

Headteacher:  
Mrs C Doherty, BSC (Hons), PGCE, NPQH



Founded in 1717

# BAINES SCHOOL

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30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

This letter accompanies the letter you will receive from Ofsted regarding the recent inspection. In terms of the way the two days went (that were either side of Halloween!) the children were excellent, and the staff pulled together superbly. Indeed, the Baines Family came through very well and Ofsted recognised the many improvements we have made since our previous inspection.

You will see that we, as a school, are still classed as 'Requires Improvement'. Through our own self-evaluation we had already identified that further improvements were required as some of the changes we have implemented since April have not yet had time to be fully embedded. However, when you read the main body of the letter you will see there are 43 lines of positive comments, compared to 20 lines indicating things we can do to improve, roughly a ratio of two to one. We are confident that we will certainly be judged 'Good' at the next Ofsted inspection, due to the raised expectations that are already in place and the fact that we are starting to work more closely with other schools and other trusts, to increase our capacity for planned improvements at Baines School.

Firstly, the feedback from pupils and parents/carers on our higher expectations regarding behaviour was very positive and proves that we are moving in the right direction and completely vindicates our firmer and fairer approach. Under my leadership we will continue to tighten up systems, remembering the vast majority of pupils and parents want a well-ordered calm environment in which to learn. The next stage of this development will be the introduction of our BAINES classroom routine system, which I am sure will have a similar impact to the changes we made in July and September.

There were lots of positives in the report:

- Most pupils enjoy attending Baines;
- Pupils are well supported;
- Pupils appreciate recent changes to behaviour systems;
- The new approach to behaviour is making a positive difference;
- Typically, classrooms are calm and purposeful;
- Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular opportunities;
- The Governing body and school have raised expectations;
- Children access a broad ambitious curriculum;
- The proportion of students studying the EBACC has improved;
- The curriculum is ambitious, including for those with SEND;
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge;
- Parents/carers are regularly consulted;
- Pupils in Key Stage 3 are supported with their reading;
- The PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) curriculum is taught well



- Pupils understand about healthy lifestyles and online and offline risks;
- The school designs a range of opportunities to learn about the world of work;
- Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education, employment or training;
- Governors have a clear understanding of their role;
- Staff workload is well considered;
- Staff are proud to work at the school.

Regarding the four areas to improve that Ofsted highlighted, I want to share what we are already doing in that area and what we intent to do in the future.

1. Improving the implementation of the Curriculum: Ofsted were happy with our Curriculum Intent. Indeed, they said that “The curriculum has been improved and strengthened through expert advice.” We have, since September, put in place a much stronger system of quality assurance, which checks the quality of teaching and learning on a daily basis. We now have two members of staff on call, with one member of staff specifically checking the quality of teaching and learning. I myself walk the school for at least an hour every day, and the seconded Deputy Headteacher Mr Uphill, as well as other senior leaders, are constantly walking the corridors. Mr Mates, in charge of teaching and learning, has also put in place a programme of focussed meetings for senior leaders and subject leaders to really discuss their lesson sequencing in depth.
2. Ensuring all teachers use assessment effectively: As a school we believe that assessment strategies are an essential part of learning. This provides key information for teachers and support staff to check student’s understanding of what we teach, adapt teaching in response to this feedback and to tailor necessary support. Assessment strategies had already been an area we had identified as a focus for this academic year, and we have identified further directed time (where staff meet after school each Wednesday) for further training and to further share the good practice that already exists across school. The school’s senior leadership team are observing all colleagues during this half-term (and will continue to monitor this) to evaluate the effectiveness of assessment strategies across school. This will allow us to continue to identify and share the strong practice in school where assessment strategies are always used effectively from those colleagues who have recently joined us as well as for existing staff. Senior Leaders are also carrying out joint lesson drop-ins and work scrutiny with Subject Leaders to support them in ensuring consistency of standards across the curriculum. We will continue to cross-reference our findings through student voice to hear how well students feel that teachers use assessment strategies to support and stretch them.
3. Ensuring some KS4 students are given support with their reading: We have immediately begun the process of testing some of our students in KS4 where we feel they will need more support and we will then offer the support needed in a bespoke manner. We have worked to develop a strong reading culture at Baines and this will be further developed to enhance KS4 curriculum content.
4. Ensuring we develop the understanding and respect of others so pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain: Ofsted recognised we have good pastoral support systems in place and the PSHE curriculum is designed and taught well, however, as with a number of schools on the Fylde Coast, we do need to further develop a greater understanding of different cultures and different viewpoints. Already this term, we have introduced a Diversity Club, explored inclusivity in form time and we will now look carefully at how we can continue to grow the students’ understanding of different cultures.

I am passionate that all students should have every opportunity to thrive at Baines School. They should feel Encouraged, Engaged and Empowered to be the best version of themselves, and prepare themselves for the next steps in their education and for the wider world in general. It is also important that students feel that they belong at Baines School; there should be something for everyone. The destination is important, but the journey should be amazing!

In conclusion we are on a positive journey and moving in the right direction. We are also going to complete an independent Parental Engagement audit to see what else we can do to work well with all of you, our key stakeholders. I will share this in more detail in a future communication.

Thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C J Doherty', written in a cursive style.

Mrs C J Doherty  
Headteacher