

Headteacher:
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Founded in 1717

BAINES SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers,

On Tuesday 26th and Wednesday 27th November 2019, we had an Ofsted inspection. Attached to this letter is a copy of the inspection report. It was a privilege to be the Headteacher of our school during the two days as our whole Baines Community pulled together to tell the inspectors about the improvement journey we are on and how much our school has improved over the last two years.

We were inspected under a brand new and more challenging Ofsted framework, with the introduction of new criteria. The category 'Quality of Education' covers many aspects including the curriculum at KS3 and KS4, subject planning, teaching and learning, assessment, numeracy, literacy and reading and where students move to after graduating from Baines.

I am sure many of you will be disappointed that our school was still judged to be 'Requires Improvement' overall but when you read the text you will see that there are many strengths reflected. It says positive things about our school and acknowledges the changes we have made to improve standards. When I took up post I said that it would take three years to become a 'Good' school. As yet there has not been time to see the full impact from the very many positive changes we have made. For example, we do not have any results yet for the new subjects we have introduced into KS4.

The report comments about students not achieving as well as they should in some subjects; we have many students who achieved excellent results last year but there are still some students who we need to help to work harder to ensure they achieve their very best. We have re-written our schemes of learning and introduced new techniques to help students to remember their learning and make connections; we have also improved the support we give for answering longer questions. As you know, we have had a strong drive to improve attendance: the report recognises the improvements but there are still some students who do not attend regularly enough, and we are targeting those who do not work hard enough and those who do not complete homework.

I am sure you will be pleased to read about the positive attitudes and strong personal development provision. We are preparing our students as well-rounded young people for life in modern Britain and they are learning about how to keep themselves safe and are well-supported through our pastoral system.

The four improvement areas are no surprise and are things we are already working on:

- The ongoing development of our schemes of learning; these now need to be embedded so we can see the change it has made to learning and that our children know and remember more.
- We have been working with primary schools to develop our mathematics curriculum and this is ongoing. While we do need to consolidate the learning of techniques from KS2, we need to

move our students further forward. For some students, they need more support developing underpinning skills such as long multiplication and division, conversion of units and fractions. We will work on these techniques as they underpin more of the complex mathematical skills, while at the same time ensuring that students make progress in these new areas.

- We have been working hard to develop retrieval techniques through the curriculum. There are far more mini-assessments in place and use of personal learning checklists to understand where the knowledge gaps are. This is to be fully embedded across all of our subjects so that teachers can adapt their teaching to fill those gaps in knowledge and skills.
- This year we have improved our expectations of the quality of work that students produce. The use of silent study time in lessons is helping with student concentration. We are continuing to work with students who do not complete their class work or homework and they rush so it is not to the best of their ability. As mentioned in the report, we still have some students who do not take pride in their work and who do not use capital letters and punctuation correctly. From January, I will be expecting that those students who do not work to the required standard, will have to repeat the work. All students at secondary school should be able to write with correct capital letters, punctuation and have a strong vocabulary. I will be looking for support from parents and carers in ensuring that all work is completed to a high standard and that we develop literacy levels further.

As you are aware, there have been many changes at Baines since I started in September 2017. The school is on the right path and the report acknowledges that we have “turned a corner”. Our results have significantly improved over the last two years and I expect to continue this upward trend. The timing of the inspection was just too soon to see the full impact across all areas of our school. We will continue the drive to be the best and I do not see any reason why we would not be graded as ‘Good’ at the next inspection.

I would like to thank you all for your support since I took up post. I truly believe we have a strong partnership where the school, students and parents/carers are working together to provide a broad, balanced and enriched education for all our students at Baines School. Thank you for supporting the changes we have made so far, as the report said, we have made some brave decisions to improve our school. There will be further changes in order to help your child achieve their full potential.

I will continue to share our progress and priorities in my fortnightly Headteacher Updates and after Christmas I will give further details from the more detailed verbal feedback and share a succinct copy of our school improvement plan with you.

Yours faithfully



Mrs A Chapman
Headteacher