

Tong High School

Westgate Hill Street, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 6NR

Inspection dates 29–30 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Inadequate	4
Sixth form provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses.

- Achievement is inadequate, despite the recent improvements. Too few students, given their starting points, especially in English and mathematics, still do not make the progress they should. Disadvantaged students, the disabled and those with special educational needs underachieve.
- Leadership and management, including governance, require improvement. The school's overall performance has declined since the previous inspection. New systems, to check more closely on the progress in each year group, have recently been put in place but have not had time to impact fully on students' achievement.
- A number of middle leaders are new to post. While they have strengthened the school's leadership a few are still developing the full range of skills to further drive forward the progress.
- Governors, until recently, have too readily accepted the reasons why students are not achieving well.
- Students' behaviour requires improvement. The weak attitudes to learning of a small minority of students do not allow them to always take full advantage of the opportunities for learning given to them. At times, they fail to engage in learning and sometimes disrupt the learning of others.
- Although improving, attendance remains below the national average; persistent absence is still above average.
- Teaching requires improvement. Teachers' expectations, while improved, are often still not high enough. Generally, opportunities for students to take more responsibility for their learning are not provided and responses to feedback are not followed up, leading to learning and progress that are less than good. Best practice in teaching is not shared widely enough.
- The sixth-form provision requires improvement as not enough students make better than expected progress in a number of subject areas.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governors have taken difficult decisions to improve the quality of teaching. This is beginning to have a positive impact on students' achievement in English and mathematics.
- Raised expectations across the school on non-negotiable aspects of behaviour, put in place this academic year, are helping most students to focus on their learning.
- The pastoral care for students is strong. Staff and governors care passionately for the welfare of students in their school. Students are safe in school.
- Governors regularly meet with key members of the local authority and Bradford Partnership to monitor the progress of students. This has added to the support and challenge they provide to senior leaders.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed and analysed teaching and learning across a wide range of subjects and year groups, some of which was undertaken jointly with five senior and middle leaders. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons. They attended an assembly and visited a number of tutor sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with students and staff, subject leaders, senior leaders responsible for different aspects of the school's work, members of the governing body and with representatives of the Bradford Partnership who provide external support to the school.
- Inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation and development plans, monitoring records, information about students' progress, safeguarding documents and samples of students' work.
- Inspectors considered the views of 73 parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View) as well responses to the school's own survey involving 241 parents and carers.

Inspection team

Pankaj Gulab, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara O'Brien	Additional Inspector
Catherine Davies	Additional Inspector
Pauline Pitman	Additional Inspector
Lynne Selkirk	Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This is a very large school when compared to the average-sized secondary school.
- There are more boys than girls on roll.
- The proportion of disadvantaged students, those supported through the pupil premium, is much higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support students known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of the school population is of White British heritage. There is a higher than average proportion of students from other minority ethnic groups, the largest of which are from South Asian origins.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs is similar to the national average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress by the end of Year 11.
- There are two alternative providers used by the school. These are Bradford College and Emerge Off-Site Sport; very few students access this alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Tong Trust. It is also a member of the Bradford Partnership, a collection of Bradford secondary schools which work together to secure the best outcomes for their students and communities.
- Over the past two years there have been a significant number of changes in staffing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Urgently raise students' achievement further across all subjects, particularly in English and mathematics and for disadvantaged students, disabled students and those who have special educational needs, through ensuring teaching is at least good by:
 - making sure all staff expect students to take more responsibility for their own learning in lessons and through homework activities
 - ensuring teachers adjust activities planned in lessons in order to best meet the learning needs of individual students
 - giving students the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback in a meaningful way to help them gain a deeper understanding of key concepts and skills
 - providing students with the opportunity to apply their literacy and mathematics skills in a wider context across the curriculum and through other opportunities provided by the school
 - sharing more effectively the good practice in teaching that exists across the school.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers, including governors, by:
 - ensuring that, at all levels and in every area of the school's work, a strong focus on students' learning and progress is maintained, particularly for students with lower starting points
 - providing appropriate developmental support and training for the small number of middle leaders to help them better undertake their roles
 - helping middle leaders to swiftly identify emerging weaknesses and inconsistencies in their area of responsibility and take effective action to address these
 - ensuring assessment processes are robust and accurately reflect the knowledge, skills and understanding gained by students
 - continuing the work to secure further improvements in attendance
 - reviewing the way in which sixth-form achievement can be improved, especially for those students who are repeating courses.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Positive changes made to leadership and management structures, including new appointments to subject leadership positions and the restructuring of the governing body, have led to improvements in teaching and students' behaviour. However, they have not had a chance to fully impact on improving students' achievement. As a result leadership and management, including governance, and in the sixth form, require improvement.
- The majority of staff recruited last year are experienced and a number are lead practitioners in their curriculum areas. Retention of staff has improved because of effective and supportive training opportunities within the school; staff morale and teamwork have improved as a result.
- A system of a 'school within school' has been set up to monitor the progress of each year group. Senior, middle leaders and mentors monitor the progress of each year group weekly to address any signs of underachievement. Governors are attached to these teams to support their monitoring of progress. This system is having impact: students are now making faster progress from one term to the next.
- The headteacher, alongside governors and senior leaders, are working together more coherently and effectively to raise achievement across the school. At the end of the last academic year they increased the focus on accelerating students' outcomes in English and mathematics. This included adopting robust performance management practices and the recruitment of new and experienced staff, including leaders, to replace those who have left these key departments. These changes, in conjunction with partnership arrangements with good and outstanding local schools, are driving forward the improvements in progress of students across all year groups in the school. Strong leadership of teaching is leading to a culture in which teaching and good behaviour can flourish.
- Senior leaders carefully monitor the progress towards challenging targets set for students four times in the year. Detailed analysis of students' progress at each of these points during this academic year is providing clearer indications of where support for students who are underachieving needs to improve. There is positive evidence of students moving up a grade as a result of this support.
- While there are some strong subject and pastoral leaders, a number are new to their posts and are being helped effectively to settle into their roles. Their pairing with senior leaders, or external support from outstanding or good schools, is developing the skills of these middle leaders well. The mathematics leader, who took up the post in September, has begun to transform the practices in the department and this is impacting positively on the learning behaviours of students. Even so, the skills of a few of the leaders in the analysis of data and self-evaluation require further improvement to bring about rapid gains in students' achievement.
- Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching are now robust and leading to improvements. Where targets set for students' progress are not met, staff do not receive salary increases. When staff need additional help, effective support is delivered by lead practitioners. Although leaders are taking steps to improve practice across the school, some staff are not playing their part. For example, there is only a slow response by some staff to implementing the new assessment initiative.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced, and adjusted to meet the needs of students. Changes have ensured that more GCSE courses are on offer to meet the new performance measures introduced by the government. A partnership arrangement with an outstanding school's mathematics department is used to develop the way the subject is taught in the school and is developing and deepening students' understanding.
- Arrangements for offering students advice, information and guidance about careers are good and involve parents and carers from Year 8 onwards. This is leading to reductions in the numbers of students not in education, employment and training. A wide range of extra-curricular activities are on offer. These are enjoyed by students through the school's 'no limits' programme. An assembly and tutor programme covers aspects of safety that make students aware of the risks of radicalisation and their role in modern Britain. This, alongside the school's 'PRIDE' (positivity, respect, innovation, determination and excellence) focus is supporting the improvement of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership and management of the provision for disabled students and those who have special educational needs are increasingly effective. The care of those with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties is strong. This enables staff to focus more on developing the literacy and numeracy skills of these students. Currently, however, too many of these students still have difficulty in writing for different purposes and in solving mathematics problems.
- The focus on improving the progress of disadvantaged students has increased. Students from this group identified as underachieving receive additional support and there is evidence of its positive impact. The progress of disadvantaged students in all year groups is rising faster than their peers this academic year,

although overall, they are still underachieving.

- The small numbers of students enrolled with alternative providers of education are carefully monitored in terms of their behaviour, attendance and progress. These students, while not being the best of attendees, participate sufficiently to secure a place in employment, further education or training at the end of their studies.
- Safeguarding arrangements are robust and thorough and meet statutory requirements. They are in keeping with the school's strong pastoral care, which promotes the welfare of all students.
- Membership of the Bradford Partnership, an arm of the local authority, is having a beneficial impact on improving the quality of leadership across the school. It also provides useful links to good and outstanding institutions. Staff from these schools help to provide external moderation of the school's work in key subjects.
- The school's detailed analysis of the performance of groups of students and individuals is now enabling leaders to identify and begin to address underachievement. Gaps between groups are closing, although not quickly enough for some. Consequently, despite the efforts made so far, the school is not ensuring equality of opportunity for all students well enough. However, the promotion of good relations and tackling discrimination between different groups is better.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body, in the past, has not been effective, but is now much more so. It previously had little success in holding the school to account and driving up the quality of teaching and the standards of students' attainment. Recent reorganisation of the governing body has resulted in fewer members and clearer roles. Governors have undertaken appropriate training on understanding performance data. They now focus more on the quality of teaching and achievement for every year group, the standards reached by students, and the quality of teaching. Governors meet regularly with external educational consultants from the Bradford Partnership who support them in evaluating the impact of the initiatives they have introduced. Some of these initiatives are too recent to show significant or sustained impact. A focus on the progress made by disadvantaged students is monitored through these meetings. Governors can confirm this is now showing some initial improvement but that more is required to close the gap in attainment with other students.
 - A robust focus on the quality of teaching has resulted in staffing changes. Some staff have lost the right to a rise in salary due to their underperformance. A focus on the progress students are making in every year group and across subjects is starting to drive driving up students' achievement.
 - Governors are committed to their role and give of their time generously to visit the school, observe lessons alongside middle and senior leaders, and listen to and observe students at work. This degree of involvement allows them to see the improvements now being made in the quality of teaching, the behaviour of students and in the progress students are making.

The behaviour and safety of students

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. In some lessons, a small minority of students have not developed appropriate attitudes to learning. This leads to low-level disruption and lack of focus, resulting in poor progress for many.
- The school has begun the process of introducing 'non-negotiables' this academic year. They started with the requirement to be fully equipped for school and wearing uniform. This raised level of expectation has been successful in ensuring that this aspect of students' behaviour has improved. As a result, students come smartly dressed to school and fully equipped for learning. They are proud of their school. However, this pride for some students has not extended to the way in which they present their work in books.
- The system of 'non-negotiables' increased the number of students referred to internal exclusion for a period of time but referrals have now reduced. New 'non-negotiables' are added each term and this is having the effect of keeping referral to the internal exclusion room high. Evidence suggests this will reduce again once students adopt these expectations.
- An overwhelming majority of students are courteous and polite to each other, adults and visitors to school. They engage willingly and answer questions honestly. During break and lunchtime, the majority conduct themselves in an orderly manner. A small minority, however, have not developed appropriate self-managed behaviour and do not willingly accept the drive to improve the culture and ethos of the school. Staff in alternative provision settings who work with these students are skilled in ensuring those who attend behave appropriately.

Safety

- The school's work to keep students safe and secure requires improvement.
- Students understand that there are different forms of bullying and are encouraged to consider related issues through assemblies and tutorial sessions. Students say they have confidence that staff in school will deal effectively with any issues of bullying they may raise. However, a minority of the small number of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, raise concern about the school keeping their child safe. A much smaller proportion in the school's own survey of a large number of parents and carers confirms this concern. A very large majority of parents and carers feel the school keeps students safe.
- Pastoral care across the school is strong and there is a comprehensive programme in place to help students to stay safe. Students across the year groups say they feel safe and know how to remain safe and deal with difficult situations online and in person.
- Leaders have taken decisive action to improve students' attendance year on year; presently it is still below the national average. The numbers of students who are persistently absent are reducing but remain above the national average. Improvements continue as a result of higher expectations and better communications developed across the school with parents and carers and robust action taken by the school.
- The school has appropriate arrangements in place to ensure those students who are learning at alternative provision are safe and attend regularly.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- There are variations in the quality of teaching across the school and in different subjects. Teaching is strengthening as a result of the actions taken by leaders. While the stronger teaching is improving students' progress in Years 7 to 10, this has not fully impacted on the progress of the current Year 11.
- The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics is improving because of staffing changes and the involvement of lead practitioners. Subject leaders are developing consistent approaches to assessment. They are supported in terms of their accuracy by staff from schools judged as good and outstanding. The need to further develop students learning and deepen their understanding of mathematics is recognised as an area for improvement by the two lead practitioners in the department. Students have inconsistent opportunities to reflect on the way in which they arrive at answers in mathematics.
- The quality of marking is variable across subjects and requires improvement. There is clear evidence that the new marking policy is implemented, but not consistently by all staff. Often students do not respond to teachers' comments on how to improve their work. A good example of constructive marking and effective feedback to help students improve their work and support their progress over time is evident in English lessons and in the work in students' English books. This was not the case previously and has improved because of the actions taken by leaders. Teaching in vocational subjects clearly focusses students on the measures that show their progress and this helps them with their learning.
- Where students' learning is good, teachers have high expectations and good subject knowledge. These teachers have a love of their subject and take into account students' starting points when planning activities. Questioning focuses on and targets students of all abilities and provides appropriate challenge to support good progress. Opportunities for students to learn from each other and review each other's work are often used well. Teacher feedback through marking, an area for development driven by leaders across the school, clearly identifies next steps and helps students to further build on the progress they make.
- Weaker learning stems from some teachers' lower expectations of what students can and should be doing. In such instances, the teacher lacks a focus on what and how well students are learning and often concentrates more on getting students to complete tasks. There are missed opportunities for students to learn more effectively as these teachers do not check students' learning thoroughly and fail to ensure students respond to marking comments. Literacy development is poor as students are not expected to expand on their answers or develop their speaking skills.
- Teachers' caring and supportive attitudes and establishment of routines support the progress of disabled students and those who have special educational needs. Specialist teachers and teaching assistants are involved in developing the literacy and mathematics skills of students who arrive with poorly developed skills. Their focused support is helping most of these students to make accelerated progress. Those who come in with poor reading skills are successfully put through a programme to increase their reading ages over a short period of time.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals in classrooms. They focus on developing

students' skills and understanding. They challenge appropriately rather than doing the work for the individual students they support.

The achievement of pupils

is inadequate

- The standards reached by students for a number of years have been low and have declined since the previous inspection. Last year, students at the end of Year 11 failed to reach the minimum standards expected by the government. While these students entered the school with standards in English and mathematics that were below the national average, they left with standards even further below at the end of Year 11. Only 16% of students secured five A* to C grades at GCSE level, including English and mathematics, compared to the national figure of 56%. Standards reached in a number of other subjects, such as business studies, geography, physical education and food technology, were also low. As a result of the leaderships' actions to improve the quality of teaching and students' behaviour, students in Year 11 are currently on track to reach higher standards in these subjects by the end of this academic year.
- The progress made by students in 2014, given their starting points, in English and mathematics, was well below their peers nationally. Currently, the progress made by students in English and mathematics, as observed in lessons and the work in their books, is improving significantly compared to last year. Nevertheless, progress for the current Year 11 remains below the national average for 2014.
- Progress in Years 7 to 10 is accelerating across a range of subjects. Those subjects that significantly underperformed last year, business, drama, resistant materials and graphics are now showing better progress this year, as a result of changes made to improve the quality of teaching in these areas.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students in English and mathematics dropped further behind their peers and other students nationally in 2014 compared to previous years. The standards reached by disadvantaged students were over two grades behind other students nationally in English and mathematics. The gap with their peers in the school fluctuates. Neither group is doing well. Last year, in mathematics, disadvantaged students were one grade behind their peers and only a quarter of a grade behind in English. In the current Year 11, evidence suggests that students are currently making better progress and the gap in standards with other students nationally is closing, although it is still too wide.
- While the most able students are making good progress in some subjects, they have not done so in others over the past few years. These students, observed in mathematics and English lessons, are now making more rapid progress and this is supported by evidence in their books and the results of mock examinations. For example, the most able students address with increasing confidence more challenging questions in both subjects.
- Students from minority ethnic groups do at least as well as their peers and often better. Those who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support from specialist language teaching assistants. This is helping them to develop their skills in speaking and using English.
- The gap between girls and boys has fluctuated as both groups last year performed poorly with girls doing worse than boys. However, in 2013, boys performed worse than girls. School information for the current Year 11 students shows that as a result of improvements in leadership and teaching, both boys and girls are now doing better and the gap between boys and girls is narrowing and is closer to the gap found nationally in 2014.
- Early entry for GCSE examinations in English and mathematics is no longer used by the school. It was used in 2014 for the English GCSE, following an unavoidable change to this course from English literature. These students did not make at least the progress expected of them and consequently did not reach expected standards. Early entry for core science is used for some of the most able students in Year 9. This is not preventing them from making the progress they should as they go on to study additional courses in science in Years 10 and 11.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs are now being supported to make better progress than last year; however, they are still underachieving, as a result of the legacy of weaker teaching they have received in previous years. Effective support in classrooms from trained teaching assistants is making a positive impact. Those attending alternative provision are successful and go on to further education, employment or training.

The sixth form provision

requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the sixth form require improvement. Self-evaluation by the leaders focuses on the standards students reach rather than the progress students make and is slightly generous.

This is leading to a reduced urgency to ensure progress improves in a number of subjects. The achievement of students who follow academic courses is broadly in line with national averages. For some vocational courses achievement is higher. Too many students studying courses at level 1 and level 2 do not make good progress. Consequently, achievement in the sixth form requires improvement.

- Students' social skills in the sixth form are good but their attitudes to learning are variable. Student retention on some courses is lower than the national and this is reflected in numbers attending classes, particularly for level two courses. This is leading to progress in these courses for a minority of students not being good enough.
- Teaching over time in the sixth form requires improvement as too many students are not making the progress that they should. Teachers mostly engage students well as a result of their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for their subject. However, in some repeat courses, which involve a significant number of sixth-form students, the students are not fully engaged. This is because the work they complete is not interesting or engaging and often just repeats activities they undertook the year before. Arrangements to provide students with appropriate advice, information and guidance are good for those seeking admission to universities. As a result most secure a place at the university of their choice. Students' personal development is supported well in tutorial sessions through coverage of current affairs and students' developing role in society.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	107366
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	462290

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Foundation
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	1,598
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Johnson
Headteacher	Stephen Curran
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2013
Telephone number	01274 681455
Fax number	01274 689547
Email address	office@tongschool.co.uk

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