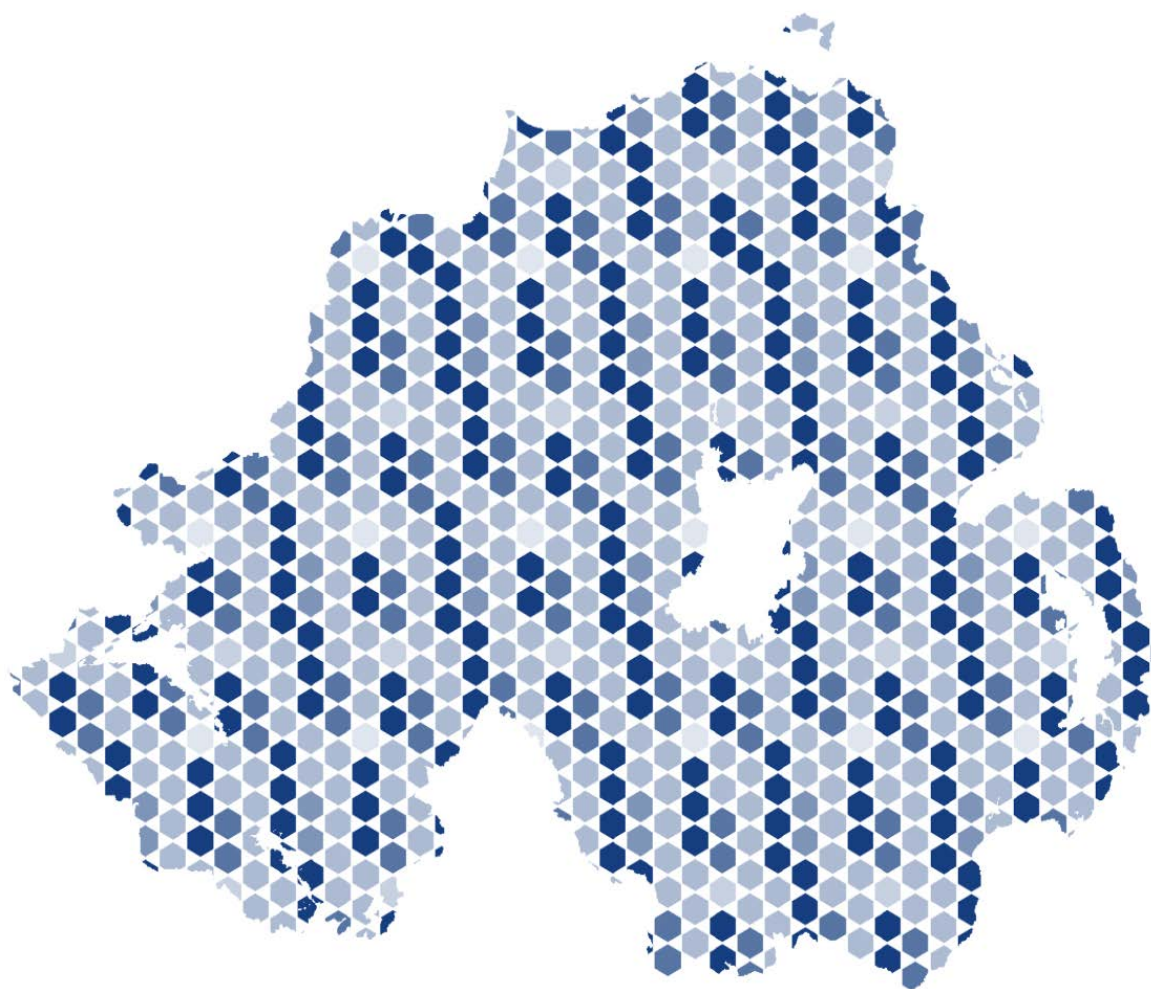


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Loreto College, Coleraine

11-19, maintained, co-educational, voluntary grammar school

Report of an Inspection in
February 2015

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, data and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups) teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Seven percent of parents and 64% of staff (56) responded to the questionnaires. The responses from both parents and staff were extremely positive and highly supportive of the work of the school. The parents highlighted the effectiveness of the pastoral care in supporting their children's learning and commended the school's holistic approach to developing individual pupils. The staff commented on the strong sense of community and support, their commitment to meeting the needs and interests of all pupils, and their enjoyment of and pride in their work.

Parents, staff and governors expressed their confidence in the leadership in managing significant change. The very few concerns identified were discussed with the governors and the Principal, and where relevant, are addressed in this report.

2. Focus and purpose of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a 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.

3. Context of the school

Loreto College attracts pupils from a wide catchment area and is regularly over-subscribed. The college is part of a network of schools worldwide, which all subscribe to the Loreto ethos and philosophy of education.

The school is the first grammar school in Northern Ireland (NI) to move away from academic selection, in September 2013, a decision supported by staff and parents, as reflected in the questionnaire returns.

The sixth form has grown steadily in recent years and the percentage of pupils who progress to higher education is just above the NI average.

Loreto College	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Year 8 Intake	120	121	125	123
Enrolment	798	808	807	818
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.2 (95.7)	95.6 (95.3)	96.3 (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	6.4	5.2	6.4	10
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	5.1 (41)	7.1 (57)	7.6 (61)	9.4 (77)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	*	*	5	8
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*
<i>Intake²:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	29.2	32.2	30.3	12.2
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	18.3	23.1	38.2	12.2
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	99.1	100	91.8	68.3
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	98.3	100	90.1	68.2
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Very good
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

5. Quality of achievement and standards

- The pupils are highly motivated, confident, ambitious and articulate. They engage well in independent, paired and group tasks, set meaningful personal learning targets and, as a result, develop effective self-management skills. They show respect for, and sensitivity towards, the needs of others, engaging in learning with enthusiasm and maturity. Their behaviour both in and out of the classroom is exemplary.
- Through well planned opportunities for the pupils to engage in peer mentoring and to take on leadership roles they develop increased self confidence, independence and maturity as they progress through the school.
- The pupils, including those entitled to free school meals and those who require additional support with their learning, attain high standards in public examinations; these reflect the high expectations they set themselves and the pride they take in their work.

¹ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

² 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

- The percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE grades at A*-C including GCSE English and mathematics dipped slightly in one of the last three years, but rose again to well above the NI average for similar selective schools. Whilst there has been a drop in the outcomes at GCE A level, the percentage of pupils obtaining grades C or above in at least three A2 levels is consistently above the corresponding NI average.
- The outcomes in English language and English literature at GCSE level are consistently above the average, and show a year on year improvement. The outcomes at GCE A level in English language are also consistently above the average, and whilst there was a decline in GCE A level English literature in 2014, the outcomes remain close to the average over the last three year period.
- The provision for the support and development of literacy across the school is a particular strength. The constant and effective focus on raising standards in writing, and in talking and listening across the curriculum, is a well embedded and shared responsibility across all departments. The pupils transfer effectively their learning and skills development in English language and English literature across subjects.
- In mathematics and additional mathematics the outcomes at GCSE level are above average. The percentage of pupils attaining grades A*- C in A level mathematics has dropped to below the average. It will be important for the school to continue to monitor this and put strategies in place to address this downward trend.
- There are opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in numeracy through cross curricular tasks and competitions. A more consistent approach to the development of numeracy across the curriculum which is monitored and evaluated would improve the standards further.

6. Quality of provision

- Most of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective (good and better) in promoting and progressing the pupils' learning. As a result of skilful questioning by the teachers, the pupils develop their knowledge and thinking skills. The well-planned pair and group tasks enable the pupils to learn with and from one another, and to take responsibility for their own learning. The less effective practice, in a minority of lessons, is characterised by insufficient pace, structure and challenge for the pupils.
- The outstanding pastoral provision is rooted firmly in the Loreto ethos and philosophy, with a commitment to developing pupils who are willing and able to play their part in the betterment of society. Working relationships are excellent at all levels and the staff are highly committed to the care and well-being of the pupils within an inclusive, safe and supportive school community.

- Through the well-conceived pastoral programme and extensive range of extra-curricular activities, the pupils develop excellent interpersonal skills and dispositions towards learning. A key strength of the pastoral provision is its integration within teaching and learning. The senior pupils are excellent role models and are actively involved in the pastoral system throughout the school, enabling and supporting younger pupils through both academic and pastoral mentoring.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe in school and that they are well supported by the staff; they are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.
- The pupils who require additional support with their learning are integrated fully into all aspects of school life. The inclusive nature of the school impacts very positively on their self-esteem and on the development of their personal and social skills. Their needs are identified promptly and they benefit from tailored support provided by knowledgeable and committed staff in partnership with appropriate external agencies.
- The pupils access up-to-date information to assist them in making appropriate careers decisions. They demonstrate a good understanding of the options open to them including opportunities provided through vocational pathways. The taught programme is enhanced effectively by a range of career-related events. The senior management's commitment to the provision of good quality careers education, information, advice and guidance is exemplified by the allocation of additional resources to support the extensive administrative workload the area demands.
- The pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The school works within the local Area Learning Community to develop the collaborative arrangements between local schools to ensure that, pupils at post-16 have access to an appropriately wide range of academic and vocational subjects. The school has identified the continuing need to keep these arrangements under review in order to meet the changing needs of the pupils, and to ensure that it will fulfil the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

7. Quality of leadership and management

- The school development plan³ is informed by extensive consultation and robust evaluation which has resulted in a shared and clear direction for the school's improvement agenda. The appropriate priorities and associated action plans focus on the changing context and profile of the school and its pupils and the strategic actions necessary to meet the needs of the whole school community.

³ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- The senior leadership team provides sensitive and strategic leadership. Their collegial, inclusive approach to leading and managing significant change successfully inspires confidence and respect among the staff, pupils, parents and the wider community. They have fostered a culture of care, encouragement and support for all in the school community; building capacity within the staff to respond to and embrace change while maintaining a clear vision and focus on raising expectations, providing quality pastoral and curriculum experiences and high achievement for all.
- The middle leaders provide effective leadership and management of their areas of responsibility; they are highly-committed, enthusiastic about their role and demonstrate a commitment to the school improvement agenda. They have recently, and appropriately, begun to work more collaboratively, with a view to sharing expertise and developing a more consistent approach to self-evaluation and action-planning across the school.
- The governors are highly committed to, very informed about, and actively engaged in, the life and work of the school. They have shown strong strategic leadership, taken decisive actions and dealt with the complex nature of moving away from academic selection sensitively and successfully. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- Despite deficiencies in the accommodation the staff create a warm and supportive learning environment for the pupils and the buildings are maintained to a high standard.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

APPENDIX 1

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2011-12 to 2013-14

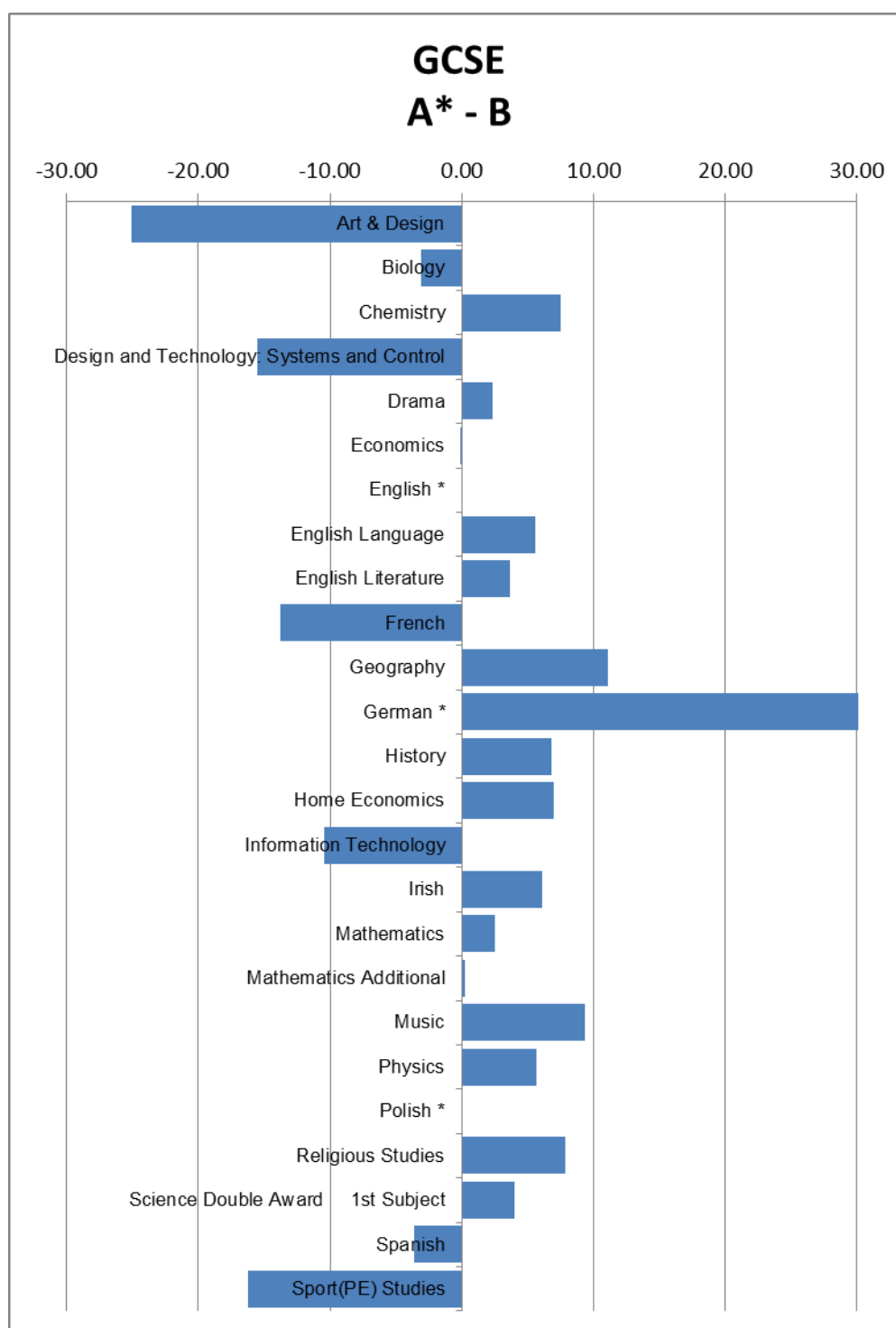
Based on data held by the school, and verified with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Loreto College achieving 7 or more GCSEs (A* to C) and equivalent subjects, and also when GCSE English and mathematics are included, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals attaining at the expected level, with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁴.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2012	2013	2014
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	94	93.2	99.2
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>93.7</i>	<i>96.3</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	98.3	93.2	99.2
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>91.3</i>	<i>92.8</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	99.1	97.4	100
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)	88.9	85.7	100

⁴ 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 2011-12 to 2013-14

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for selective schools in Northern Ireland. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, 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 2011-12 to 2013-14

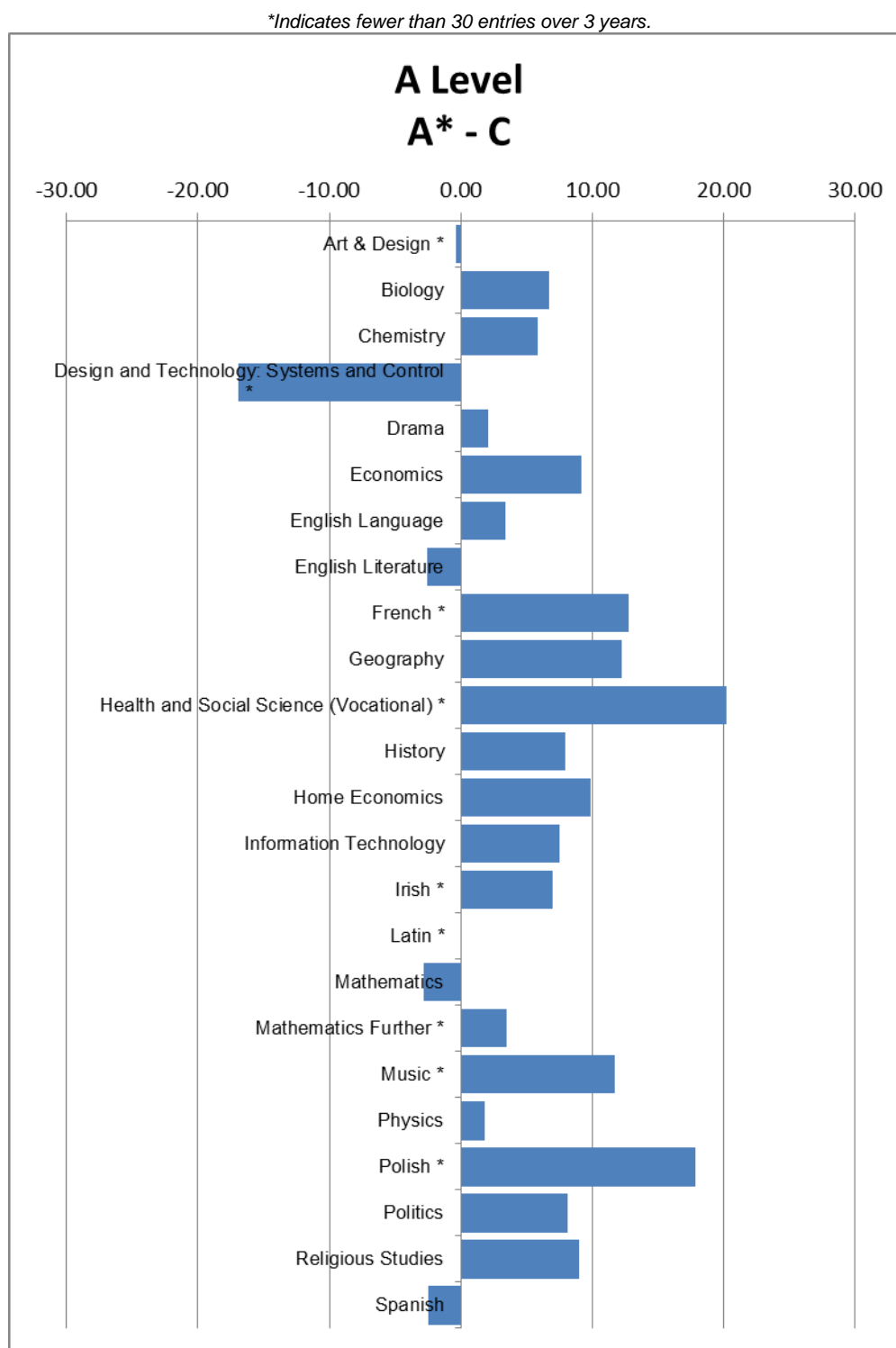
Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Loreto College achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C. The table compares this percentage with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁵.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2012	2013	2014
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	88.2	84.8	79.8
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>75.2</i>	<i>72.9</i>	N/A

⁵ 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

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for selective schools in Northern Ireland. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, comparisons should be treated with caution.



Staying on rate

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

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	95.7	90.7
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	94.3	93.2

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 Loreto College who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for selective schools.

	School % (No.)	NI %	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 3+ (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	122	9503			
Employment	0.8 (*)	3.4			
Further Education	16.4 (20)	21.2		90 (18)	10 (*)
Higher Education	73.8 (90)	72			100 (90)
Training	0	1.2			
Unemployed	2.5 (*)	1.2			
Unknown	6.6 (8)	1.1			

APPENDIX 2

Accommodation and health and safety

1. The school heating system requires upgrading; many of the windows are single glazed and in need of replacement.
2. Toilet facilities for pupils need updating.

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