

Inspection of Baines School

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

Inspection dates:

31 October and 1 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), enjoy attending Baines School. They feel well supported by their teachers. Pupils appreciate the recent changes made to the behaviour management systems. These have established stronger routines to help pupils engage with their learning.

The extra-curricular programme offers pupils a range of enrichment activities. For instance, pupils in Year 7 relish their camping experiences. This helps pupils to make friends, build their confidence and settle well into school. Pupils enjoy preparing for their roles in the school's annual musical performance. Pupils feel a sense of pride and belonging when taking part in these events.

The governing body and the school have raised their expectations of what pupils are able to achieve. Pupils have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because the curriculum is not delivered consistently well across different subjects.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better

The governing body and the school have taken considerable positive steps to improve the curriculum. They have used expert advice to strengthen the curriculum design, such as enhancing the languages offer. This has improved the proportion of key stage 4 pupils studying the English Baccalaureate suite of subjects.

The revised curriculum is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. The knowledge that pupils need to know and remember is identified and ordered logically. This helps pupils to build their knowledge as they move between topics and year groups. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. In some respects, they use this knowledge well. For example, they maintain a sharp focus on building pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. Nevertheless, teachers are at different stages of implementing the new curriculum effectively. This means that the activities that are designed to help pupils learn do not enable them to gain a secure understanding of subject content. As a result, pupils' achievement across subjects and year groups is uneven.

Some teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively to check what pupils know or do not know. This means that gaps in learning go unnoticed. Often, pupils move on to new learning before they are ready. This hinders them from knowing and remembering more over time.

The additional needs of pupils with SEND are identified effectively and supported well. Pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. The support that they receive means that they benefit more readily from the curriculum than some other pupils in the school. As a result, pupils with SEND are prepared well for future success.

The school has improved the strategies to address poor behaviour. Some pupils, parents and carers believe that the raised expectations of pupils' behaviour are too high. However, most pupils value the improvements in behaviour. The new approach is making a positive difference. Typically, classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils can learn without disruption, and they are able to enjoy their social times.

Parents are regularly consulted when pupils, including those with SEND, are struggling with their learning or behaviour. This helps the school and parents to put effective support in place for pupils.

Pupils in key stage 3 who find reading difficult are identified quickly and supported well. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers. However, this is not replicated in key stage 4. Older pupils who have gaps in their reading knowledge do not receive the support that they need to help them read well. This limits their access to the curriculum.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum is carefully designed and taught well. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to stay healthy and how to keep themselves safe from online and offline risks. Through the PSHE curriculum, pupils learn about peer pressure and how to avoid the risks that they may face, such as substance abuse. Nonetheless, leaders' work in promoting diversity is less well developed. This means that pupils do not gain a deep understanding of the differences between themselves and others in society. At times, pupils use derogatory language without being aware of the impact this causes. As such, they are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

The school designs a range of opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work. Engagement with local, national and international organisations helps to raise pupils' future aspirations. For instance, they learn about palaeontology, estates management and piloting. This prepares pupils well for their next steps in education, employment or training.

Members of the governing body have a clear understanding of their role, and they fulfil their duties well. Governors offer the school purposeful challenge to bring about improvement. Staff appreciate the support that is provided and the consideration of their workload when change is proposed. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the revised curriculums is variable across subjects. This means that some pupils complete activities that do not enable them to learn the

content of the curriculum well. The school should ensure that teachers are well equipped to design learning that allows pupils to build a secure body of knowledge over time.

- Some teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge go unchecked. This makes it difficult for pupils to build on what they know when they are introduced to new learning. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' learning effectively so that misconceptions are identified and addressed.
- Those pupils in key stage 4 who find reading difficult do not get the support that they need to overcome gaps in their reading knowledge. This limits their reading fluency and comprehension. It hinders their access to the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils at the early stages of reading are identified quickly and supported effectively so that they become confident and competent readers.
- The school does not promote and celebrate diversity as well as it should. This means that some pupils do not develop an awareness of the differences between people in their community and in modern society. The school should ensure that it develops pupils' understanding and respect of others so that they are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	119813
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10290071
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	872
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Robert Hindle
Headteacher	Clare Doherty
Website	www.baines.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 March 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current interim headteacher was appointed in April 2023. She was previously the deputy headteacher at the school.
- There have been some recent changes to the staffing and governance of the school. This includes the appointment of a deputy headteacher, who is on secondment from another school.
- The school make use of three registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils.
- The school provides before- and after-school care for pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. Inspectors met with a range of other staff and leaders during the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body, including the acting chair of governors. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and alternative provider.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during social times and during movement around the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: mathematics, science, English, art and design, French and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders and teachers, visited a sample of lessons, reviewed samples of pupils' work and spoke with some pupils.
- Inspectors also met with subject leaders to review other areas of the curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke with the leaders responsible for personal development, pupil premium, behaviour and attendance, alternative provision, early careers teachers, careers, SEND and reading.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, attendance and behaviour records.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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