

Turton High School Media Arts College

Bromley Cross Road, Bromley Cross, Bolton, Lancashire, BL7 9LT

Inspection dates 10–11 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not good. Students do not make consistently good progress from their starting points in any subject or key stage.
- The sixth form requires improvement because progress of students is not yet good.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure good achievement for all. Teachers do not use the information about how well students are doing accurately enough to ensure that they provide activities which meet the needs of all students.
- The quality of marking and feedback is not consistently good enough to ensure that students always have a clear enough understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders and governors have an overgenerous view of how well the school is doing, including how well students are achieving, and action plans are not always focused sharply enough.
- Checks by leaders on the quality of teaching are not yet rigorous or accurate enough. There is insufficient emphasis placed on students' progress when judgements about teaching are being made. Targets set for individual teachers to improve their performance are not always challenging enough. This means that leaders are not bringing about improvements in teaching and achievement rapidly enough.
- There are inconsistencies in the rigour with which middle leaders are held to account for the performance of students in their subjects.

The school has the following strengths

- Behaviour is good. Students are courteous and manage their own behaviour very well. Leaders' and governors' inclusive approach has ensured that the atmosphere around school is very harmonious. Teachers and students treat each other with care and respect.
- Leaders have provided an extensive programme of support for teachers to develop their skills. As a result, staff morale is very high and all are united in their commitment to the well-being of the students. Consequently, teaching is beginning to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and achievement in parts of 41 lessons, taught by 41 teachers.
- Inspectors observed students' behaviour around school. They talked to them informally about their views and their learning, as well as holding four formal meetings with different groups of students.
- Inspectors held a number of meetings with senior and middle leaders, and teaching staff. They also met with members of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 113 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account, as well as the views expressed in other surveys which had been undertaken by the school.
- The inspection team examined a range of documentation, including information about the progress of current students from the school's own tracking data. Inspectors also scrutinised leaders' monitoring records, including the outcomes of lesson observations, as well as documentation relating to behaviour and attendance and safety.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clive Hurren	Additional Inspector
Gary Kelly	Additional Inspector
Helen Gaunt	Additional Inspector
Janet Peckett	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Turton High School is much larger than the average-sized secondary school with a sixth form, in which the overwhelming majority of students are of White British heritage and speak English as a first language.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. Pupil premium funding is provided by the government to support students who are eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority, or who are the children of military personnel. In this school the majority of students entitled to the pupil premium are those who are eligible for free school meals, but there is a small number who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of students supported at school action, school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The school makes alternative provision for a very small number of students to undertake work placements.
- Turton High School has received a number of awards including the Cultural Diversity Quality Standard, Artsmark gold, Fair Trade School Status, Inspiring IAG Gold Award and the Rights Respecting Schools Award.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that it is at least consistently good, so that progress accelerates for all groups of students in all subjects at all key stages, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use data about how well students are doing to plan lessons and activities which meet the needs of all students
 - ensuring that teachers assess students' progress regularly in lessons so that they can change the direction of the lesson if necessary
 - ensuring that all students are well informed about their progress and what they need to do to improve through the provision of consistently good quality marking and feedback
 - ensuring that teachers provide enough opportunities in different lessons for students to develop their mathematical, reading and literacy skills
 - identifying and supporting students who are at risk of underachievement more effectively so that they all make the progress they should
 - raising teachers' expectations of what all students should be able to achieve.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders at all levels place appropriate emphasis on the progress of students when monitoring the quality of teaching and setting performance management targets for teachers
 - ensuring that action plans are based on accurate and rigorous evaluation of how well the school is doing with clear timescales and success criteria so that leaders can monitor the impact of actions taken
 - ensuring that middle leaders are consistently held to account for the performance of their area of responsibility and the progress of students
 - ensuring that governors have sufficient information about the progress of different groups of students, and subjects, to be able to ask challenging questions and hold senior leaders to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because although students join the school in Year 7 with attainment which is above the national average, their progress across different year groups and different subjects is inconsistent over time, even when taking into account recent evidence of improvement in some subjects and for some groups.
- Although the proportion of students attaining five GCSEs at grade C or above including in English and mathematics is higher than the national average, achievement still requires improvement overall because for many students this still does not represent good progress from their individual starting points. For example, in mathematics, higher-ability students in this school typically make less progress than higher-ability students nationally.
- Achievement in too many of the lessons observed required improved. In particular, students were not given enough opportunities to develop their reading and literacy skills across the curriculum. In mathematics, students are not given enough opportunities to undertake their own research or to apply their skills to solving problems.
- Although the care for disabled students and those with special educational needs is very good, and they are well supported to ensure that they can access the curriculum, achievement for these students also requires improvement because they still do not make enough progress from their starting points. This is because leaders and teachers have not placed sufficient emphasis on evaluating the impact of the school's provision for these students on their attainment.
- Although the gaps between the point scores of those students who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium narrowed in 2012 in English, they are still much wider than that found nationally in mathematics and are not closing rapidly enough. Students who are supported by the pupil premium typically leave the school with GCSEs which are two thirds of a grade below those of their peers. This is because although leaders spend the pupil premium funding appropriately, they do not check on the impact of this spending or on the Year 7 catch-up programme for students who enter the school with attainment below Level 4 rigorously enough.
- Although there are aspects of the sixth form which are good, for example in a small number of subjects, and around one third of students make better than expected progress, overall achievement requires improvement because too many students underperform in one or more subjects.
- The students who attend work placements make appropriate progress because they are more focused when they are back in school, and this ensures that they are more successful in attaining a limited number of GCSEs than they might otherwise be, and are more focused on future possibilities.
- The school does not typically make use of early entry for students for GCSE, and therefore this is not a factor in limiting student achievement.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although inspectors observed some examples of good and outstanding teaching during the inspection, teaching overall requires improvement because although expectations about behaviour are very good, expectations of student progress are not high enough. Teaching over time has not resulted in achievement which is good enough.
- Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, but although they use this to ensure that lessons are usually well paced, they do not ensure students are able to build securely on what they have learnt previously. Teachers employ a range of appropriate teaching strategies, but these tend to be more focused on what the teacher will do rather than on what students will learn because teachers do not analyse closely enough exactly what it is that they want students to learn.
- Although inspectors observed a few examples of lessons where teachers planned lessons to

meet the range of needs of different learners, overall this is not a strength of the school. In too many lessons teachers assume that students' starting points are the same, and all students are expected to undertake the same activities in the same way. Teachers have data which indicate students who are at risk of underachieving, but do not use that information quickly enough to provide good support to enable them to catch up. As a result, some students are insufficiently challenged, while others fall behind as the work is too difficult for them.

- The way in which teachers use questioning to promote learning is variable. In some lessons very well-phrased questions encourage students to think very deeply about their understanding of the subject, but in others questions are superficial and lack challenge. Generally, teachers did not use questioning sufficiently well to assess students' progress in lessons and to modify their teaching in response to student feedback.
- Marking is very variable in quality. Some excellent examples were seen of books which were marked in detail, and where teacher comments provided clear next steps for improvement and encouraged students to reflect on their progress. However, some teachers do not mark frequently enough or in sufficient detail. There was limited evidence of marking to promote the development of students' literacy skills.
- Teaching assistants provide well-focused support because teachers provide them with clear information about what they should be doing and who they should be supporting in lessons.
- Relationships between students and teachers are very strong, and this ensures that students are keen to learn and confident to ask for help when they need it.
- The quality of teaching in the sixth form was very similar to that in the rest of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils is good

- The quality of care which is provided for the students is a significant strength of the school, and as a result, behaviour is very good, and students feel safe and well supported, and attend regularly. The overwhelming majority of parents are very happy with the levels of support which their children receive.
- Students say that bullying in school is very rare, and that it is always dealt with effectively. They are aware of the different forms which bullying can take, such as cyber-bullying or homophobic-bullying, because they say that the school takes steps to ensure they understand such issues through assemblies and lessons. They are aware of risks and know how to keep themselves safe from harm.
- Behaviour around school is very good. Students are very courteous and respectful towards each other, and the atmosphere is harmonious. Relationships between students and adults are very good, and teachers provide very positive role models for good behaviour. Students are very proud to be part of the school community. Comments such as, 'Everyone here feels safe to be who they are', are typical.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Teachers use sanctions sparingly because students understand what is expected of them and they are able to monitor their own behaviour.
- Students are given a range of opportunities to contribute to the school community and to influence what is going on in the school. They are convinced that their views are valued by the adults around them and this encourages them to respond in a mature and reflective fashion.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because students sometimes become passive when they are not sufficiently challenged in lessons.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders and governors have very high expectations about the ethos of the school and this results in very high levels of inclusivity of pastoral care, until recently there has been insufficient emphasis on student progress and teachers' expectations about what students can achieve have not been challenging enough.
- Leaders' evaluation of how well the school is doing has been overgenerous, particularly in terms

of the judgements about the quality of the teaching. Although good systems are in place for monitoring the work of the school, they are not applied robustly enough. Until recently, for example, there has been insufficient focus placed on the progress of students when teaching is being evaluated. The focus has been on teacher performance, and as a result, judgements have been too generous.

- Good systems are in place for managing the performance of teachers, and there is evidence that pay progression is linked to performance. Leaders know the strengths and areas for development of individual staff very well, and provide high-quality training which results in good staff morale because teachers feel well supported. However, performance management targets are not always challenging enough, and do not focus sufficiently well on the achievement of students. Not enough attention is given to measuring the impact of training activities on teachers' performance. Although the quality of teaching is improving, it is not rapid enough.
- Action plans are not focused sufficiently well on student achievement, and do not have clear enough criteria for measuring success or timescales by which time the impact of actions taken should be evident.
- The quality of middle leadership is variable because there is variation in the way that they are line managed by senior leaders. Not all middle leaders receive sufficient challenge about the progress of students in their subjects, and in turn, they do not hold teachers in their departments to account robustly enough for student achievement. Similarly, leadership in the sixth form requires improvement because students do not make the progress that they should.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school, meets all requirements, and is enhanced by the 'opening minds' programme as well as a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. It contributes very well to the students' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. However, the provision for developing literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is underdeveloped.
- Leaders have created a very harmonious community. However, the promotion of equal opportunities requires improvement because the achievement of some groups of students, particularly those who are eligible for the pupil premium, requires improvement.
- The local authority has adopted a 'light touch' approach to the school, so it has received the minimum amount of support although there are plans in place to provide external verification for leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are passionately committed to the school, and to promoting high-quality care for students in an inclusive atmosphere. They have effective committee systems for undertaking their statutory responsibilities, and ensure that all safeguarding responsibilities are met and that all appropriate policies are in place. However, although they receive extensive information about the work of the school, it has not been focused sufficiently well on student achievement and the quality of teaching, and this has limited their ability to ask challenging questions. They are aware of how the pupil premium funding has been spent, but are not fully informed about its impact. Likewise, they are aware of procedures for teachers' appraisal, the types of targets which are set for teachers and the range of training opportunities available, but have not related these closely enough to student achievement. They check that pay progression is linked to teacher performance.

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	105253
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	412853

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	1636
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Owen Hughes
Headteacher	John Porteous
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2009
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