headteacher. 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 should improve strategic leadership at all levels across the school, so that all members of the school community contribute meaningfully to improving their school.**

The school has started to make progress in this aspect.

There is an important consultation taking place across the school community about refreshing the school vision, values and aims. This has the potential to provide a clear aspiration for all learners at Caldervale High School and support a collective approach to school improvement.

The recently appointed headteacher is highly regarded by staff and young people. Parents have warmly welcomed the improvements in communication since her appointment and have reported they are beginning to feel that they have a greater role to play in school life. The headteacher provides clear direction for school improvement and plans carefully for change in a manageable and ambitious way. She works closely with senior leaders. There is still room for senior leaders and faculty heads/ principal teachers to work more closely together, so that planning improvement throughout the school links clearly to common goals and agreed methods of delivering improvement in young people's wellbeing and attainment. A next step is to ensure that there is a shared understanding of how progress towards achieving improvement is measured, as well as what success looks like.

**Teachers should improve the consistency and quality of learners' experiences.**

There have been some early indications of progress in improving the experiences for young people in classrooms.

The learning, teaching and assessment committee has developed the 'Caldervale lesson' and provided a range of professional learning opportunities for staff. Senior leaders have allocated additional time for staff to share and discuss practice. Teachers speak positively about the opportunities they have to work together. Senior leaders now need to consider carefully how to monitor the impact of these developments to ensure things are improving at a whole school, departmental and classroom level. It is very important that everyone

understands why changes are made and can evaluate whether these changes are improving outcomes for young people.

The Pupil Support Team are planning how to provide information on ways to support all young people to learn, including those learners who may need more help. This will enable staff to plan more effectively, so that all young people make the best progress they can. There is still inconsistency in the learning experiences of young people across the school. Young people are, at times, carrying out activities at the same level and pace as everyone else in the class. However, a more consistent approach to classroom routines and expectations is emerging. As a result of this, young people are beginning to speak more positively about having a better understanding of what they are learning and what success looks like.

**Staff need to ensure that programmes and courses are carefully planned and designed to meet the needs of all learners.**

The school has made some progress in this aspect for improvement, but the work is at the early stages and the impact is not yet evident.

There are clear plans in place to ensure that programmes and courses are carefully planned and developed to meet the needs of all learners. Senior leaders are working with middle leaders to look at the range of subjects available to young people. This includes making sure that young people can make progress to higher levels of attainment within areas that are relevant to them. This can help them make choices that support their dreams and aspirations for their future life. An important part of this work is ensuring that all staff know the progress that young people are making and whether they require additional help, both in S1-3 and also in the senior phase. It is important that senior and middle leaders continue to monitor how effectively this information is supporting young people to improve.

**Staff should develop young people's understanding of wellbeing and its relevance to their lives.**

The school has made some progress in this aspect for improvement but as yet there are insufficient signs of impact.

Senior leaders have been developing staff understanding of wellbeing as a responsibility of all through professional learning and working groups. There has been an increase in the number of young people who report feeling safe in school. A recently introduced one-way system, increased staff supervision and the offer of nurturing spaces during breaks have contributed to young people feeling safer around the school. The consistent implementation of the mobile phone policy has had a significant positive impact in lessons, contributing to a more inclusive and safe school environment.

There is inconsistency in how young people's wellbeing needs are being met across the school. The wellbeing of young people does not yet feature strongly enough as everyone's responsibility. There is not yet a shared understanding of what it means to be safe, healthy, achieving, respected, nurtured, active, included and responsible in the unique context of Caldervale High School. Young people are keen to play a more active role in updating the personal and social education programme and contribute to promoting a shared

understanding of wellbeing across the school. Senior leaders and the pupil support team are aware of young people who are experiencing anxiety about a range of issues, including bullying. Staff should take fully into account the views of young people and their parents in this key area.

Senior leaders recognise further action is required to improve young people's attendance and timekeeping. An initial focus on this area has been well received by the school community and has led to a significant reduction in late coming. The pupil support team plan to review the attendance policy in line with national guidance and the recently published local authority policy. This key next step will support staff to explore the reasons why young people are not attending school and look for ways to identify and take away any barriers.

**Staff should raise attainment for all young people, including a focus on effective targeting of gaps in knowledge and skills.**

This work is at very early stages and has yet to have an impact on outcomes for learners.

Senior leaders and staff are very aware of the need to improve attainment for all young people and at all levels across the school, both at S1-3 and in the senior phase. Staff have an increased focus on how best to improve young people's attainment and support all young people to achieve their maximum potential.

Senior leaders have created a self-evaluation calendar that links with a shared assessment calendar. This will provide staff with identified times in the year for tracking young people's progress in wellbeing and attainment and is a key next step. It will support teachers to identify gaps in knowledge and skills and staff will be able to take steps to support learners to improve. Senior and middle leaders should closely monitor the effectiveness of these processes. Staff provide supported study options which are highly valued by young people.

### **What happens next?**

The school has made some progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with North Lanarkshire Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within one year of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with North Lanarkshire Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Jacqueline Gallagher  
HM Inspector