



Headteacher Update – 28th February 2022

Dear Parents, Carers, Students, Family and Friends of Baines School,

Welcome back to the spring half-term, we are now past the halfway point through the academic year and lots of important events happen in this half term. I would like to thank you all for your support and understanding while I am away from school for a few days following a family bereavement. Mrs Doherty is Acting Headteacher while I am away and I thank her and all the staff who are covering in my absence.

I know many of you will be upset and concerned about the events in the **Ukraine**. I know the children are also upset and concerned and want to know what it means for us in the UK. We are hoping that the DfE will be issuing some guidance (and maybe even some teaching resources to support all schools in leading on this sensitive issue). In the meantime, Mrs Doherty will be leading a whole-school assembly (today/tomorrow) and providing staff with guidance and resources to help us work with the students in an age and maturity appropriate manner. Towards the end of this update is a link about a webinar for parents and carers to help them recognise signs of stress in children and where to go to access help.

There are quite a few links in this update to resources/webinars/help that we hope you will find helpful.

Attendance remains a high priority at Baines School, we all know that the education over the last two and a half years has been disrupted by Covid, we are really having a push in school in the hope that we can raise the attendance standards, especially now our Covid cases have reduced significantly. Please remember that on average, a child who has attendance below 95%, tends to achieve at least one grade lower in every subject than those who have attendance above 95%. We cannot help illness, but please do try to ensure children attend as much as possible.

If your child is unwell at school, they are to see first aid, we cannot have a situation where a parent/carer turns up to pick up their child without us being aware of the situation. Our first aiders will phone parents/carers if there is the need for a child to be collected to go home.

Well done to our **year 11 students** who have conducted themselves very well in their mock examinations. They will receive their results in a couple of weeks when we have a 'mock results day' where they will be issued their results in an envelope in a similar way to what happens on the 'real' results day in August. The year 11 students now need to focus on what the results have told them about what they know and what they need to re-learn / improve in preparation for the summer examinations. Please do register for the **Elevate Parental session** mentioned late in the update. It will help you to support your child through their examination.

Last week and this week are important for our **year 9 students** who are in the middle of their options process. It was year 9 consultation evening last week, where you learnt about how your child is doing in the different subjects, this will have helped to inform your child's choices for KS4. Mr McGrath led special assemblies last week about the options process, he has emailed a link to all year 9

parents/carers, this is a video to watch before the Options Evening on Tuesday. The video is used to reduce large numbers of people sitting in the hall together. The video is a recording of Mr McGrath's presentation. You need to watch this so you understand the process and choices before Tuesday evening. On Tuesday evening, you will attend school and visit the subjects that your child is considering taking but please visit more than just four because your child will need to list first and second choices, so you want these to be informed selections.

In my last update, I mentioned the excellent achievement of our Senior Head Boy from 2020, Charlie O'Brien who has secured a place at Cambridge University. Charlie has sent this message:

"I feel extremely proud to have received a conditional offer to study economics at Cambridge. It is not lost on me how significant the help and support I received at Baines has enabled me to get to this point in my academic career. The thing with Baines is that if you are determined and the fantastic opportunities available, the school will do everything they can to maximise your potential.

As you move into sixth form, your determination to succeed and your ability to expand your knowledge beyond the classroom become paramount. Blackpool Sixth Form has offered me many opportunities to do this. Baines gave me such a solid platform and for that I will always be grateful".

It is with sadness that I report the passing of **Mr Don Ramsden**, a former student and former teacher at Baines School. He was fondly remembered by staff and peers for being a German teacher and also for his love and passion for cricket. Our thoughts are with his family.

We have followed Dave Ryding's build up and Olympics with hope for our 'adopted Bainesarian'. While he did not bring back a medal from the Olympics, finishing 13th in the Winter Olympics is still a wonderful achievement alongside all of his other achievements in skiing. We know he will have given everything – living our motto, 'Nil Sine Labore' and we are feeling honoured and proud to be associated with him through his Grandmother, Muriel Ryding (former Headteacher at Baines). She kindly wrote us some reflections about his journey, I hope you enjoy reading them at the end of this update.

We work with a number of teacher training providers, mostly with the Fylde Coast SCITT and Ripley SCITT. I previously posted a Fylde Coast SCITT leaflet, at the end of this update is a leaflet for the Ripley SCITT for any of our community interested in a career in teaching.

I am so pleased that we are getting back to more normal times with trips, visits and larger special events now being planned. Next week nearly 70% of our year 7 students will be going on camp to Colomendy in North Wales, we have a group going to the International Women's Day conference and members of the Eco-Council are going to a special Climate Change event in the next two weeks. We are hosting our first face to face Creative Arts Concert since December 2019. Details of this can be found later in the update. We are also starting to plan the Year 11 Prom and re-organise Founders Service as well as arranging our summer awards events. I really look forward to welcoming you back to these special events at school.

Finally, this week we find out the students who have successfully secured a place in our school to be our Year 7 students in September. These will be our Class of 2027! I cannot wait to see the names and start welcoming them to the Baines family. If you know of anyone, please do give them a warm Baines welcome.

I look forward to being back in school soon, please encourage your children to continue working hard as I will be visiting lessons and looking in books to see their learning and pride in their work as soon as I am back.

Stars of the Week (Week 1)



Stars of the Week (Week 2)



Successes

Lancashire School Cross Country

On Saturday 5th February, Ella -Year 9 and Kristie - Year 7 represented Wyre in the Lancashire School's Cross-Country Championships at Witton Park, Blackburn.



The conditions were horrendous; cold, windy, rainy and very muddy; but this did not deter the girls from turning in two fantastic performances.

Ella finished in 11th position in the Junior Girl's race, and Kristie a remarkable 2nd position in the Year 7 event. There were 60 plus runners from around the county in each race which makes the achievements of our Baines girls even more special!



Wyre district also won the Year 7 girls and the Junior girl's competitions overall. Well done Ella and Kristie!

Ewan Year 7 also took part in the Lancashire School Cross Country. He did really well and worked really hard despite still not being 100% after his recent COVID sickness. Well done Ewan!

Follow Your Dreams Dance Competition



Congratulations to Ava in year 7. We are excited to share the news that she won a national dance title in London in the Follow your Dreams competition. As you can see from the photograph, Ava has excelled and won a number of awards along with her dance troupe. I hope Ava will perform in our Summer Creative Arts concert.

Hegarty Mathematics – Mr Harrison

| Name | Year | Total questions answered correctly | Time spent doing Skills (hours) |
|-----------|------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Emily | 9 | 728 | 138 |
| Cerys | 10 | 637 | 4.6 |
| Amber | 11 | 386 | 2.4 |
| Nafisa | 8 | 386 | 4.3 |
| Khadijah | 8 | 328 | 5.6 |
| Valentina | 10 | 314 | 1.1 |
| Callum | 9 | 291 | 1.6 |
| Harry | 7 | 258 | 1 |
| Erin | 9 | 252 | 3.3 |
| Lola | 9 | 236 | 3.2 |
| Ethan | 7 | 234 | 3.1 |
| Darcy | 9 | 230 | 3.8 |
| Olivia | 9 | 218 | 3 |
| Sofia | 9 | 203 | 3.3 |

The number of students answering more than 200 questions over the past fortnight has increased dramatically. It is great to see how many students have taken the revision seriously, for the upcoming assessments. The work being done is really pleasing and the effort put in by the students will hopefully be reflected in the scores they get on the assessments.

Year 7 – Mrs Russell

Year 7 Kindness Jar is up and running. Lots of names in there already! Remember 'kindness is contagious', let's start the wave.

Thank you to our Form Prefects, they are doing a wonderful job supporting their Progress Tutor. Prizes for you all in our next Celebration Assembly.



ClassChart Champions - effort is the key to success!

| | | | |
|---------|----------|------------|-------------|
| Lily H | Lily A | Harrison H | Kayden |
| Robyn | Millie B | Ibby I | Tyler S |
| Maisy S | Cole | Tyler H | Macie-Leigh |
| | Callum D | Kayleigh W | |

Literacy Update – Mrs Streetly & Mrs Simmons

Reading Plus

Our Reading Plus students have completed their mid-term check so that we can see how they're progressing. Our B1 student leader board is: Holly, Lilly, Ruby, Cameron and William. Our ILC leader board is: William, Aaliyah, Miles, Freya, Thomas.

Reading Ambassadors

Our reading Ambassadors are now meeting weekly with their reading buddies. We hope that they are providing support and confidence in reading as well as helping some of our younger students become familiar with our senior students. All of our Reading Ambassadors and their buddies are displaying exemplary behaviour and a positive attitude during their sessions.

Reading Testing

During March, we are re-assessing the reading ability of our students in years 7 to 10. We are hoping that our students will show an increased aptitude.

Literacy Clubs:

Friday lunchtime - Writing Club (all years in the ILC with Miss Dunstan and Mrs Streetly)

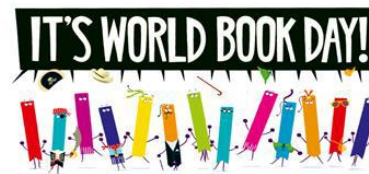
Monday lunchtime - Year 9 Boys Book Club with Mrs Streetly in N18

Friday lunchtime - Year 9 Girls Book Club with Mrs Streetly in the ILC

Root of the Week:

w/c 28th February: Mater/Pater meaning Mother/Father

w/c 7th March: Port meaning to carry



This March we are celebrating 25 years of World Book Day. The ILC will be hosting a week full of activities, including creative workshops, design your own keyring and staff reading aloud at lunch. The ILC will also be running three competitions with chances to win amazing prizes! 'Get Caught Reading' in our photo competition, take part in the 'Book Title Scavenger Hunt; find the staff to find the book title, and can you guess the book by the emojis? Visit the ILC for more information about all our events taking place Monday 28th February-Friday 4th March.

Reading Around Maths



Over the month of February, we were encouraging the students to Read Around Maths. In their ILC lessons our students took part in the following activities;

Year 7-Mathematical Murders. Students had to call upon their arithmetic skills to solve their mini mathematical murder mystery.

Year 8-Escape the ILC. The ILC door was locked!! Teams had to compete and complete three mathematical and literacy rounds to get the key that would unlock the door and enable them to escape the ILC!

Year 9-Murder in the ILC. A terrible crime had been committed! The librarian's assistant had been murdered and the students had to study the clues around the ILC to solve not only who had murdered the assistant, but why and how.

Harry Potter Book Night

All week long (31st Jan-4th Feb) the ILC celebrated all things Harry Potter. During break students watched 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone' to commemorate its 25th anniversary, Mrs Holmes read to the students about Harry's first trip to Diagon Alley and on Thursday 3rd February 30 students battled it out in the ultimate Harry Potter Quiz.

Students entered the ILC through Platform 9 3/4, and took part in 6 rounds, which included making their own broomstick, but there could only be one winning team.

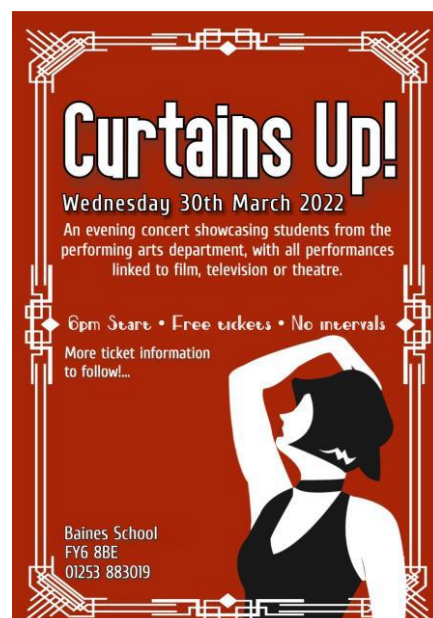


Well done to Team Hungarian Horntail who received an illustrated copy of 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'

Congratulations to Sophie who won a Harry Potter Goody bag for her design of her own version of Hogwarts.

Creative Arts – Mr Shillitoe

We are excited to announce our first face-to-face Performing Arts events since 2020! On Wednesday 30th March 2022, starting at 6pm in our School Hall, we will host "Curtains Up!", a celebration of music, dance and musical theatre performances from across the Creative Arts department. This concert will not only feature performances from a range of super talented students, but the entire concert will be planned and delivered by a committee of Y11 students. Furthermore, each item in the concert will link to the world of film, television and/or theatre. This concert will be free of charge, and more information will be provided soon re: how to obtain a ticket and secure your seat. The concert starts at 6pm, and there will be no interval. We expect the concert to last roughly 1 hour in length. Finally, many thanks to **Rohan**, a member of our Y11 student committee, who produced the poster that you can see attached to this article.



Year. 9 Options – Mr McGrath

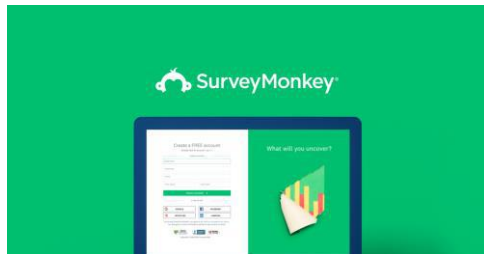
| Date | Event |
|--|---|
| 31 st January – 11 th February | Careers Advice for Year 9 Options Students Mrs Kinder will be offering group and individual sessions for students who require specific careers advice. She will be working closely with Blackpool Sixth Form to provide up to date advice on next steps. |
| 11 th February | Letter home to Parents / Students regarding the dates of the upcoming events and Options Process this year |
| Half Term | |
| 21 st February -25 th February | Year 9 Progress Review Week This will be an opportunity for Progress Tutors and Progress Leaders to discuss the individual progress of students within their forms and year groups. |
| 23 rd February | Year 9 Consultation Evening |
| 25 th February | Year 9 Options Assembly – Mr McGrath to will run an assembly where he will outline the process for this year. The Options Booklet will also be allocated. |
| 1 st March | Year 9 Options Evening Details on how this will run this year will follow soon. |
| 11 th March | Deadline for handing Options Forms |

Parent/Carer Survey – Mr Mates

We would like to hear and understand how you feel about different aspects of your child(ren)'s school life so that we can continue to improve our school. We would be very grateful if you would find five minutes to complete a brief survey using the link below. The survey will remain open up to and including Friday 4th March.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9G85SJ2>



[Parent/Carer survey February 2022](#)

Take this survey powered by [surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com).
Create your own surveys for free.
www.surveymonkey.co.uk

Year 11 – Session for Parents/Carers



Dear Parents and carers,

RE: Upcoming webinars for parents

We're excited to announce that next week Elevate will be hosting its next Parent Webinar. Feedback to the series so far has been fantastic, so don't miss out the next instalment in the series.

Elevate works with our students, delivering high impact workshops on study skills, motivation, wellbeing, and exam preparation. By tuning into their webinar series you will learn how to better support your children at home through reinforcing the skills they learn at school.

Tuesday 1st March @ 6:00pm: *Managing Technology and Focus*

[Register for free here](#)

In this session Elevate will show you:

- ✓ How to help your child manage social media and reduce technology dependence
 - ✓ Practical strategies and apps to minimise procrastination
- ✓ How to help your child use technology productively to enhance their learning

The webinar is run **live online from 6pm – 7pm** where the presenter will share Elevate's key research and skills, and will conduct a live Q&A so you can ask them questions directly.

[Register for free here](#)

Should you have questions or would like to contact Elevate directly, their details are listed below.

☎ 01865 987 732

✉ charlotte@elevateeducation.com

🖥 https://go.elevateeducation.com/e/891981/uk-register-/418ls/184881574?h=TpO028JJXsi0eZDW9-9_5mNJ7AnWdyG6Jl3-bKA7k-l

👍 www.facebook.com/ElevateParentsUK/

Careers Update

Meet the Professional Masterclasses

On Tuesday 8th February we welcomed Mark Walker, a Public Service tutor from Blackpool and The Fylde College who worked as a Police Officer for four years before moving on to teaching. Students who attended the masterclass enjoyed the interactive nature of the session and asked lots of interesting questions around the different types of crimes which have been committed in the local area and the likelihood of prosecution for uncommon crimes.

Our professional guest provided insight into a range of topics including:

- The different shift patterns of a police officer e.g. early (7am – 3pm), afternoon (2pm – 10pm) and late (9pm – 7am)
- What topics are discussed within a morning police briefing e.g. any outstanding warrants for arrest
- The skills required to be a good police officer which includes communication, discipline and problem solving
- The most common crimes to be reported (anti-social behavior) and the most serious crimes (murder)

Our next masterclass will be held on **Wednesday 2nd March** where we will welcome **The RAF** as our professional guest. Please can interested Year 10 and 11 students put their name forward to Miss Kinder if they would like to attend – kki@baines.lanacs.sch.uk

Year 9 – Options Appointments

We have had a huge amount of interest in options support appointments from the Year 9 cohort this year. Miss Kinder has been busy with these and will continue to see students over the next two weeks before options forms are returned to school on 11th March.

Year 10 – Work Experience

Please can all Year 10 students ensure that they have informed Mrs Doherty of their career aspiration in order to be placed on a relevant work experience. Students who have yet to do this will need to see Mrs Doherty immediately.

We will be starting the matching process soon and want to ensure that every student has a valuable experience which will allow them to learn more about the particular job role they are interested in for the future.

Year 11 - College Applications

Please be aware that Blackpool Sixth Form have announced that the closing date to apply for courses starting in September 2022 is **Tuesday 1st March 2022**. Only applicants can attend their taster events in March and the New Student Day in July. Therefore, if your son/daughter is considering Blackpool Sixth Form as an option then please apply before the closing date.

Some key points to remember when making an application:

1. Students can apply to multiple sixth forms/colleges as the decision on where you are going to study is only finalised on GCSE results day.
2. The courses selected on your college application can change, as these again are not finalised until you enroll at your chosen provider on results day.
3. Predicted grades should be used on application forms to give the provider an idea of the grades you are working towards, so they are able to give you a conditional offer/place on the course.
4. Check your spam/junk folder as the education provider will contact you on email with updates about the progress of your application and important information regarding upcoming college events.

Student Council

Current projects the student council are undertaking include

Year 7 – Kindness

Year 8 – Food survey

Year 9 and 10 – Designing a front cover for our new student folders which they will use to store certificates, CVs etc to help prepare them for post-16.

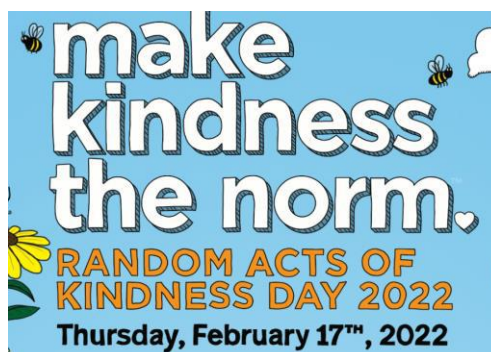
All year groups – Organising an interform benchball competition to raise money for The Stephen Beech Foundation.

Following the Year 8 student survey, the Estate Team, led by Mr Ashworth has fitted benches in the Year 8 yard area. The students have been really pleased with them, and recognise that their voices are important and listened to. Thank you Mr Ashworth and Team!

All students are welcome to join student council.

Themes of the Week

Our theme this week is Random Act of Kindness and the students have been reminded of being kind to each other. They watched the video of the Brownlee brothers, where the older brother supported his younger brother across the line at an important triathlon.



We want our students to enjoy coming to school, and feel they belong at Baines School. Kindness is such an important part of this, and a student being unkind can have a lasting impact on others. Social media continues to be an issue in terms of comments made to each other, outside of school. From a safeguarding point, please ensure that you check your child's devices regularly to ensure there is nothing on there that you are concerned about.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>



On Tuesday lunchtime, Jess the Layworker from Poulton Methodist Church started her first scrap booking / journaling club. We had a lovely turnout of students. If anyone else is interested in joining, please see Mrs Doherty.

Friends of Baines

If you would like to be involved with our own version of a PTFA – Friends of Baines, please contact Mrs Doherty (cdo@baines.lancs.sch.uk). We are hoping to start looking at organising more fund raising events after the success of the Christmas Raffle, including the possibility of hosting a car boot sale. These activities can only help with support from our Friends of Baines.

We very much value your input in shaping our community.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Just a reminder that if you or your son / daughter has any safeguarding concerns, please contact a member of the safeguarding team:

[Mrs Doherty \(Deputy Headteacher and Safeguarding Lead\)](#)

[Miss Harkins \(Pastoral Manager and Safeguarding Person\)](#)

[Mr Shillitoe \(Head of Creative Arts and Safeguarding Person\)](#)

If you have any ideas how you feel we could improve our safeguarding of students, please feel free to email Mrs Doherty (cdo@baines.lancs.sch.uk)

Please see below for a Government Campaign 'Stop Abuse Together'

<https://stopabusetogether.campaign.gov.uk/>

Stop Abuse Together



Child sexual abuse is a reality for thousands of children across our country, with at least one in ten estimated to experience sexual abuse before they turn 16.

But we can all play a part in protecting children and getting them the right help. That's why it's important to know how to spot the potential signs of child sexual abuse and where to go for support. This website brings together advice and resources to help you keep the children in your life safe.

If you have any concerns at all about a child's safety or wellbeing, don't hesitate to contact the NSPCC helpline on

0800 800 5000

or email help@nspcc.org.uk

The dedicated NSPCC child protection specialist you talk to will know what to do next and will take any necessary action. It's never too soon to speak out when a child needs help. Even if you're unsure, it's the wrong, the best thing to do is to talk to a trained professional. Your call could protect a child from experiencing sexual abuse.

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.

Supporting Young People with Positive Mental Health

Kooth Northwest - Mental Health and Wellbeing Resources

Kooth provide free, safe and anonymous support to all young people on Kooth.com across the North. All resources and engagement offers are free for schools, services and young people to access. All content is moderated at Kooth. It is commissioned by the CCG and is staffed by clinical psychologists and accredited counsellors.

- [Introduction to Kooth for Parents and Carers](#)
[Kooth Webinar](#) (PDF 542 KB)

6–7 pm 10 March

This session will help parents and carers, who have a child aged 10 and over, to identify the signs and symptoms of stress with their children and understand how Kooth can help.

If you want to book a session or find out more, please contact, Heather Hook, via hhook@kooth.com

Forthcoming Events:

1st March - Year 9 Options Evening 5.30pm -7.30pm

3rd March - World Book Day

7th March - Year 7 Camp Departs

9th March – Year 7 Camp Returns

11th March – Year 9 & 11 Individual and Year 11 Group Photographs

11th March – Sports Relief.

Nil Sine Labore

Alison Chapman, Headteacher

Interested in teaching? Join us for our open day.

Ripley ITT offers teacher training across primary (3–7 years and 5–11 years) and a range of secondary subjects.

Thursday 10 March 2022

09:30 – 11:00 via Zoom

12:30 – 14:30 or 16:00 – 18:00
at Ripley St Thomas CE Academy



ripleyitt.co.uk



Who is it for?

We welcome potential candidates, those already recruited and school staff.

There will be an opportunity to meet the Ripley family, explore if teaching is for you and hear from our trainees.

Book your place

Email itt@ripley.lancs.sch.uk or register your place on Eventbrite at ripleyitt.eventbrite.com

Visit ripleyitt.co.uk for more information
Call **07745 529975** or **07709 525401**



ripleyitt.co.uk



Reflections from Mrs Muriel Ryding, former Headteacher at Baines School (retired 2000), her Grandson is Dave 'the rocket' Ryding, Olympic Skier (GB Squad)

Ref. Extracts taken from the media and in particular <https://planetski.eu/2022/01/22/the-dave-ryding-story/>

(M.G.R.) The Baines Connection - My philosophy has always been that life is a journey and along the way it offers us a lot of opportunities, so take them and you never know where it will lead. Thinking back over the last few days I realise that Baines had a small part to play in Dave Ryding's journey.

When I was the Head of Baines School, a letter arrived on my desk from a teacher in the French Alps who was looking to exchange with a school in England; somewhere near the sea. Eureka! this seemed too good an opportunity to miss and would give Baines the chance to broaden its horizons and for pupils to gain valuable experiences. The exchange school was in Taninges near Samoens, a delightful summer and winter ski resort in the Haute Savoie. Over the years many pupils took advantage of the exchange to experience first-hand, French family life. I got involved and my family had great times visiting the area and made lifelong friendships. It was here that Dave had his first experiences on snow and loved it. In later years, when he started training and racing more seriously, our contacts in the area were extremely helpful.

The second occasion involved the chance to experience a trip without parents. Mrs Champion (Head of Year 7) and keen skier herself, ran a school ski trip every year. In 1997 she had a late cancellation only one week from departure. She asked me if Dave, who was not a Baines pupil, would like to take the place. As he was only 11 and didn't know anyone at all on the trip, I wasn't sure. When I asked him if he thought he might like to go, he said "Yes please and as long as I can ski every day I don't really mind if I have to camp on the snow" I assured him that warm accommodation would be provided, and he was ready for off. This was a great preparation for later team ski camps.

(Dave's History) It's been a long road for the 35-year-old, and it started many years ago with a ski-crazy dad. At the age of six, Dave, along with his younger sister Jo, was 'encouraged' to learn to ski at the local dry slope at Pendle in Lancashire. Dad promised to take the kids on their first family skiing holiday to the mountains if they could get to a good basic level and carry their own skis. It worked. They joined Pendle Ski Club and first Dave and then Jo joined the family on what was to become an annual trip to the Alps.

Dave thrived on racing on dry slopes – a passion he shared with considerable success with sister Jo, when he was 13, he was selected for the English Schools Race Team. But living in a country whose mountains can be counted on one hand, it was never going to be easy to turn his hobby into a career.

He didn't get any race training on real snow until 2001 when he was 14 That was when he began travelling to the mountains more regularly. For the weeks he was not at school, he attended training camps to improve his technique and build his fitness. In stark contrast, Dave's potential rivals usually lived in the mountains, started skiing at 2 years of age and if they showed talent, they went to a specialist ski school. So, the coastal plain of Lancashire versus the Alps - It's not really a fair contest, is it? But they make them tough up north – and Dave Ryding is the epitome of northern grit. He has reached the very top of his chosen career thanks to hard work, determination, and a huge amount of talent. and sacrifice

When asked, Dave said "I come from a very ordinary background, and I know the sacrifices that my parents and wider family made to help me, and I owe them a huge amount of respect and gratitude." Dave's parents insisted he completed his education before he could consider racing full-time. At 18, after his A levels, he secured a place at Loughborough University and was selected to the GB Alpine Development Team and deferred his place at university. It was the start of a remarkable rise for the boy from Bretherton.

Any training at elite level is expensive and in order to find the tens of thousands of pounds needed to race on the international circuit each season, Dave had to rely on financial support from sponsors and the sport's governing body, BSS (now GB Snowsport). However, no sooner had he been selected to the Senior Team and won selection to represent GB at the Winter Olympics in Vancouver, than the Nation Governing Body went bankrupt. This meant that the training and support structure virtually disappeared overnight and the elite funding agency, UK Sport, which allocates money on the basis of Olympic medal prospects, withdrew funding for the British alpine programme in 2010.

Dave was left in limbo. His childhood ambition had been to be ranked in the top 30 ski racers in the world. It must have seemed a lofty aim at the time, but he believed in himself was determined to continue for as long as he could.

These were very difficult years for Dave and his coach as he had to find his own funding until he had proved himself. Determined to continue, he looked to local businesses to help with the costs and was able to get two very good companies on board. "The Race Team" consisted of Dave and his coach driving in a van all over Europe to train and race, staying in self-catering accommodation, finding equipment sponsors – skis helmets goggles etc. and all without the specialist help of a technician to prepare the skis, a doctor or physio. After a hard day's training on the slopes and in the gym, dinner made and eaten there were still six pairs of skis had to be waxed and sharpened. In spite of the difficulties they continued to work hard and make progress. He was selected and raced at the 2014 Olympics in Sochi. Both men put their private lives on hold, and through dedication and hard work they made progress up the leader board. In January 2017, he stepped on the World Cup podium for the first time, taking second place in Kitzbühel behind the World Slalom Champion, Marcel Hirscher. That stunning achievement made the world sit up and notice the Brit who had learned his sport on plastic. He was all over the

news in the UK and Austria. "Overnight I was recognised everywhere I went in Austria. I had many, many phone calls and was on the TV news. You have got to embrace it. It's what you dream of as a kid. With that result, being British, you have to take all these media opportunities because it's important for the sport.

As Dave continued to make progress the National Governing Body had reformed and appointed experienced leaders from other successful sports to bring a more professional approach to the governance. Before the Kitzbuhel race Dave was already GB's most successful ever alpine racer with three World Cup podiums. The first was at the scene of his latest triumph when he won silver in Kitzbühel in 2017. He picked up another silver in the Oslo parallel slalom in 2019 and a bronze at the Adelboden slalom in 2021.

This, though, is something else. The Kitzbuhel Race is a weeklong event with races from all Alpine disciplines. It has been likened to the Alpine equivalent of winning the Wimbledon Final, the Monaco Grand Prix or the FA World Cup.

. "It's been a crazy journey," said Ryding, a heavy favourite to be named Team GB's male flagbearer for the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics on February 4. "You win a World Cup three weeks before the Olympics, it's natural for everyone to talk. Obviously, the pressure and expectation will have ramped up, but I won't be defined by an Olympics. I've had an amazing career that I've been proud of. To win a World Cup, it's taken the weight off my shoulders."

He added: "The whole of the British winter sports scene has undergone a real revolution since my first Olympics, and we've finally got to the stage where we have a strong federation. For me the important thing is to see the next generation coming through. You're judged by what the next generation thinks of you, and we're certainly not seen as a laughing stock anymore."

There were widespread emotional scenes: his ski technician Jai Geyer broke down in tears and pounded the snow shouting repeatedly "he did it,"; congratulations poured in from current and ex-team-mates understanding the magnitude of his achievement; even the US Ski & Snowboard team tweeted their appreciation and Mikaela Shiffrin, the American record-breaking alpine skier and long-time Ryding admirer, hailed him as proof "that you can reach the top even if you didn't grow up in a powerhouse ski racing country."

Ryding himself was a vision of pure emotion. "I don't know if dreams are made better," he said post-race. And yet, in a reflection of the dedication that has powered his career to date, later celebrations consisted of "a meal with the boys" before hopes for "a good night's sleep" ahead of racing in Schladming on Tuesday.

Endearingly, the Briton does not do flashy or arrogance. A Liverpool fan, he joked his career success must obviously mean being able to live next to Jurgen Klopp and Steven Gerrard, before following up with: "The footballers earn more in a week than I do in a year. But I'm not complaining. My sponsors have always been there for me and I'm happy to do this as a living and be able to support myself now. Before that, I was absolutely fine if it didn't work, and I had come out with nothing at 30 [years of age]."

Ryding's humility, shaped by sacrifices made by him and those close to him, has helped earn him the universal respect of his skiing peers but so, too, has his notable talent.



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