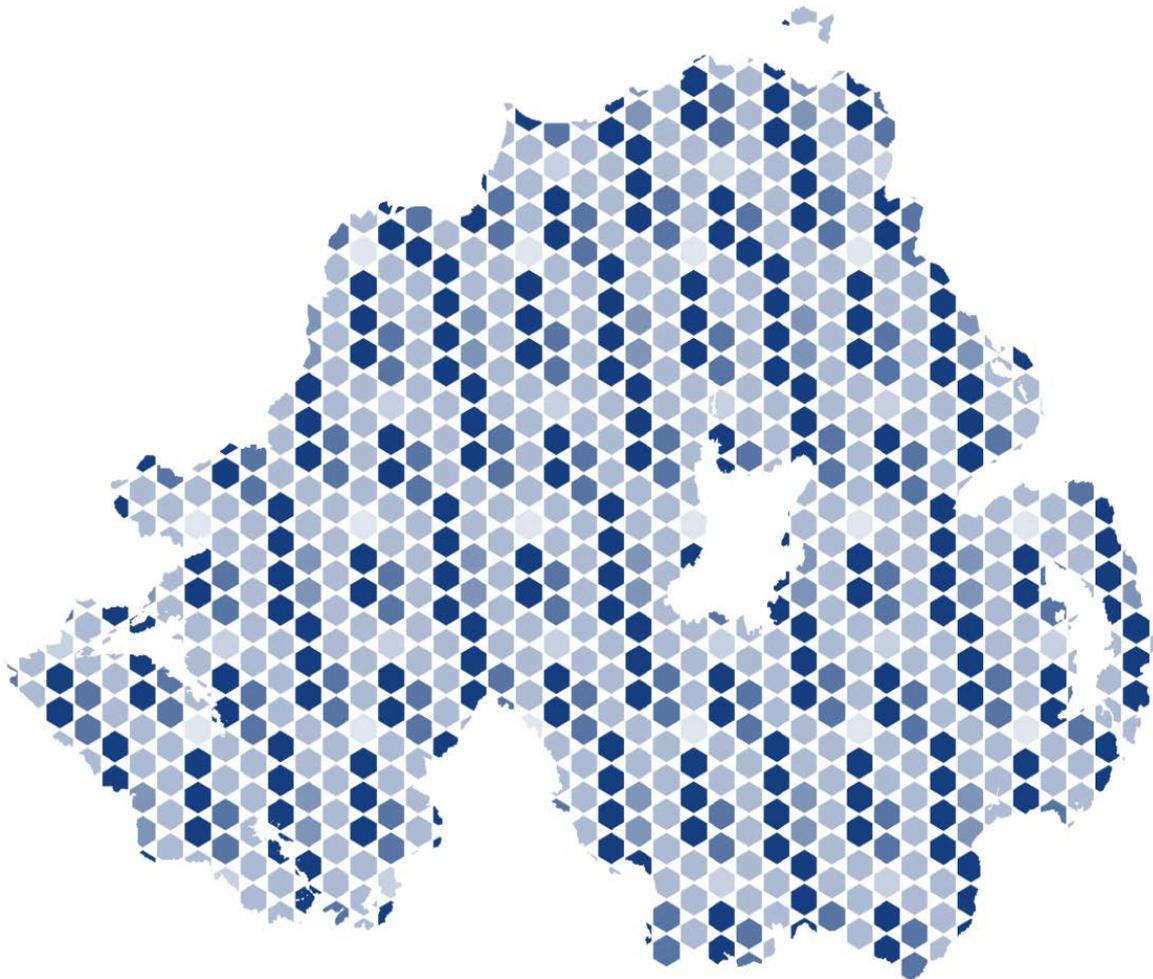


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Foyle College

Co-educational, 11-18, non-denominational, selective school

Report of an Inspection in
November 2013

eti

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -
Promoting Improvement*

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.etini.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 ¹	705 ²	137	19	60
Teachers	54	38	70	15
Support Staff	50	11	22	*

* fewer than 5

2. Context

Foyle College is situated on two sites in Londonderry's city-side. The junior school is at Springtown and the senior school is approximately half a mile away at Duncreggan. This presents significant challenges for the staff in how they deliver the curriculum. The pupils come from the city and across a wide rural area. The enrolment has remained steady over the past three years.

The school has undergone significant changes to the staffing, management and pastoral structures over the past three years due to retirements and new appointments; at least 22 members of staff, representing some forty percent of the teaching staff, have been appointed or have taken up new posts of responsibility.

The school enrolls pupils on the basis of academic selection although, in practice, it has been under-subscribed in two recent years. An increasing number of pupils are identified as needing additional support with aspects of their learning.

After a long period of uncertainty about the future development of the school buildings, funding was released in June 2013 for a new school building, on the Limavady Road in the city's Waterside.

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 available to all families; return as percentage of families

Folye College	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Year 8 Intake	127	124	125	129
Enrolment	878	862	852	854
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.7 (95)	95.3 (95)	95.3	
FSME Percentage ³	6.9	9.1	9.4	10.5
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	10.5 (92)	10.4 (90)	11.9 (102)	11.8 (101)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	9	9	9	13
No. of newcomers	*	*	0	0
Intake:				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	54.7	52.4	58.4	47.3
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	65.4	64.5	80	56.6
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	94.5	96.7	100	93.8
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	97.6	99.2	100	96.9 ⁴
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

* fewer than five

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	Satisfactory
Leadership and Management	Satisfactory

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

⁴ 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.

5. Achievements and standards

- The pupils are well motivated and work effectively in pairs and group situations, supporting each other to extend their learning. By the end of year 14, they have good skills and dispositions for learning; they are socially confident, mature and increasingly independent. The proportion of pupils progressing from year 14 to higher and further education is in line with the average for selective schools.
- The overall standards⁵ achieved by pupils attaining seven or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, improved to reach the average for similar schools in 2013. Over the past three years, while the majority of subjects have improved at grades at A*-B, a variation remains: half of the subjects are more than ten percent below the average for similar schools and a significant minority are above average. At GCE A level, the percentage of pupils taking up three subjects has increased and almost all of the subjects with a high uptake are close to, or above, the Northern Ireland (NI) average, with a majority showing an improving trend. The overall percentage of A level grades at A*-C remains below the NI average and the school has identified, correctly, that this is a top priority for improvement. The standards attained by the small number of pupils with special educational needs and for those entitled to free school meals are in line with their peers.

6. Provision

- There is a wide variation in the quality and effectiveness of planning across departments. In the best practice, there is comprehensive planning for learning which identifies an appropriately wide range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies. However, particularly at KS4 and post-16, planning is focused too narrowly on the content and/or the relevant examination specification and does not identify purposeful and effective teaching and learning strategies, nor take account of the individual needs of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate with a majority of the lessons being good and very good. A significantly higher proportion of the lessons were good and very good in KS3 compared with KS4 and post-16 teaching. In the most effective practice across the school, the teachers paced teaching well and ensured, skilfully, that the pupils were well engaged. In response to effective questioning and suitably challenging activities the pupils produced thoughtful, extended and confident contributions.
- In over one-quarter of the lessons observed there were important areas for improvement including: over-direction by the teachers; limited opportunities for the pupils to extend their responses, be creative and develop higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills; inconsistent use of information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning; and variation in the effective use of assessment and in the quality of the teachers' written and oral feedback to the pupils to help them improve.

⁵ 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.

- Literacy is promoted well within English classes and through the Accelerated Reading programme at KS3 which is contributing to raising standards in language. However, in English, the high quality of the teaching and the achievements of most of the pupils, which are evident in the classroom, are not reflected in the standards achieved in GCSE English and English Literature examinations, which are taken by all of the pupils. In mathematics, the pupils at KS3 and KS4 make expected or better progress. The pupils' written and oral communication is of a high quality and they can use their mathematics to support and extend their learning across other subject areas. At GCSE and A level, attainment is consistently high; the uptake of additional and A level mathematics is excellent. The school has identified appropriately the need to review and revise how literacy and numeracy are promoted and improved across the whole school.
- The school has effective strategies in place to ensure the inclusion and retention of those pupils who are at risk of marginalisation. Almost all of the pupils who require additional support are motivated, work confidently alongside their peers and are supported well by the classroom assistants. While the individual education plans provide very effective guidance to help teachers plan targeted support, they need to take greater cognisance of the individual needs of the pupils in their planning and teaching.
- The pupils are valued and supported as individuals in a caring ethos. They interact confidently and respectfully with their peers, teachers and other adults in the school. They participate, in large numbers, in a wide range of activities, events and accredited programmes beyond the classroom which develops well their team-working, leadership and mentoring skills. In discussion, they expressed their enjoyment of and appreciation for the wide range of additional and extra-curricular learning activities provided by the staff. The pupils state that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.
- The school has developed good links with outside agencies and local employers and a wide range of careers events have been organised, however, the pupils in KS4 are not well enough informed to enable them to make appropriate careers decisions based on a good understanding of all the options open to them. Appropriately, the school has begun to review the careers education, information advice and guidance curriculum to provide a more coherent programme. The senior leadership team needs to ensure that the careers programme links more strategically to the necessary development of the curriculum and that the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the careers provision are suitably robust.
- The curriculum is largely determined by a legacy timetable which is further constrained by the logistics of the two sites and aspects of inadequate and inappropriate accommodation. While the KS3 curriculum is broad and balanced, at KS4 and at post-16 it does not take sufficient account of the pupils' interests, abilities and aspirations. The option choices at post-16 are constrained for the pupils; significantly, the proportion of pupils staying on from year 12 to take part in post-16 provision is thirteen per cent below the NI average. Significant re-design will be required to ensure that the curriculum reflects and responds to the needs of individual pupils and to further the school's progress in meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

7. Leadership and management

- From September 2012, the newly-appointed principal, drawing on findings from an independent survey, identified correctly that a range of essential policies and practices, including an appropriate school development plan⁶ and process, were not in place in this school.
- Through consultation across the school community the principal led the work to develop the school's ethos and aims and to restructure the pastoral system. A range of appropriate policy and strategy approaches, which were at very early stage, are being taken forward. These include: a focus on raising standards; a consistent framework for assessment to improve outcomes through setting targets for individual pupils and tracking their progress; and effective processes to engage all teachers in self-evaluation, including the use of performance data. A strong challenge is now being provided to subject leaders and post-holders, through, for example, developing a consistent approach to departmental reporting and action planning, and improved opportunities for the professional development of the staff. Consequent change in practice generally is at a very early stage.
- The emerging leadership teams at both senior and middle management lack a sufficiently strategic and accountable role. There needs to be greater delegated responsibility, accountability and support throughout all management tiers to promote improvement in line with the new school development plan and all of the departmental and co-ordinators' action plans.
- The governors are informed about the introduction of school development planning and of pupil tracking and are engaged in certain aspects of the life and work of the school. The parents, staff and community can have confidence in the work of the governors; however, in order to support school improvement the governors should develop their role to provide greater challenge and support on the issues identified in this report.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people which broadly reflect the guidance of the Department of Education. Changes in staffing and the school's ongoing strategic review of the pastoral provision, including safeguarding matters, as a priority, have highlighted the need to update training for a number of staff and governors and for more formal arrangements for record keeping in relation to staff training.

8. Conclusion

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

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

The main areas for improvement are the need:

- to continue to develop delegated and shared responsibility and accountability for improvement across the full senior and middle management teams in order to build more consistently on the improving standards;
- for all teachers to share widely the most effective approaches in planning, teaching, assessment and learning to provide, more consistently, teaching which has a greater degree of challenge, and learning that is matched more appropriately the abilities of all of the pupils; and
- to review the design, development and provision of the curriculum and the associated careers education information advice and guidance to improve choice and provide more appropriate pathways for all of the pupils.

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

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 7 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 selective schools in the same free school meals category⁷.

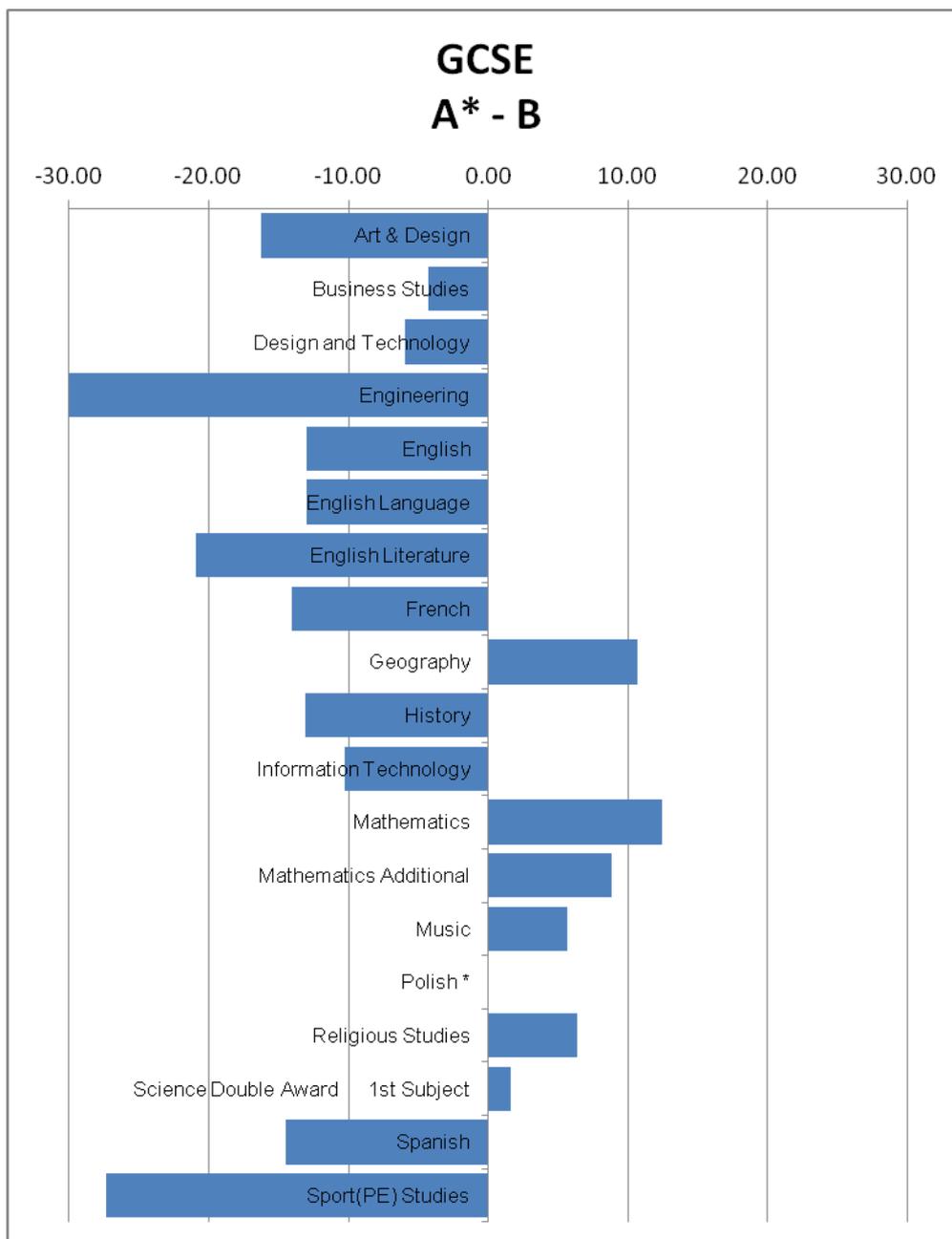
GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2011	2012	2013
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects</i>	100	100	99.2
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects</i>	86.6	88.3	93.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	94.9	93.7	93.7
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics</i>	85.8	85.9	92.3
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	93.7	91.3	91.3
<i>*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects</i>	93.7	94.5	96.2
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)	71.4	87.5	85.7

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

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to B 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 B 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: KEY STAGE 4

The table below shows other GCSE examinations achieved by the pupils; there is currently no benchmarking data for these examinations.

GCSE Subject	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-B	% A*-B	% A*-B	
Hospitality and Catering	-	-	78.6	15

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. The table compares the percentage achieving three or more GCEs (A* to C) with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁸.

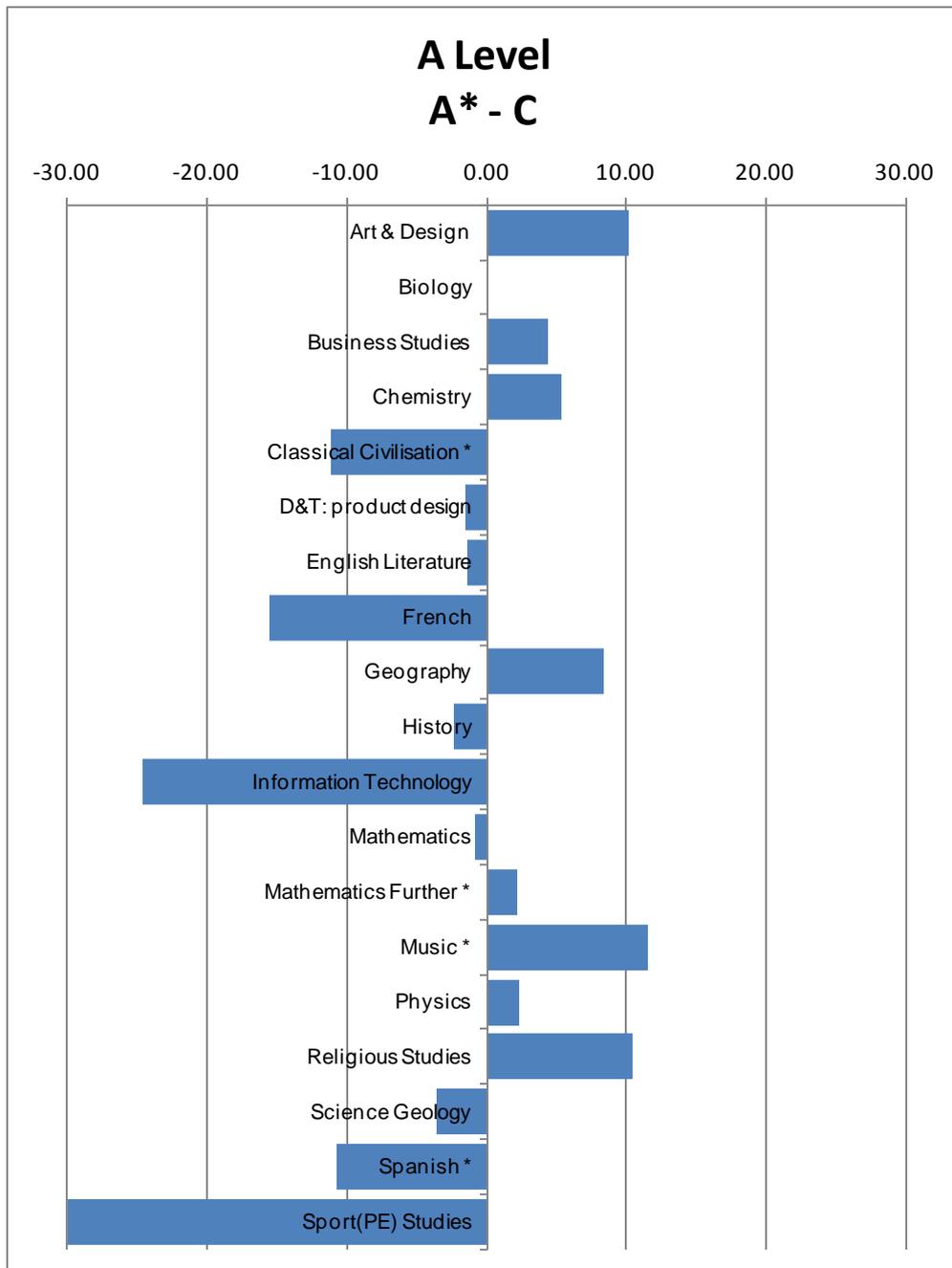
GCE A Level or equivalent	2011	2012	2013
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalent in at least 3 subjects	87.3	83.3	93.3
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	59.7	57.8	68.6
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>78.0</i>	<i>75.2</i>	<i>75.2</i>

⁸ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

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

The table below shows other examinations at level 3 (equivalent to A levels) achieved by the pupils; there is currently no benchmarking data for these examinations.

GCE Subject	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-C	% A*-C	
Health and Social Care	-	-	100	*
Psychology	-	100	-	*

*fewer than five

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	95.0	82.0
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	94.9	97.2

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 selective schools.

	2011/12 NI %	2011/12 School %	2011/12 School Nos.
Total number of leavers			131
Employment	3.8	5.3	7
Further Education	19	22.9	30
Higher Education	72.7	71	93
Training	*	0	0
Unemployed	*	*	*
Unknown	*	0	0

*fewer than 5

Health and Safety

- A policy and risk assessment is required in line with DE Circular 2013/07 for class sizes in KS3 technology and design, music and home economics and other practical subjects.
- There are significant shortcomings in the accommodation, especially at the Duncreggan site.

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