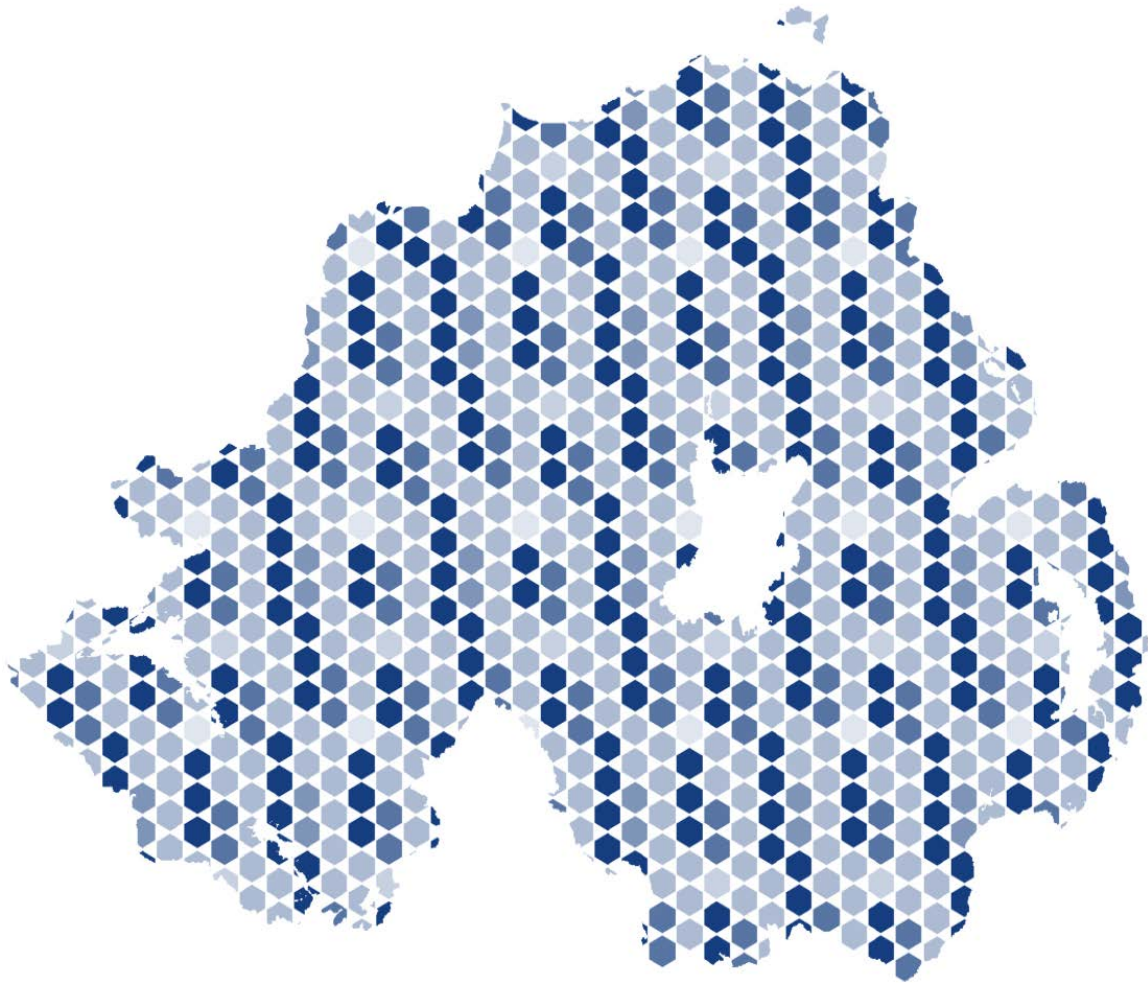


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## Fivemiletown College

Controlled, co-educational, 11-18, non-selective school

Report of an Inspection in  
November 2013

### Quantitative terms

In this report, proportions may be described as percentages, common fractions and in more general quantitative terms. Where more general terms are used, they should be interpreted as follows:

Almost/nearly all	-	more than 90%
Most	-	75%-90%
A majority	-	50%-74%
A significant minority	-	30%-49%
A minority	-	10%-29%
Very few/a small number	-	less than 10%

### Performance levels

The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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## 1. Inspection method and evidence base

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of post-primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: <http://www.eti.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of pupils; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Data on the returns on questionnaires<sup>1</sup> sent in advance of the inspection to parents and school staff is shown in the table below.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	330	32	10 <sup>2</sup>	23
Teachers	35	29	86	22
Support Staff	26	*	4	*

\* fewer than 5

## 2. Context

Fivemiletown College serves the community in Fivemiletown and the surrounding rural area. In the last four years, both the intake to year 8 and overall enrolment have increased. There has been a significant rise in the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs. The school has a small sixth form; although there is an increasing enrolment to year 13, the school will have to monitor carefully the viability of the post-16 provision.

Fivemiletown College	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Year 8 Intake	72	63	58	78
Enrolment	426	441	431	444
% Attendance (NI Average)	91.4 (92.3)	91.8 (92.6)	90.4 (92.6)	n/a
FSME Percentage <sup>3</sup>	10.6	10.9	13.5	13.1

<sup>1</sup> ETI is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents/carers about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parent/carer questionnaires may be low.

<sup>2</sup> Available to all families; return as percentage of families

<sup>3</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	16 (68)	20.6 (91)	23.4 (101)	26.6 (118)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	10	18	20	37
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*
<i>Intake:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English <sup>4</sup>	12.5	20.6	20.7	*
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	16.7	23.8	32.7	*
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	79.2	79.3	77.6	56.4
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	88.9	79.4	82.8	66.7
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

\* fewer than 5

### 3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of the post-primary inspection is, through an effective linking of internal and external approaches, to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- to inform the school's planning for improvement.

### 4. Overall findings

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>

### 5. Achievements and standards

Most of the pupils are well motivated, engage readily in learning and are making good progress in most of their subjects. When given the opportunity, in the majority of classes, they co-operate well and support one another in paired and group work. The pupils develop functional writing skills with a particular focus on preparing for examinations, but do not have enough opportunities across the curriculum for extended writing and for developing their oral skills; the standard of their oral and written communication is variable. While there are examples of good practice in a significant minority of classes, the majority of the pupils lack confidence in applying their mathematical thinking in a range of different contexts.

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<sup>4</sup> From 2013, KS2 standards in English and mathematics are reported as Levels of Progression in Communication and Using Mathematics and cannot be compared directly with KS2 data from previous years.

In two of the last three years, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE examinations at grades A\*-C, including English and mathematics, has been above the average for similar schools <sup>5</sup>. In the same period, most of the individual subjects, at GCSE grades A\*-C, have been more than 10 percentage points above average.

Over the last three years, the attainment of the pupils in three GCE A level qualifications at grades A\*-C has remained consistently below the average; in the same period, almost all of the pupils taking A levels have attained at least two grades A\*-E. The standards attained at this level have been variable due to the small number of entries in almost all of the subjects. The percentage of pupils staying on at school post-16 and progressing to higher education is above the average.

The majority of the pupils who require additional support in their learning achieve qualifications which enable them to make good progress. Due to the small numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals taking GCSE examinations over the last three years, the standards have fluctuated. Overall, the proportion of those pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C in 2013, including English and mathematics, is below the average.

## **6. Provision**

Planning, teaching and learning ranged from outstanding to good in the majority of the lessons observed. The most effective lessons are characterised by: an appropriate level of pace and challenge; purposeful independent, paired and group work; investigations complemented by reflection which extend the pupils' thinking; questioning which enables them to make extended oral responses; and supportive verbal and written comments which help the pupils raise the standard of their work. In order to improve the practice in the significant minority (30%) of less effective lessons observed, the teachers need to: match the work more closely to the needs and interests of all of the pupils; enable the pupils to be more actively engaged in their own learning; and implement more consistently strategies to manage the pupils' behaviour, focused sharply on improving further their learning and the standards they attain.

There are appropriate systems in place to identify those pupils who experience difficulties with their learning. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides detailed information to staff on the specific learning needs of individual pupils, and arranges appropriate in-service training and guidance to help teachers meet those needs. The learning support assistants have developed their knowledge and expertise through access to relevant courses and help individual pupils improve their standards in literacy and numeracy. Individual learning plans are sufficiently detailed with mostly literacy-based targets; some pupils would benefit further from support focused on numeracy. The pupils' needs are met well through access to specialist external agencies.

In the majority of lessons, there is a supportive and inclusive ethos in the classrooms, characterised by good working relationships between the teachers, pupils and support staff. If the pupils have any worries about their safety and well-being, they are aware of what to do and with whom to speak; they report that they feel safe in school. The transition arrangements for the year 8 pupils include well-planned induction, including senior pupils acting as "buddies". There are limited opportunities for the pupils to express their views on school improvement.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix for data: note that when averages are compared, they are with the average for selective or non-selective schools, as appropriate, with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

The pupils access a range of good quality, up-to-date, written careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), including information on a diverse range of higher education courses and a variety of labour market information in a well-resourced careers suite. They benefit from their participation in a range of careers visits and events in the school. Overall, the pupils' knowledge of the career pathways open to them and the associated examination grades is variable. There are important areas for improvement, which the newly-appointed head of careers has already identified. There is an immediate need to implement a review focused on integrating better the discrete provision for Learning for Life and Work with the CEIAG programme, which are insufficiently connected, and on planning for progression from year 8 to year 14.

At KS3 and KS4, the pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum which meets well their needs and aspirations. The school has made good progress towards meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework through effective collaboration arrangements with the local college of further education and another post-primary school.

At post-16, the school has widened the curriculum to include applied courses; however, the numbers of pupils in many of the individual subjects are too small to be viable.

At all key stages, the pupils benefit from a range of extra-curricular activities which develop their wider skills. A particular strength is the provision of accredited enrichment courses offered to pupils in years 13 and 14 through the swimming pool, sports hall and general purpose rooms in the Youth Annexe, which are used extensively during the school day and for a range of purposes in the evening. The Annexe facilitates extensive links between the school and the local community.

New timetabling arrangements have recently been introduced; the management needs to monitor and evaluate more fully the impact of these changes on the pupils' learning and adjust timetabling anomalies, notably, the blocking of lessons for certain GCSE subjects into a single day.

## **7. Leadership and management**

The recently-completed school development plan<sup>6</sup>(SDP) sets appropriate priorities for the future, but lacks sufficiently robust processes for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the planned actions on the standards attained by the pupils.

The senior leadership team (SLT) has overseen an improvement in standards, notably at GCSE, a widening curriculum and an increased enrolment. They have identified appropriately, as an important priority, the need to analyse and use data more effectively to inform planning and to effect improvement. However, communication, at a senior level, is not providing clear direction. As a consequence, the SLT needs to implement urgently arrangements to gather and consider more effectively the views of the pupils, parents and staff, in order to foster a more cohesive collegial ethos and to distribute leadership roles more appropriately across the school.

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<sup>6</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

Most of the middle managers provide effective curricular and pastoral leadership; they are committed to improvement in their respective areas of responsibility. The school has identified appropriately the need to build the capacity of all middle managers to monitor effectively the provision in order to raise standards consistently. In the best practice, there are highly developed and effective approaches to self-evaluation for improvement, based on a good knowledge of the pupils, which lead to improvement in learning and in the standards the pupils attain.

Currently, the senior leaders do not deploy the staff with posts of responsibility in the most effective ways: it will be important to ensure that the most suitable staff are leading improvement in the key areas identified during the inspection and are empowered to do so.

The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have worked effectively with senior leadership to reduce significantly the budget deficit and to promote the school in the community. In order to monitor more effectively the improvement work in the school, the governors now need to exercise their challenge function by receiving more first-hand information from teachers with specific responsibilities and consulting a wider range of stakeholders.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the school needs to inform the parents of its arrangements for child protection more regularly and systematically; and the designated governors need to attend refresher training.

## **8. Conclusion**

**In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory;** the strengths outweigh the areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in: standards in literacy and numeracy at KS3; in care, guidance and support; and in leadership and management.

The main areas for improvement are the need:

- to raise standards in literacy and numeracy notably at KS3, as the school has identified in its SDP; the inspection endorses the urgency of this priority;
- for the SLT and governors to establish clear channels of communication and consultation at all levels in order to distribute leadership appropriately and support school improvement more effectively; and
- to develop the role of the school council to provide a meaningful forum for pupils to participate actively in the life and work of the school.

The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement over the next 18-24 months.



## APPENDIX 1

### Performance and statistical data

#### GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving 5 or more GCSEs (A\* to C and A\* to E) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category<sup>7</sup>.

<b><i>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</i></b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	98.2	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	74.6	79.4	75.4
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>8</sup></i>	<i>68.8</i>	<i>69.7</i>	<i>69.7</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	36.4	50.8	47.8
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>39.5</i>	<i>45.4</i>	<i>45.4</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	92.7	96.8	98.5
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	22.2	83	14

<sup>7</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

<sup>8</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

## Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the tables below show the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving grades A\* to C and A\* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining board for the subjects in this/these table(s) to facilitate comparison due to the small size of the cohort.

*Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years*

GCSE Subject	2011		2012		2013		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
SA Occ Studies	100	100			100	100	25
DA Occ Studies	83		90				34
Statistics					100	100	11
RE (Short Course)	64	97	57	93	57	84	155

Level 2	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
<i>Essential Skills Level 2</i>	100	100		17
<i>Essential Skills Level 1</i>			100	23
<i>BTEC Construction</i>		100		*

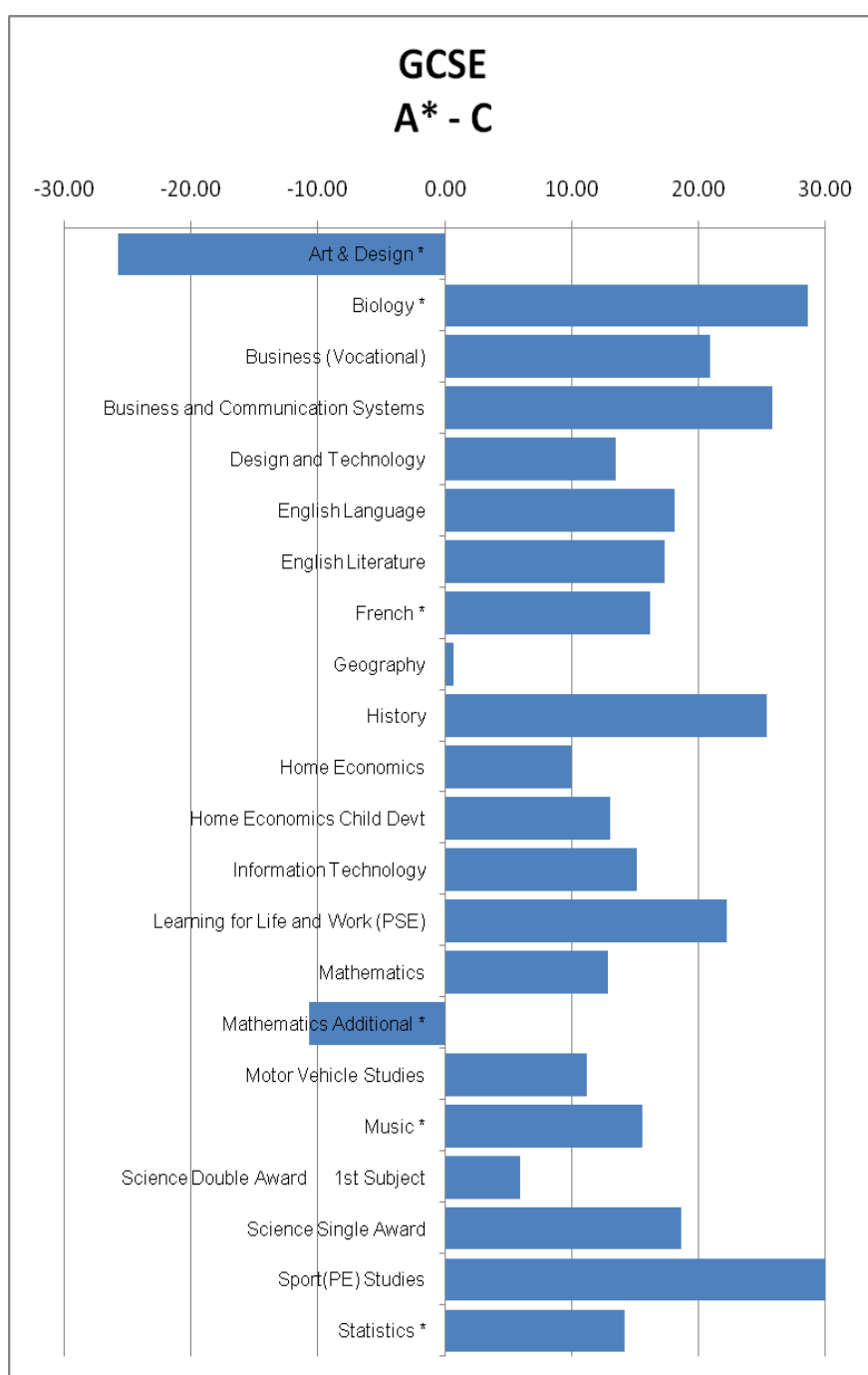
\*fewer than 5

## Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A\* to C from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of pupils achieving at GCSE level at grades A\* to C in individual subjects in this school is compared with the three-year NI average.

The comparison is shown below as the difference between these two values; a positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above the NI average. The number of entries to each subject will vary considerably and therefore comparisons should be treated with caution.

### Comparison with the three-year NI average



\*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

### **GCE A level examination results at grades A\* to C from 2010-11 to 2012-13**

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in this school achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to C, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to E.

<b>GCE A Level or equivalent</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	76	86	89
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	26.9	47.6	46.4
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	88.5	97.6	96.4

### **Other examination results: post-16**

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Fivemiletown College achieving grades A\* to C and A\* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCE A level. No average is available from the examining boards for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison due to the small size of the cohort.

### **Other level 3 courses taken in the last three years.**

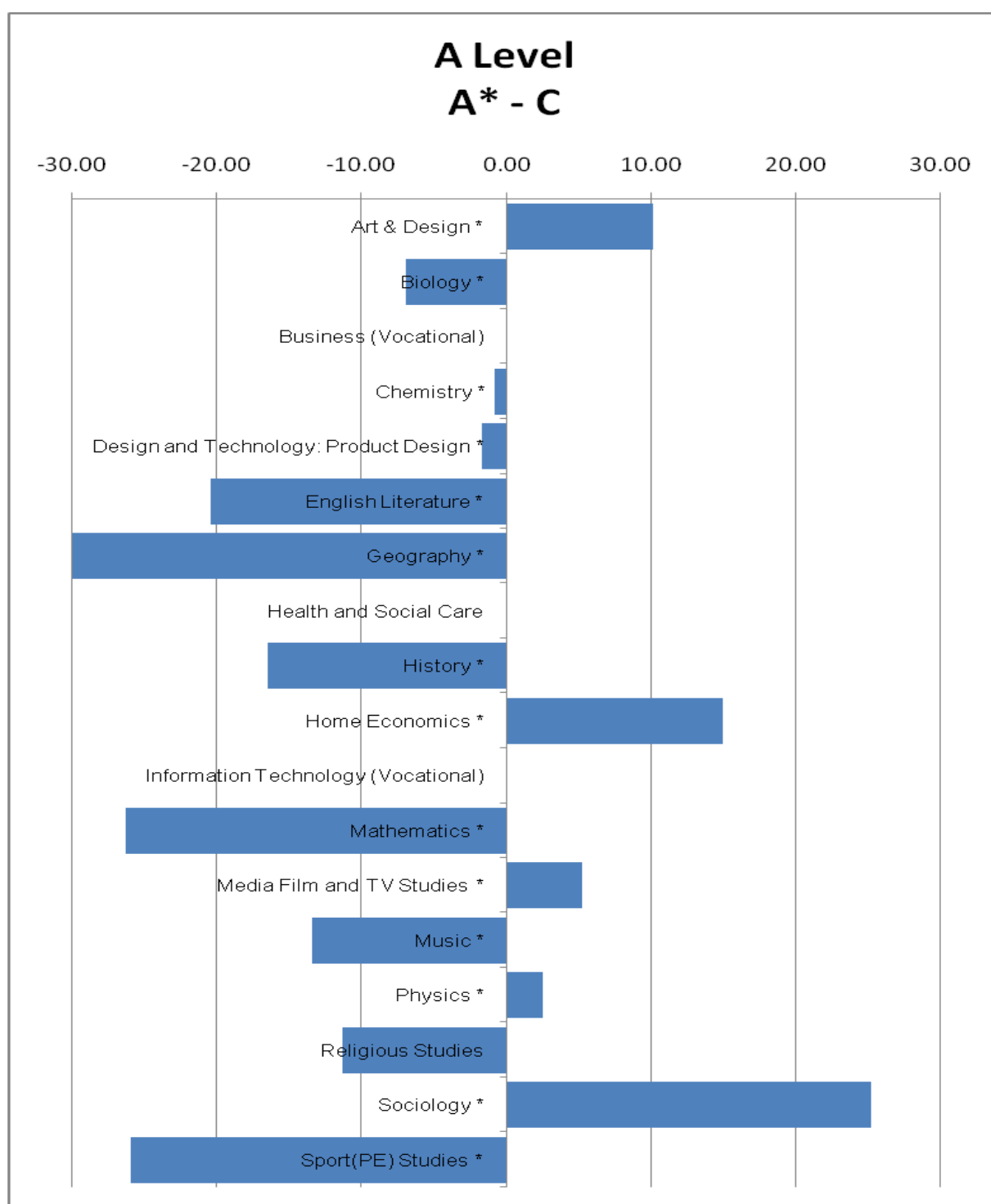
<b>Level 3</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>Total entry over 3 years</b>
	<b>% pass</b>	<b>% pass</b>	<b>% pass</b>	
BTEC Children's Care, Learning & Development	100	100	100	7

### **Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A\* to C from 2010-11 to 2012-13**

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of pupils achieving at GCE level at grades A\* to C in individual subjects in this school is compared with the three-year NI average.

The comparison is shown below as the difference between these two values; a positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above the NI average. The number of entries to each subject will vary considerably and therefore comparisons between subjects should be treated with caution.

## Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A\* to C



\*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

**Staying on rate** (Percentage staying on from year 12 to 13 and from year 13 to 14)

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at this school from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	52.3	73
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	79.9	77.8

**Leavers' destinations**

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from this school who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	2011/12 NI %	2011/12 School %	2011/12 School Nos.
Total number of leavers			75
Employment	7.9	12	9
Further Education	46	28	21
Higher Education	20.1	32	24
Training	18.2	21.3	16
Unemployed	4.4	0	0
Unknown	3.4	6.7	5

### **Health and safety**

- There are no visibility panels in the doors of many of the classrooms.

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