

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



Founded in 1717

BAINES SCHOOL

Highcross Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire FY6 8BE

Telephone: (01253) 883019

Email: info@baines.lancs.sch.uk

Web site: www.baines.lancs.sch.uk

Rationale for Baines School to join Cidari Multi Academy Trust

The governing body at Baines School has applied to join the Cidari Multi Academy Trust. This is a milestone in the long history of the school and we are confident it will secure the additional capacity needed to bring about further positive impact on the life chances of the young people who come to Baines School, including the results they achieve. The appointment of a new Headteacher has led to a period of positive change at Baines and joining a strong, local Trust, with considerable experience with similar students, would further this process.

This decision has come after discussion with a number of Academy CEOs, who explained what their trusts could offer, led by our Academy Working Group. It has been a long process and the pace of school improvement in recent years has added some urgency. We have had clear suitability criteria throughout that Cidari has been keen to guarantee:

- recognising the history of the school;
- its name and acknowledgement of its importance to former pupils;
- ensuring we have control over the school curriculum;
- that the Headteacher has autonomy in decision making;
- that assets stay with us, including those of the Foundation.

We have been keen throughout to ensure that any decision includes the input of wider stakeholders, including staff and parents/carers.

Good schools are built on trust and transparency and there will be a clear timeline before a final decision will be made by the Secretary of State for Education during 2024. The recent OFSTED inspection (30th October and 1st November 2023) has further validated the need for improvement.

Our curriculum intent is strong throughout, our art results are extremely positive and our teachers have strong subject knowledge. Our PSHE intent and implementation is strong and safeguarding is effective. At present, our outcomes are not as strong as they should be, but under a new Headteacher these and the quality of teaching and student results are a keen focus of attention. This is where collaboration between teachers and leaders with staff at St George's School (a high performing secondary school in Blackpool, within Cidari) can have a positive impact on outcomes. In 2023, St George's become the first school on the Fylde Coast to get an above average score for P8. Equally we at Baines have strengths that would benefit other schools in the Trust.

As the Baines Foundation we would further strengthen our longevity within Cidari, continuing the ethos of Baines Endowed Primary School within the Trust. In addition, of course Baines is a very short 15-minute car journey to St George's. It is only slightly further to Fleetwood High which is also working with Cidari. Therefore, there are huge advantages of a number of secondaries working more



closely together, with real potential to make further impact on the Fylde Coast.

Being part of the Cidari Multi Academy Trust will give us greater freedom on improving the curriculum for our students, and the experience they have will allow us to make the improvements we know we need, to ensure that all benefit from great teaching, learning and evidence informed practice. Cidari has the capacity to support the pace of development that we as Governors, alongside the Headteacher, expect to see at Baines School.

Our already committed teachers will be provided with the best training and evidence-based curriculum support, to allow them to focus on what they must do best – teaching the students that make up the Baines Family. This shared responsibility to meet rising expectations will result in better student progress and attainment, ensuring that all our students leave with the qualifications that they need for the next steps in the education, and can hold their own in a very competitive world.

It will allow for more shared thinking, planning and the sharing of expertise so that school leaders, governors and teachers tackle challenges together. Although Cidari is a Church of England Trust, Baines School will continue to be a non-denominational school, we will be aligning with a trust of similar values.

At a time when retention and recruitment of teachers and school staff in general is challenging, being part of Cidari will help: we have already benefitted from an informal arrangement this academic year with three members of teaching staff on secondment at Baines. There may also be the potential for reciprocal arrangements in the future. In addition, Baines would benefit from the potential financial savings of purchasing as a larger group and could look at sharing staff in some shortage subjects.

We are also aware that moving to a Trust brings with it a much greater degree of accountability and scrutiny in comparison to the Local Authority system. We would be open for example to Trust reviews of the school in, for example, leadership, curriculum, safeguarding and SEN.

In the recent OFSTED governance received favourable comments. However, as a Governing body we are keen to continuously improve by sharing practice within the Trust.

To conclude, there are several next steps, including agreement on a proposed conversion date. A series of open hearings will form part of the process and provide an opportunity for staff, parents and the local community to submit views.

I am grateful to our Headteacher, Clare Doherty, for her leadership in this area and to my fellow members of the governing board for their expertise and insight.

Nil Sine Labore.



Robert Hindle

Chair of Governors