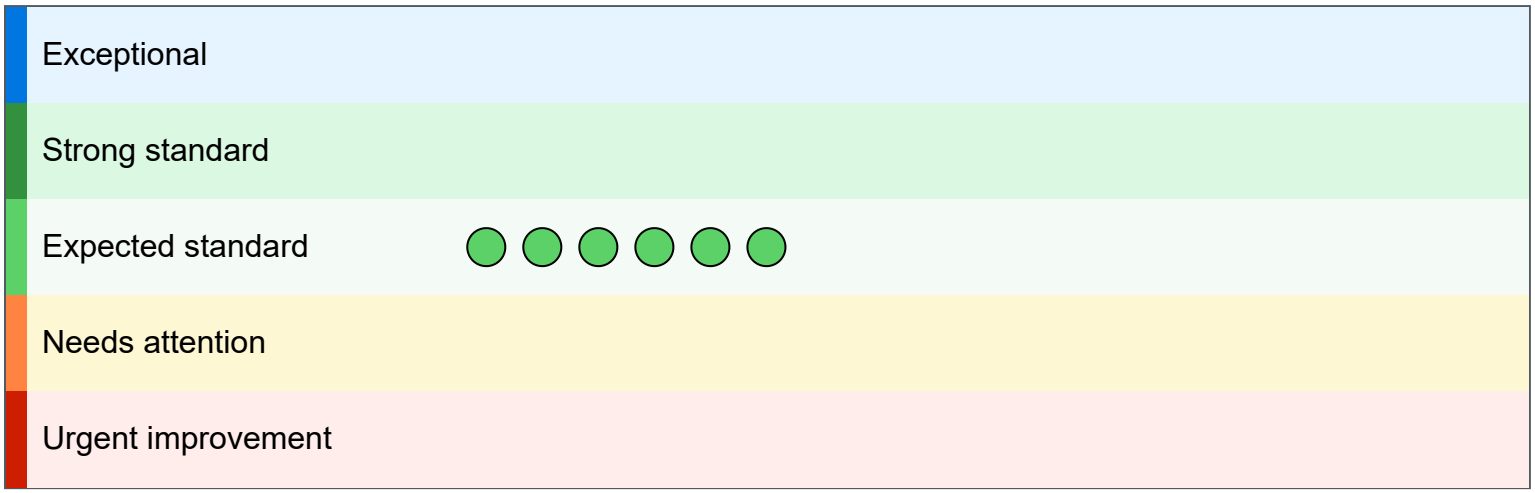
Baines School

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

Unique reference number (URN): 119813

Inspection report: 24 March 2026



Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders' improvements to teaching and assessment are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Over time, pupils' outcomes have improved, as shown by the 2025 published examination results. By the end of key stage 4, pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve in line with national averages in most measures. More pupils now move on to positive post-16 destinations. This reflects higher expectations across the school.

Pupils generally learn well in lessons. They build on what they already know. In key stage 3, pupils use subject-specific vocabulary more accurately and the quality of their writing has improved. Pupils usually show secure spelling, handwriting and number knowledge. Any remaining gaps in pupils' basic knowledge and skills are closing.

Teachers adapt learning effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). From their starting points, pupils with SEND make progress across a range of subjects.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders place a sharp emphasis on improving pupils' attendance and make clear that it is everyone's responsibility. Systems to monitor attendance are well established and absences are followed up quickly. Leaders analyse attendance information carefully so they can act swiftly to support pupils who are not attending regularly. For example, pupils who are persistently absent receive mental health support alongside help to catch up on missed learning.

As a result, attendance has improved over time. Gaps between the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and their peers are reducing. Overall attendance is above national averages.

Leaders have strengthened behaviour systems across the school. This has raised staff expectations and contributed to fewer suspensions and more positive rewards.

The school has a calm and respectful atmosphere that supports pupils' learning. Pupils are usually motivated in lessons. Staff apply consequences fairly and consistently, and clear routines are in place throughout the school.

Staff know pupils well and care about them. Pupils are confident that staff respond quickly to any concerns about bullying or discrimination. Better communication with families, including those of pupils with SEND or other barriers to learning, is helping pupils to manage their behaviour successfully.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have taken clear steps to improve the quality of teaching across the curriculum. They understand what is working well in classrooms and where further improvement is needed. Stronger quality assurance processes now help leaders check that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders have raised expectations of what pupils can achieve. They are supporting teachers to develop strong subject-specific teaching. As a result, teaching is improving in most subjects.

The curriculum is well designed and supported by teachers' secure subject knowledge. Teachers usually deliver lessons through agreed teaching and assessment approaches. They check pupils' understanding during lessons and address misunderstandings quickly. Teachers generally adapt their teaching effectively to support pupils with SEND.

Teachers place a strong emphasis on talk and discussion, and pupils contribute confidently in lessons. Reading is a priority. Pupils study challenging texts and learn how to write at length.

Teaching supports pupils to become more independent and to close gaps in knowledge. However, some older pupils still have gaps in their reading, writing and number knowledge. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged or who face other barriers to learning. Leaders have introduced systems to help address these gaps more quickly.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Over time, leaders have put systems in place to identify pupils' additional needs and any barriers to learning. These systems also work well for pupils who join the school mid-year. As a result, staff are able to identify concerns quickly and provide appropriate support.

Leaders have improved the quality of information shared with staff about pupils' needs. This usually gives staff clear guidance to adapt teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is helping pupils with SEND to access the curriculum more fully. Leaders recognise that using this information more consistently could also help staff reduce barriers for other pupils.

Leaders promote an inclusive culture and a shared commitment to supporting all pupils well. Effective work with external agencies helps ensure that pupils known to social care receive appropriate and ambitious support. Leaders have also developed in-house alternative provision. This allows vulnerable pupils to follow the same ambitious curriculum as their peers while receiving additional support for their social and emotional needs.

The pupil premium strategy forms part of everyday practice. Careful tracking of disadvantaged pupils' progress, alongside effective staff training, is helping these pupils to do well.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Pupils, their parents and carers, and staff recognise the clear improvements leaders have made since the previous inspection. Older pupils, in particular, speak positively about the changes they have seen. They explain how improvements to behaviour systems and the way teachers use assessment have helped them to learn better and feel more confident. Staff, including those new to the profession, also describe positive changes over time and express confidence in the direction in which leaders are taking the school.

Leaders have focused clearly on improving behaviour, attendance and the quality of teaching. This focus has enabled the school to improve quickly. Closer checks on teaching and learning help leaders to understand what is working well and where further improvement is needed. Leaders use this information effectively to plan staff training that matches the school's priorities.

Staff value the professional development they receive and recognise how it is helping them to improve their classroom practice. Early career teachers say that the support they receive helps them to develop their skills and confidence. Staff also appreciate leaders' consideration of workload and wellbeing as changes are introduced.

Those responsible for governance share leaders' commitment to ensuring that all pupils do well. Governors have a secure understanding of the school and provide appropriate challenge and support. This helps to maintain momentum and ensures that leaders remain focused on improving outcomes for pupils. Leaders are held to account for the impact of their work and reflect carefully on the decisions they make. They recognise that improvement is ongoing and continue to review how their actions are affecting pupils' experiences and outcomes. As a result, standards across the school continue to improve.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

The school's personal development programme, RESPECT, is well designed and ambitious. It supports pupils to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills they need for life beyond school. Leaders have ensured that RESPECT is valued by staff and pupils alike, and this is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes and high levels of engagement. Pupils speak clearly about the importance of the programme and show enjoyment in their learning.

Leaders have carefully planned the content of the RESPECT programme so that it reflects pupils' needs and the local context. Through this programme, pupils learn about different faiths, emotions and fundamental British values. They develop a growing understanding of cultural diversity, both within the school community and beyond. Pupils discuss sensitive and topical issues, such as misogyny and consent, with maturity and confidence. Most pupils develop secure, age-appropriate knowledge, including how to form healthy relationships and how to stay safe online.

Leaders emphasise raising pupils' aspirations. For example, learning about the school's history and heritage helps disadvantaged pupils to see what they can achieve. Links with former pupils show pupils that barriers to learning can be overcome and that success is possible. Alongside effective careers information, education, advice and guidance, this

supports increasing numbers of pupils to move on to ambitious post-16 courses that reflect their interests and potential.

Pupils have access to a wide and growing range of enrichment opportunities. Participation continues to increase, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils. Pupils take part readily in artistic, sporting and musical activities. Leaders listen carefully to pupils' views to ensure that the activities provided reflect pupils' interests and encourage wide participation.

Staff are committed to supporting pupils' wellbeing. Pupils speak openly about their experiences and the high-quality pastoral care they receive. Timely, sensitive and individual support helps pupils to feel that they belong, builds their resilience and prepares them well for future challenges.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are at the heart of leaders' decisions at Baines School. Leaders have created an environment where pupils feel that they belong and can learn well, including those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have high expectations for pupils in keeping with the school's motto 'nil sine labore'. This has helped to bring about clear improvements across the school. Pupils recognise these raised expectations and speak positively about improvements in teaching, behaviour and the school's culture.

Positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff are a characteristic of school life. Staff know pupils well, which helps them to identify and reduce barriers to pupils' learning and wellbeing. Pupils value the care and support they receive from staff.

In lessons and around the school, pupils behave well and are respectful of others. Pupils speak confidently about how bullying and discrimination are not tolerated, which helps them to feel safe. Pupils increasingly value their education and understand why regular attendance is important for their learning and achievement.

Across the curriculum, pupils achieve well, including those who are disadvantaged. This reflects improvements that leaders have made to teaching and assessment. Teachers' delivery of the curriculum generally enables pupils to build secure subject knowledge by the end of key stage 4. As a result, pupils are prepared well for aspirational next steps in education, employment or training.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. These include trips abroad and opportunities to support younger pupils with reading. Pupils enjoy celebrating the talents of others, for example through musical performances such as 'Grease'. They are confident and articulate, and take part positively in assemblies and community events. These experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the improvements that have been made in teachers' pedagogy and use of assessment are consistently embedded across the curriculum so that all pupils can achieve well.
- Leaders should ensure that staff are fully equipped to use the information that they have about pupils' vulnerabilities to swiftly remove any barriers to learning, including gaps in knowledge, so that all pupils can benefit from improvements in curriculum delivery.
- Leaders should further enhance the effectiveness of their processes for identifying pupils in key stage 4 who find reading difficult so that these pupils can receive effective support to fully access the wider curriculum.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Nora Sopworth.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

During the inspection, inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other senior leaders. They also spoke with members of the local governing body, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of the virtual school.

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.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Clare Doherty

Lead inspector:
Rachel Goodwin, Ofsted Inspector

Team inspectors:
Stephen Cox, Ofsted Inspector
Derek Yarwood, Ofsted Inspector
Michael Wright, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

This data is from 24 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

747
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,067

School capacity

890
Below average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 1,153

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

31.59%
Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 28.9%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

1.20%
Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.09%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

4.95%
Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 13.4%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

English and maths GCSE

Percentage of pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	41.1%	45.4%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	38.8%	45.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	38.9%	45.3%	Close to average

Attainment 8

A measure of pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	45.8	46.0	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44.0	45.9	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	42.9	46.3	Close to average

Progress 8

How much progress pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-0.59	-0.03	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.79	-0.03	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	27.9%	25.8%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	20.8%	25.8%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	27.7%	25.2%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	37.4	34.9	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	36.2	34.6	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37.5	35.0	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	-1.13	-0.57	Below
2022/23 (final)	-0.96	-0.57	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils' English and maths GCSE grade 5 or above

Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who achieved grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSE.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	27.9%	53.1%	-25.2 pp
2023/24 (final)	20.8%	53.1%	-32.3 pp
2022/23 (final)	27.7%	52.4%	-24.8 pp

Disadvantaged pupils' Attainment 8

A measure of disadvantaged pupils' point scores across 8 subjects including maths (double weighted), English (double weighted if both language and literature are taken), 3 EBacc measures and 3 GCSE or technical measures.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2024/25 (revised)	37.4	50.4	-13.0
2023/24 (final)	36.2	50.0	-13.8
2022/23 (final)	37.5	50.3	-12.8

Disadvantaged pupils' Progress 8

How much progress disadvantaged pupils made between the end of primary school (key stage 2) and the end of secondary school (key stage 4), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2023/24 (final)	-1.13	0.16	-1.29
2022/23 (final)	-0.96	0.17	-1.13

Destinations after 16

Destinations after 16

Percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least 2 terms after the end of secondary school (key stage 4).

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023 leavers (provisional)	88%	91%	Average
2022 leavers (revised)	90%	93%	Average
2021 leavers (revised)	96%	94%	Average

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	8.2%	8.1%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	9.9%	8.9%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	10.6%	9.0%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	27.5%	21.9%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	30.8%	25.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	36.4%	26.5%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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