

Tong High School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107366
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	356150
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Marianne Young HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1528
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Diane Fairfax
Headteacher	Mr Stephen Curran
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2008
School address	Westgate Hill Street Bradford West Yorkshire BD4 6NR
Telephone number	01274 681455
Fax number	01274 689547
Email address	office@ths.bradford.sch.uk

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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and five additional inspectors. 47 lessons and teachers were observed and other teachers were observed during tutor times. Meetings were held with senior leaders, groups of students, members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner and the Senior Achievement Officer from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, a range of documentation, the school's website and scrutinised questionnaire responses from 30 parents and carers. Consideration was also given to completed questionnaires from 157 students and 25 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether students' progress and attainment in mathematics have improved and, if so, what are the key reasons to support this.
- How well teachers use assessment as a way to guide students and to plan challenging lessons for all ability levels.
- Checking if the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully.
- To look carefully to see if the sixth form has 'turned the corner' and whether the new leadership is able to drive improvements and outcomes for all students.
- Whether there is sustainability in the school and if leaders provide convincing evidence to support this.

Information about the school

Tong High School is larger than the average-sized secondary school and has almost double the average proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals and, also, who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The mobility of students is higher than average. There are generally more boys than girls in the main school, with this gender imbalance being reversed in the sixth form. The largest ethnic group is made up of White British students, with those from the Pakistani heritage also being well represented. There is also a growing number of students from Eastern European countries. The headteacher took up his post in September 2010. The school has held specialist sports status since 2001 and Trust status was attained in 2010. The school holds various awards with the most notable being Investors in Pupils, Sportsmark, Artsmark Gold, International Schools Award and Investors in People. They are also one of the schools in the north of England to be able to use the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic 'Get Set' logo.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Tong High School is a satisfactory and improving school. It has good features, particularly in the leadership and the care provided for all students. Recent initiatives, led by the headteacher but embraced and supported by others, are driving forward improvements in the progress made by all students. This work, together with the rate of improved results in all the key measures, provides inspectors with confidence that there is good capacity for sustained improvement and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

A supportive, personalised learning plan is in place for all teachers and is designed to ensure a sharp focus on classroom practice and continuous improvement of their skills. However, inspectors saw that there are still inconsistencies in teaching and learning which affect students' rate of progress. Using assessment information to plan lessons which provide appropriate levels of challenge for all abilities and clear feedback to students so that they can take more responsibility for their own learning were particularly weak features. Students who are new to learning English and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported either in the classroom or through small-group intervention work. As a result these groups of students make satisfactory progress. Changes to the curriculum have taken place and more are planned, especially developing systematically students' basic skills, particularly their progress in literacy and oracy. However, leaders recognise that the guidance given to students when they choose particular subjects has not always been effective in order to maximise their achievement and life chances. Well-managed, motivational enrichment experiences, including those linked to partnerships and the school's specialism, are having a positive impact on students' engagement and involvement in learning. Rigorous monitoring of their participation in these events together with their overall attendance are resulting in fewer students being persistently absent and an overall rise in their attendance. However, leaders recognise that more work is needed to ensure that attendance continues to improve.

Students report that they feel safe in the school and inspectors noticed how all groups engage and work well together. All customs and faiths are celebrated and students learn how to respect and value each others' differences. Consequently there is a racial harmony within the school, with any potential issues dealt with firmly but fairly.

Sixth formers mix well with younger students and provide good leadership, for example through sports activities, assemblies and tutor times. Their progress is regularly monitored, which is enabling leaders to check how well they are doing and provide additional support if necessary. Inspectors noted that in some lessons sixth formers are very clear about how to reach higher grades because examination criteria are referred to regularly; however, this is not consistently embedded in all subjects.

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Careful planning, systematic monitoring and regular evaluation against the school's key priorities are ensuring that no detail is overlooked. Leaders share results, including good practice methods, across the school and with parents and carers. Openness and accountability are important for all leaders and members of the governing body, who understand clearly their individual roles and responsibilities.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and the level of progress made by students in lessons by:
 - using all information about students' abilities and capabilities to plan lessons which provide appropriate levels of challenge
 - enabling and teaching students how to learn independently
 - developing students' literacy and oracy skills systematically in all subjects
- Ensure that all students are provided with appropriate information and advice, to enable them make informed choices before they study particular subjects.
- Work to ensure attendance continues to improve.
- Improve attainment in the sixth form especially at A2 and AS level by:
 - continuing the regular monitoring of students' progress
 - ensuring that students understand how to reach higher grades in all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The last three years have seen an improvement in the results attained by students in Year 11. Although still lower than the national average, the proportion of students gaining five A* to C, including English and mathematics, GCSE grades has increased significantly to 36% in 2010. Improvements in the leadership, the quality of teaching and the choice of examination courses in mathematics have been significant contributors to improved attainment in this subject. Secure tracking information and individual support plans are also being used to ensure improved performance with more students than previously, especially in mathematics, making expected progress in the core subjects. Inspectors saw how students' weak literacy and oracy skills impact negatively on their progress in some subjects. However, in others, developing these skills is given priority and as a result students' progress here is good. Overall, given students' low attainment when they start in Year 11, the significantly improving results in many areas, plus work seen in lessons, indicate that students make satisfactory and rapidly improving progress. Specialist subject targets in 2010 were being met by those students taking the BTEC physical education course; however, targets for those taking the GCSE option were not met.

More robust intervention and monitoring of attendance are in place and as a result, although still low, students' attendance has improved since the last inspection. The number of students who are persistently absent has also reduced. The school places significant emphasis on restorative justice measures as a way to improve behaviour. Inspectors noted a small amount of rowdy behaviour during social times, but overall students mix well, conduct themselves sensibly and are polite to visitors. A number of

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different organisations are supporting the school in order to raise students' aspirations and help to promote their skills in the work place, for example during the business and enterprise days. The sports specialism contributes well to students' understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The impact of this work is shown clearly in the number and range of awards held by the school.

Students from different groups take on a host of responsibilities throughout the school, including the 'ELF' group who are beginning to consider the best way in which students learn. Community issues are a feature of some lessons and, together with assemblies and tutorials, enable students to gain a good understanding of how different cultures and racial groups can live and work together successfully.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Inspectors saw a range of teaching, with none that was inadequate. Students are generally keen to learn and in the best lessons inspectors noted a real buzz in the classrooms because learners were immediately engaged and their work was clearly explained to them. A pride in presentation was evident in students' books, with helpful marking enabling them to understand how to make improvements. These features were, however, not present in all lessons. Here there was a lack of clarity in the instructions given to students, resulting in a slow pace to lessons and students becoming disengaged and passive. Leaders are reviewing the current curriculum provision in order to improve

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students' achievement and to ensure they are guided onto appropriate courses. The literacy skills for students in Year 7 are developed securely in the foundation learning literacy programmes; however, this work is not built on systematically throughout the school. Similarly, some teachers are more adept than others at helping students to learn independently. Arrangements to support different groups of students, especially those who are new to learning English, are well organised, for example involving appropriate external agencies to discuss and review strategies being used. This work, together with the clearly targeted support in school for potentially vulnerable students, has improved significantly their behaviour, confidence and attitude towards learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership. In a short time he has ensured that his vision for the school is shared and developed by other senior and middle leaders. A number of measures have been put into place which systematically monitor and evaluate provision throughout the school. Transparency and accountability are evident. Inspectors saw how middle leaders have an up-to-date understanding of their faculties, are able to challenge staff and also report knowledgably, at the regular meetings, to senior leaders. Improving the quality of teaching is a key focus for the school and joint observations were undertaken during the inspection. These enabled inspectors to discuss lessons with senior leaders and for them to demonstrate their awareness of the quality of teaching and where inconsistencies still remain. Although safeguarding procedures are in line with government requirements, members of the governing body recognise that their attention to detail regarding the monitoring and updating of some policies has not been sufficiently rigorous lately. Leaders and members of the governing body survey parents' and carers' views regularly; however, they acknowledge that links are underdeveloped, as shown by the low response to their questionnaire. Specialist status has helped develop a number of partnerships which contribute significantly to students' personal and academic development and their good understanding of community cohesion. Cultural diversity is celebrated, equal opportunity is assured and students' aspirations are raised.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Following the disappointing results in 2010, especially at A2 and AS level, a new leadership team is now in charge of the sixth form. More rigorous monitoring procedures are in place to track the progress being made by individual students. From September 2011 students will have to have gained higher grades at GCSE level than in previous years before they can start courses in Year 12. Plans are well advanced to restructure the curriculum from September and to introduce a wider selection of courses, including those designed to develop students' basic skills. These arrangements, together with other well-considered changes, indicate satisfactory leadership and management. Teaching is satisfactory. Inspectors observed some good teaching, especially where students were fully involved in their learning and knew exactly how to improve their work because of good feedback and regular references to examination criteria. Where teaching was less effective, teachers were too quick to help students and to direct their learning.

Students mix regularly with others in different year groups, which contributes well to social cohesion throughout the school. Some sixth formers provide additional support for younger students, helping to improve their literacy and numeracy skills especially. Together, these activities contribute successfully to students' developing maturity and their social responsibilities. Students report that they receive good guidance when choosing their future educational options. As a result the large majority of students go on to their first choice of university or training establishment.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received 30 completed questionnaires from parents and carers. This is a very low response. Generally, from the parents and carers who responded, a positive picture regarding the work of the school was indicated. However, mixed views were expressed regarding the information provided about individual students' progress, the quality of teaching and how behaviour is managed. Inspectors found that, although there are strengths in teaching, overall it is satisfactory and the school provides appropriate information to parents and carers about their child's progress. Observations by inspectors indicated that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with appropriately and, overall, they judged behaviour to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Tong High School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1528 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	27	20	67	2	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	33	19	63	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	43	11	37	5	17	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	30	17	57	4	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	30	17	57	1	3	3	10
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	33	13	43	7	23	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	27	20	67	2	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	40	11	37	4	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	27	19	63	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	50	6	20	4	13	4	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	37	10	33	8	27	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	37	14	47	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	11	37	14	47	5	17	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 April 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Tong High School, Bradford, BD4 6NR

Thank you for making me and my colleagues welcome and giving us your views about the different aspects of your education when we inspected your school last week. We were especially grateful to those of you who met with us at formal meetings. The school provides you with a satisfactory and improving standard of education. We also judged the sixth form to be satisfactory. There are some particularly good features, for example the care provided for all of you and the leadership of the school. New monitoring systems are enabling all leaders to identify how well you are doing in different subjects and to provide additional help and support if needed. This is helping more of you to get better results and thus go onto the next stage of your education or the training of your choice.

We noticed that most of you behave well in lessons and around the school and you all get on well together, respecting and valuing each others' ethnic and religious differences. Many of you are involved in activities out of school and the sporting ones in particular help you to understand how important it is to be healthy. In some lessons, however, you were not always attentive and involved in your learning. This is because you have 'switched off' or because you are not being given work that is challenging enough for you. We have asked the headteacher to make sure that you are all involved properly in lessons and that you are clear about how to work independently and make appropriate improvements. We were pleased to see that your attendance has improved; however, there is still more to be done and it is important that you all attend regularly. Finally, we have asked leaders to ensure that you are all given appropriate guidance and help when you choose different courses.

Those of you in the sixth form will know that your progress in different subjects is monitored regularly; we think it is important that this is done and also that you are clear in all lessons about how to improve your work and your grades in examinations.

I wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Young

Her Majesty's Inspector

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