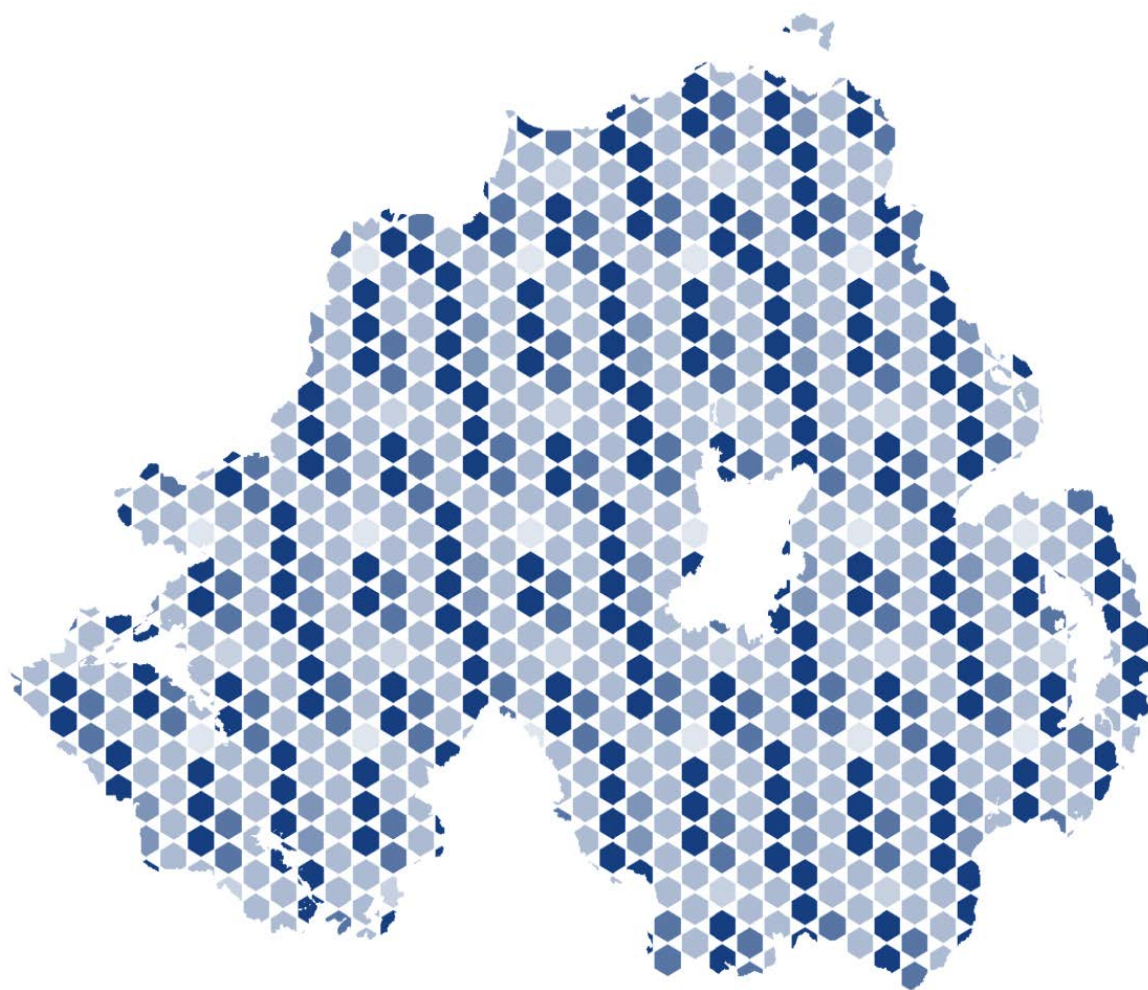


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Fort Hill College, Lisburn

Controlled integrated, co-educational, 11-19, non-selective
school

Report of an Inspection in
December 2013



Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 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	765	18	2 ¹	12
Teachers	61	22	36	*
Support Staff	50	*	*	*

* fewer than 5

2. Context

Fort Hill College is a controlled integrated, co-educational school located in Lisburn. The school includes a Communication Support Centre (CSC) for pupils diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. Approximately three-quarters of the pupils enter the school with the expected levels² in mathematics and English which is just below the Northern Ireland (NI) average. The school has identified a quarter of the pupils as requiring additional support with their learning. Over the past four years, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased significantly from 13.4% to 20.3%.

¹ 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.

² From 2013, KS2 standards in English and mathematics are reported as Levels of Progression and cannot be compared directly with KS2 data from previous years

Name of School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Year 8 Intake	164	147	142	149
Enrolment	896	907	904	889
% Attendance (NI Average)	90.7 (92.6)	91.3 (93)	91 (92.9)	
FSME Percentage ³	13.4	16.2	19.4	20.3
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	20.8 (187)	22.1 (200)	24.5 (221)	24.8 (221)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	50	51	57	56
No. of newcomers	33	32	25	12
<i>Intake</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	13.4	9.5	11.9	*
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	21.9	20.4	19.1	*
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	75	71.4	78.2	53.2
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	75.6	76.2	80.3	55.7
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

*fewer than 5

3. Focus of 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 finding

Overall Performance Level	Satisfactory
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

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

5. Achievements and standards

- In over half of the lessons observed during the inspection the pace of work and degree of challenge in learning was appropriately demanding. As a result the pupils worked enthusiastically, employed good thinking and problem-solving skills, cooperated well with others, learnt independently and listened and responded well when questioned effectively by teachers and peers. Their ability to assess their own learning is developing well and their skills in using information and communication technology to support their learning are satisfactory. Across the whole school the opportunity to develop their skills to this level is uneven and the teachers need to ensure that there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning which develops the wider capabilities and dispositions of all of the pupils.
- The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs (and equivalents) at grades A* to C has improved by a third over the past three years; the percentage achieving at the same level when GCSE English and mathematics are included has risen by 7% over the same period. While standards are below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for schools with a similar intake, the improved results in 2013 are within three and a half percentage points of the average for all non-selective schools. From 2012 to 2013, standards in fifteen subjects at GCSE (and equivalent) level improved, eleven of these by ten or more percentage points. Attainment in mathematics at the end of KS4 has recently improved significantly to the average for all non-selective schools. The percentage of pupils, entitled to free school meals, who are achieving at the expected level in GCSE examinations, is just above average for all non-selective schools, although with variations from year to year.⁴
- There is a rise in the percentage of pupils taking GCE A levels and equivalent examinations in three subjects over the past three years; at the same time, the percentage achieving a grade C or above in at least three A levels, and equivalents, has doubled. The percentage obtaining grades A*-E in two subjects has also improved to within three percentage points of the average for all non-selective schools. Progression is good: the percentage of pupils progressing to employment and training is well above the NI average; the percentage progressing to further education is average.
- The pupils placed in the CSC by SEELB are fully integrated across the school, their pastoral and educational needs are well met and they achieve well in public examinations. The pupils in the mainstream classes, who have special educational needs, make steady progress and achieve a suitable range of qualifications.

6. Provision

- Planning, assessment, learning and teaching in three-quarters of the lessons observed during the inspection was good or better; a significant minority of which was very good, and a few were outstanding

⁴ Refer to appendix 1 for detailed statistics

- In the most effective practice, when the teachers' expectations are appropriately high and the level of challenge is matched well to the needs of all of the pupils, there is planning for, and clear discussion of, the learning intentions and success criteria and a sharp focus on peer-assessment and self-assessment. The teachers need to sustain their more effective practice throughout the school year particularly in relation to planning appropriate support for all of the pupils who have special educational needs.
- The quality of the provision for literacy is satisfactory and for numeracy it is good. As the standard of the pupils' writing across subjects is variable, the literacy co-ordinator has prioritised appropriately the need to improve extended writing in all subjects. Teachers in a range of subjects integrate and consolidate mathematical skills, confidently and competently. In mathematics lessons, the pupils have very good opportunities to, and can, explain their reasoning, which helps to strengthen their understanding and skills.
- Provision for the pupils in the CSC is good; it is well-organised, structured, yet flexible, and there is effective interaction between teachers and pupils. The teachers and classroom assistants, responsible for the pupils, are supportive and are dedicated to their welfare and progress.
- The pastoral care is good: the school has a caring, inclusive ethos and shows a strong commitment to the welfare of both pupils and staff. The pupils respond well to strategies which promote positive behaviour, good attendance and punctuality and benefit from the range of extra-curricular enrichment activities. In particular, the pupils involved in shared education projects have developed the self-confidence to work with others, to respect difference and to discuss controversial issues with maturity. It is therefore appropriate that the school has identified the need to develop further ways in which the pupils themselves can inform the provision for their pastoral care. As highlighted by the pupils, in discussions with them, this needs to include the review of policies, the use of form class time and the further development of the integrated ethos of the school.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people, which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe and secure in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.
- Through the effective links with parents, the wider community and a range of agencies which support the pupils in their learning, the school prepares the pupils well for life and work, including celebrating their achievements and promoting a greater degree of home-school partnership.
- The pupils benefit from the high priority the school gives to careers education, information and guidance and in particular, to the promotion of STEM⁵ careers; the pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities and experiences provided for them. The careers co-ordinator has identified appropriate areas for development including the further development of the discrete timetabled careers provision in year 10, and work experience provision in years 13 and 14.

⁵ STEM: Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

- The school development plan (SDP) has identified appropriately the need to ensure that all of the pupils have equal access to the full range of subjects at KS3. At KS4, the curriculum is broad and balanced. The school is active within the Lisburn Area Learning Community and is making good progress in offering post-16 courses collaboratively with local schools and colleges of further education. The additional applied courses reflect appropriately the pupils' needs, interests and abilities.

7. Leadership and management

- The SDP⁶ⁱ is at the beginning of a new three year cycle with appropriate development priorities identified; the more detailed action plans will require adjustment in light of the inspection findings. The senior leadership team (SLT) is in the process of being restructured following a recent retirement of a vice-principal. Through their commitment to promoting improvement, the SLT has made a sharper use of internal and external performance data to identify and address underperformance, which has resulted in improved teaching and learning and better outcomes.
- There has been a significant change in the profile of the staff, in particular the recent appointment of curriculum leaders in literacy, numeracy and ICT. In light of the recent, and further planned, redrawing of roles and responsibilities, there is a need for a stronger focus, with external assistance, on ensuring that all of the teachers have consistently high expectations and to build the capacity in leadership and management at all levels.
- At departmental and middle management level, action planning requires a more consistently rigorous focus on planning, assessment and learning and teaching in order to maintain and improve further the standards the pupils achieve at GCSE and A level. The SLT needs to use monitoring information more rigorously to evaluate which of the actions taken by subject teachers are bringing about sustained improvement.
- The governors, while sufficiently aware of the life and work of the school, need to review the SDP and planning process more closely in order to support the principal and teachers and to enhance their challenge to senior and middle management. The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement in the provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

⁶ The SDP is compliant with the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010,

The main areas for improvement are the need to:

- consolidate and raise further the improving standards in public examinations;
- build capacity in leadership and management at all levels, especially in light of recent changes; and
- disseminate further the effective practice which exists in planning and teaching to bring about improvement.

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 with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category⁷.

<i>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	92.7	93.2	92.8
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	46.4	39	62.3
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁸</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	26.5	26.7	32.6
<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	87.4	91.1	96.4
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)	31.3	21.7	27.8

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

⁸ 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 and/or applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining board(s) for the subjects in these tables to facilitate comparison due to the small size of the cohort.

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

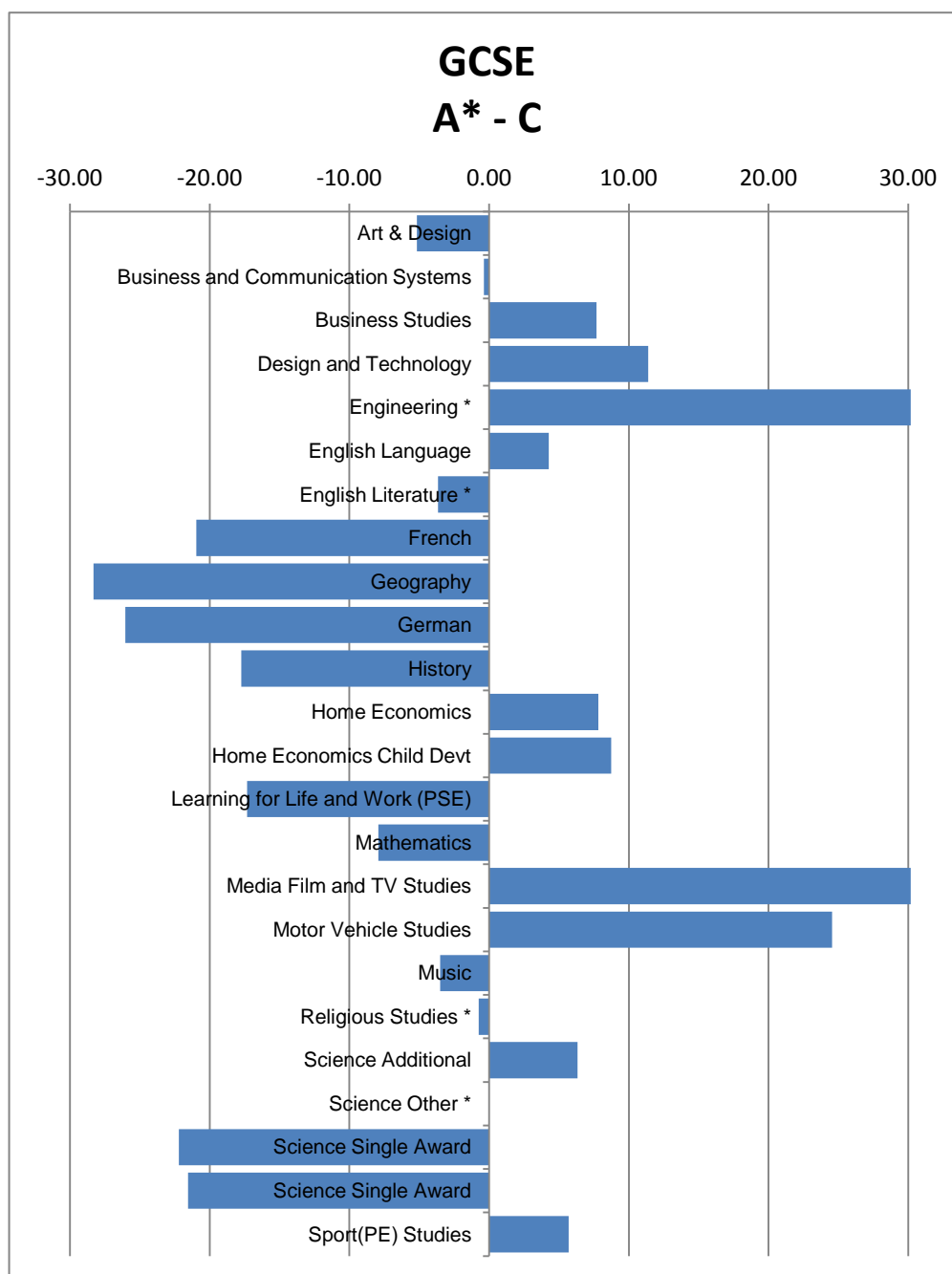
Level 2	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
<i>Occupational Studies</i>	SA – 83.3 DA – 58.8	81.6	89	307
<i>Numeracy</i>	---	---	100	4
<i>Literacy</i>	100 *64.7%	100 *100%	100 *77.3%	69

*The percentage of the students that passed Level 2 Essential Skills from the cohort.

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.



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

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

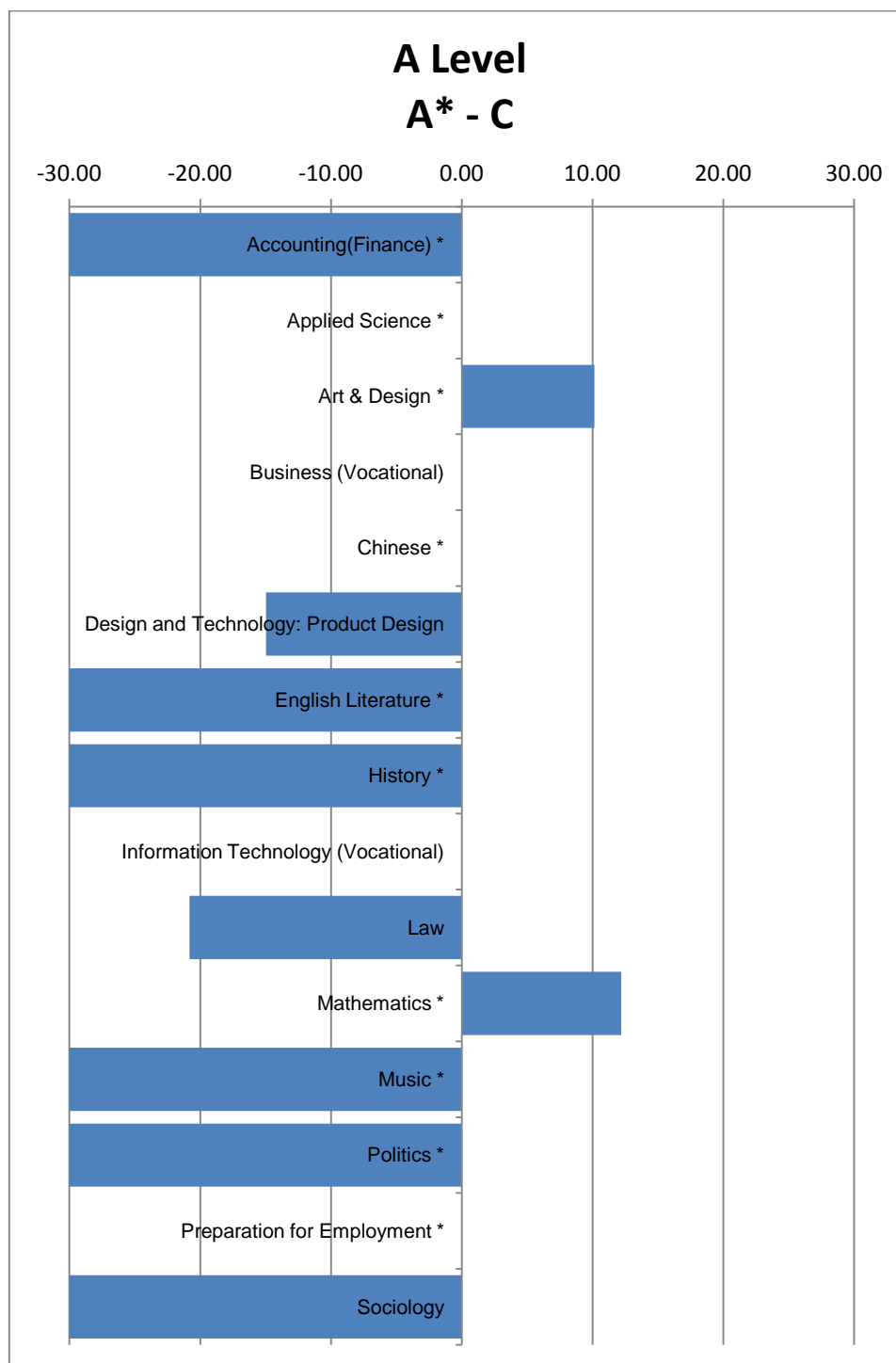
Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in this school achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A* to E.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2011	2012	2013
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	85.6	75	92.2
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	21.4	18.6	39.2
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	97.6	85	92.6

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.



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST-16

Other [level 3] courses taken in the last three years.

Level 3	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
<i>Construction</i>	60	100	100	14
<i>CACHE</i>	85.7	100	100	28
<i>Sports Studies</i>	72.7	80	100	19

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	41.8
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	79.9	88.7

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			135
Employment	7.9	14.8	20
Further Education	46.0	48.1	65
Higher Education	20.1	6.7	9
Training	18.2	28.9	39
Unemployed	4.4	1.5	2
Unknown	3.4	0	0

Health and safety

- There is a need to carry out a health and safety risk assessment of the visibility panels on the internal doors.
- There is a need to carry out a health and safety risk assessment for the provision of technology and design in the mobile accommodation.

Accommodation

- There are insufficient changing facilities in the sports hall.

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