

Baines School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119813
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291552
Inspection dates	1–2 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Garry Jones HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1074
6th form	262
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David R Jesson
Headteacher	Mr Roderick McCowan
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002
School address	Highcross Road Poulton-le-Fylde Lancashire FY6 8BE
Telephone number	01253 883019
Fax number	01253 892179

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Baines School is a larger than average, non-denominational, comprehensive school. It serves the community of Poulton Le Fylde and surrounding areas, an area with below average social and economic deprivation. A well below average proportion of students is eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of students are of White British origin and there is a tiny minority of students who are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is well below that found nationally, as is the proportion of students with a statement for their special educational needs. The school has SportsMark Gold, Investors in People and the National Healthy School awards

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Baines School provides a good education for its students. It has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money. Parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire overwhelmingly value the education provided for their children.

The personal development of the students is outstanding. They clearly enjoy their lessons and other activities and speak warmly of their appreciation of the school. Attendance is well above the national average and there is little unauthorised absence. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Students feel safe within the school and report that there is little bullying and that any incidents are dealt with effectively. There is an excellent understanding of the demands of healthy living supported by a much improved catering service and by the extensive involvement in physical activities. The students are very well prepared for their future economic-well being through the acquisition of high levels of basic skills and well developed inter-personal skills. There are extensive opportunities to contribute to the development of the community, particularly through charity work. Students are also involved in the development of the school; many hold positions of responsibility, for example, as librarians, prefects, members of year committees and as mentors. They report that their views are listened to and taken seriously. Outstanding care and guidance contribute to the students' development in a very supportive environment. There is very effective pastoral care and individual students, particularly the most vulnerable, are well supported. Excellent procedures ensure that high quality support is provided on entry to the school, when preparing for Key Stage 4 and on transferring into the sixth form, other providers of further education or employment. There are also well established procedures in place to ensure the safety and well being of young people within the school.

Students enter the school with attainment that is above average. At the end of Key Stage 3 results in the national test are well above average and this has consistently been the case for some years. Students continue to attain well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 4. The progress that students make in both key stages is improving, but remained satisfactory in 2006. However, evidence in lessons and from the school's monitoring data show that students are now making good progress and almost all attain challenging targets. This reflects the good teaching within the school, although some is satisfactory. Staff have high expectations and provide appropriate challenge for students within lessons. Lessons run at a good pace and effective learning is supported by the commitment that students show to their lessons. There is a good focus on independent learning. Systems for monitoring academic progress are well developed and appropriate action is taken to address identified underachievement. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and make good progress. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of students effectively and there are a range of pathways in Key Stage 4 to allow individuals to pursue interests and aptitudes. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of visits and extra curricular activities which enhance the enjoyment of education.

Leadership and management are good. The school is well led by an experienced head teacher. He has, with the support of a committed senior team established a clear vision for a school in which every child is allowed to develop through a personalised programme of study and support. There are established systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and to inform planning for improvement. The governing body know the strengths and areas for development in the school well and are enthusiastic supporters of its efforts to improve further.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Sixth Form is good with some exceptional features. Standards were broadly average in 2006. Progress is improving and is now good. Retention rates are very high and the vast majority of students are very successful in gaining admission to the university and course of their choice. This represents good achievement. Teaching is good and helps students to develop independent learning and study skills. The Sixth Form is well led. Care, guidance and support of students are outstanding. Assessment and monitoring of students' progress are particularly good and students are highly appreciative of the commitment, dedication and approachability of their teachers. They particularly value the ethos of hard work, friendship and team spirit that is fostered. Personal development and well-being are exceptional. Students are extremely confident, articulate and mature, and have excellent relationships with each other, their teachers and younger students. They enthusiastically run their own social and sporting events, and embrace the opportunities for trips abroad and charity events. They make a very valuable contribution to the main school and to the wider community, which includes prefect duties, paired learning, peer mentoring and helping with sporting activities in local primary schools. Many students do valuable work in the community at local schools, residential homes and a children's hospice.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that progress continues to improve.
- Share the good practice of the very best teaching with all staff.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. Students enter the school with standards that are above average in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. The attainment on entry has fallen slightly in recent years. The standards achieved in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were above average in 2006 and have consistently been significantly above average for the last five years. The standards in mathematics and science in 2006 were exceptionally high, but this was not the case in English. In Key Stage 4 standards are consistently well above average. The proportion gaining 5+ GCSE grades at grades A*-C including English and maths is well above the national average and is a particular strength.

The progress made by students across the school, as measured by the contextual value added figure, has improved over the last three years. The inspection evidence in lessons and the monitoring data provided by the school shows that students are now making good progress and the vast majority are reaching challenging targets. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

Students in the Sixth Form attained standards that were broadly in line with the national average in 2006, although there were variations between subjects, particularly at the A2 level. This represented satisfactory progress overall, but the achievement of students as reflected in retention rates and in their success in gaining places in Higher Education is extremely positive. Inspection evidence and monitoring records within the school illustrate that standards are continuing to rise and that the progress made by students is now good.

Personal development and well-being Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Students speak warmly of the school, the opportunities it provides and the support they receive. This view is shared by the vast majority of parents. Students enjoy coming to school, they are punctual and attend regularly. The great majority are confident, polite and friendly young people. Relationships are excellent, built on the mutual respect which is the norm in this very orderly school. The behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent and is reflected in a very low exclusion rate. Students report that they feel safe within the school and that the very rare incidents of low level bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school is aware of the limited cultural diversity within the school community and ensures students have positive experiences of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. However, first hand experience of cultures in the local region are less well developed. Students understand very well, the benefits of healthy eating and a great many benefit from the many opportunities to take regular exercise. They are prepared exceptionally well for later life through the development of very good basic and interpersonal skills, a good understanding of work related issues and strong links with colleges and universities. Their contribution to the wider community through fund raising activities is outstanding. Students take on responsibilities within the school such as librarians, mentors and prefects making a positive contribution to the personal development of a wide range of students. They eagerly take part in a wide range of extra curricular activities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

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Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The school has developed a well thought out teaching and learning policy that makes expectations clear and continues to improve its practice through a Learning Focus Group. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations based on a clear understanding of students' needs through the use of a well developed tracking system. Clear learning objectives are shared with the students and carefully planned tasks ensure progression. High quality teaching ensures that pace is maintained and students make good progress. A particular strength of the school is the good use of open questions to challenge students and their confident, well informed and appropriate responses. Teachers use assessment effectively to ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they have to do to make further progress. The ends of lessons are used effectively to consolidate learning and promote a sense of achievement. Behaviour and attitudes are especially good. In some lessons expectations were not as high and the range of planned activities was more limited and did not fully meet students' needs. In a number of lessons teachers talked for too long and dominated the lesson. In these less effective lessons pace was more limited and only satisfactory progress was made.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is good with some very strong features. It meets the needs of students well. Language provision is a strength, and all students learn French, German and Spanish in Years 8 and 9. There is a well-balanced LifeSkills programme which contributes to students' outstanding personal development. The curriculum is effectively enriched by activity days to prepare students for the world of work, for example, with a focus on industry in Year 9 and enterprise in Year 10.

At Key Stage 4 almost all students follow a broad and balanced curriculum of nine full GCSE subjects and for most students this includes a foreign language. This meets the needs of the majority well. The school is developing more vocational courses to broaden the range of opportunities. It has so far introduced two vocational GCSE subjects and two BTEC courses, a vocational course in collaboration with another local school, and day release courses in painting & decorating and hairdressing. These currently effectively provide for a small number of students.

Although the school rated the sixth form curriculum to be outstanding the inspectors judged it to be good. Its traditional curriculum is popular and the sixth form is oversubscribed. The Ethics Conference in Year 12 is a particular strength. Programmes for gifted and able students are not yet fully developed.

The range of extra-curricular opportunities is very good and highly valued by students. These include many sporting activities, music ensembles and an impressive number of trips abroad. Currently volunteers from Years 9 to 13 are taking the TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) qualification in preparation for a trip to Zambia, where they will teach English to African students. This is a fantastic opportunity for youngsters and will contribute significantly to their personal development. Other students are undertaking NVQ training in Librarianship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. There is a very well developed system of pastoral care which ensures that all students are known, valued and supported. Students know that their concerns will be listened to and they appreciate very much the care and support that they receive. Sixth form students are good role models and make a significant contribution to improving the self-esteem of many younger students. There is a very strong commitment to inclusion and a range of initiatives including mentoring and the 'Childline in partnership with schools programme' ensure that students receive effective additional support when required. There are very effective partnerships with outside agencies to provide very good care for vulnerable students and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Close liaison with primary schools ensures the smooth entry of pupils to the school. There is very good careers guidance and the high quality advice provided when choosing GCSE options, sixth form courses and university placements is valued greatly by the students. Systems for tracking and guiding students' academic progress are excellent and result in effective intervention to address underachievement.

Policies and procedures to safeguard students are in place, are understood and used consistently by staff. The systems to ensure that suitable staff are employed are in line with current government guidance. Systems for risk assessment, recording accidents and ensuring safe working practice are extremely thorough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school is well led by an established head teacher who has a clear vision to maximise the achievement of all students through a personalised programme of learning and support. The head teacher is ably supported by a dedicated senior management team. There is a strong commitment in the school to a collegiate approach to management and middle managers are being developed well to contribute consistently to this process. There is a good range of opportunities for staff to contribute to the development of school policies and to evaluate their impact. Effective processes for monitoring and evaluation are in place and inform both the self-evaluation documents and improvement planning. The improvement plan is clear, but the definition of responsibilities and time scales for its implementation are not fully documented. The senior leadership of the school knows its strengths and areas for development well. The self evaluation judgements were generally accurate, although one grade was too high. The governing body is well led by an established chair of governors. It is effective, through its committees, in fulfilling the role of the critical friend and is determined that the school will improve further. There is good capacity to improve and the school currently provides good value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

3 May 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of Baines School, Poulton-le-Fylde, FY6 8BE

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave to the inspection team. We really enjoyed speaking to you about your work and listening to your views on the school.

We agree with you and your parents that Baines is a good school. We were impressed by your positive attitudes to school. You attend regularly and enjoy your lessons and the wide range of other activities provided. In and around school we were also impressed by the high standards of your behaviour and politeness. You told us that you feel safe in school and that you are well supported by your teachers. We agree that you are exceptionally well looked after and given good advice on how to make the most of your education. You attain standards in your work that are well above the national average and you make good progress. This reflects the good teaching that you receive in most lessons and the well planned range of subjects that you study. Your teachers monitor your progress carefully and provide you with additional support when you need it. You are prepared well for your life after school.

The school is well led and managed by the head teacher and his senior colleagues. They have a clear understanding of what is good in the school and the areas that they intend to develop further. They are well supported by all the staff who work hard to meet your needs. The governing body also contributes well to the running of the school.

We have asked the staff to work together to ensure that they are all aware of the very best teaching methods that are used in the school and to ensure that your progress continues to improve. You can all help by ensuring that you continue to work hard and keep up your positive approach to school life.

Best wishes for the future,

Garry Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector