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16 July 2013

Mr Stephen Curran  
Headteacher  
Tong High School  
Westgate Hill Street  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD4 6NR

Dear Mr Curran

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Tong High School, Bradford**

Following my visit to your school on 15 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, and the Operational Director of the Bradford Partnership. A range of documentation was reviewed, including the post-Ofsted action plan, the headteacher's latest report to governors and notes of the summer review undertaken by the Bradford Partnership. A tour of the school, which included visits to a number of lessons, was undertaken.

**Context**

A number of teachers will be leaving the school at the end of this term and in total 29 new teachers will join the staff in September. The governing body is at full capacity.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders are determined that the school is judged to be at least good at the next inspection. They are aware of the importance of concentrating solely on what is required to move the school forward. They are focused on supporting and on ensuring the accountability of middle leaders, most of whom are relatively new in post. They are also clear of the need to have consistency in the way they quality assure what happens in all curriculum areas. A series of non-negotiable expectations has been agreed for all staff and students and these will be in place for the start of the new academic year in September.

The post-Ofsted action plan focuses on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. It sets down specific activities, the people taking responsibility for each issue, deadlines, and milestones. However, precise monitoring and evaluation criteria are not clear, the senior leaders who will take responsibility for monitoring and evaluation have not been identified, and there is insufficient reference as to how governors will hold senior leaders to account. In addition, this plan covers the period from the inspection up to and not beyond July 2014. Discussions were held on the importance of having a clear process in the autumn of 2013 for drafting the next stage of the plan after July 2014 and to considering how best to incorporate monitoring and evaluation procedures by senior leaders and governors.

Senior leaders are aware of the importance of using the best practice from within the school as well as from other schools to improve the quality of teaching, further develop skills of leaders and managers and improve the impact of their work on students' achievement. However, they have yet to decide in detail the nature of the support from beyond the school and the in-school training programme that will be required.

Governors receive regular reports from senior leaders, question these leaders robustly and have a good understanding of the barriers yet to be overcome. It is clear that as well as providing challenge they also provide support for the headteacher and his senior team. Governors are knowledgeable and focused on what needs to be achieved to help the school improve. They are due to discuss and approve the action plan in the next week and are in the process of considering how they might best review progress against the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. However, the criteria they will use, and the process they will follow, to monitor and evaluate the action plan are not yet sufficiently clear.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- identify specific monitoring and evaluation procedures, including identifying who will be responsible for each of these actions, for each section of the plan
- clarify within the plan the precise role of governors in ensuring that the actions identified bring about the necessary improvements within the next two years
- ensure that all aspects of each area of improvement are covered fully within the plan
- by the end of 2013, draft the details of the next stage of the action plan which will take effect after July 2014
- once the changes in this letter have been acted upon and the revised plan has been signed-off by governors, forward the plan to the monitoring HMI
- as a matter of urgency, plan the in-school and external training, including school to school support, required so that all teaching staff can benefit from high quality and focused professional development in their drive to ensure the school is judged at least good at its next inspection.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Senior leaders welcome the challenge and support provided by Bradford Partnership. They have yet to decide the details of the school to school support that they require to ensure that the initiatives outlined in the action plan are fully realised. As a result, the school is not yet accessing all the guidance and assistance available to help it move quickly to good.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bradford and as below.

Yours sincerely

Michael Maddison

### **Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- the academy chain where relevant
- Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- The lead inspector.