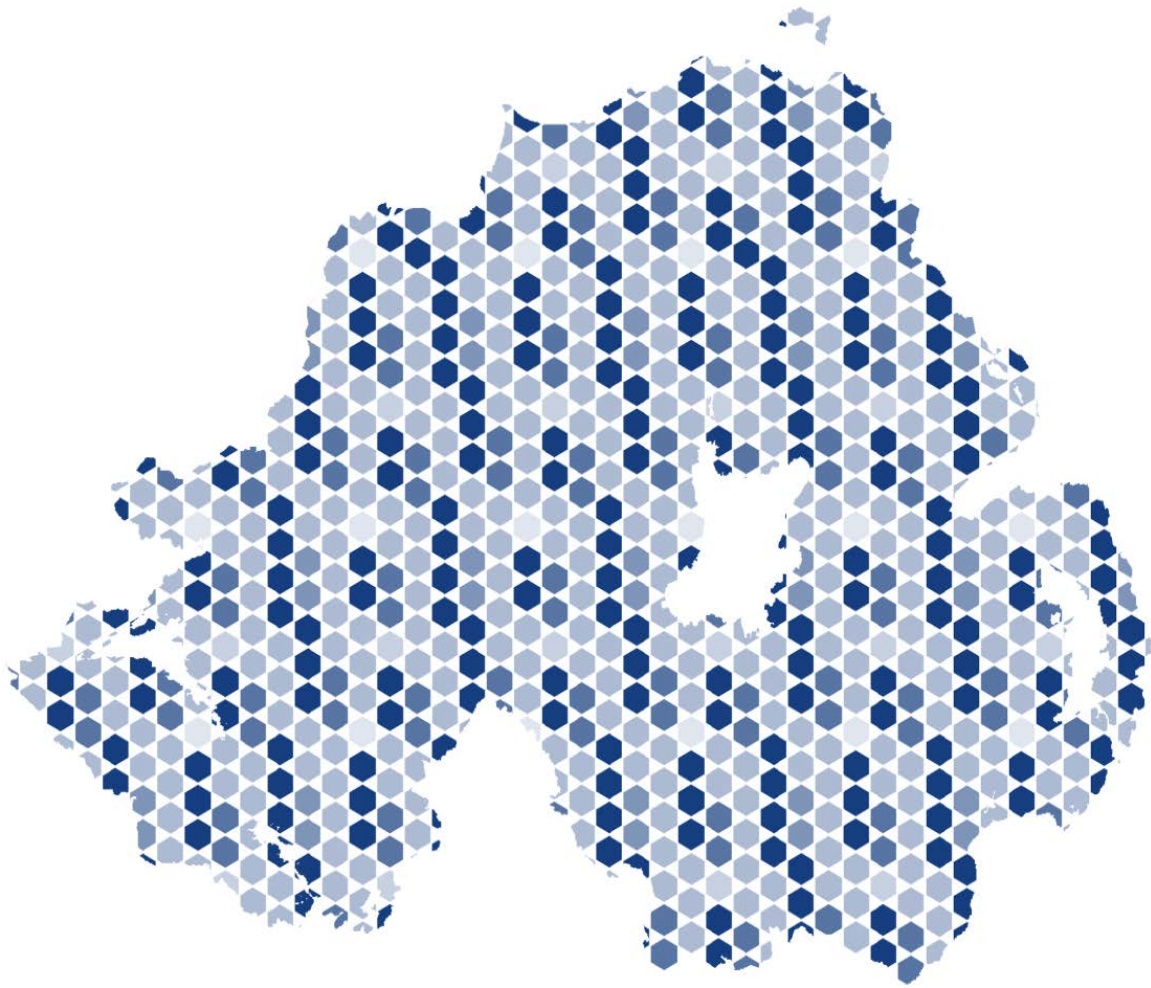


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sperrin Integrated College,
Magherafelt

Maintained integrated, co-educational, all-ability 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection in
April 2015

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, 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. Any significant issues, relevant to the inspection, raised are reviewed by ETI with the governors and senior leaders.

Around 10% of parents (38) and 68% of staff (44) responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of the parents who responded were supportive of the work of the school and commented positively on the care and support provided for their children. All the teaching staff and almost all the support staff who responded expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school, highlighting in particular the inclusive and welcoming ethos and the high levels of staff collegiality and collaboration. The concerns raised in a minority of the parental questionnaires have been discussed with the principal and governors.

2. Focus and purpose of the 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

Sperrin Integrated College was established in 2002 and is situated on the northern side of Magherafelt. The enrolment is currently 501 pupils and the school is regularly over-subscribed for entry at year 8. The pupils come from a wide catchment, centred on Magherafelt and extending across a wide rural area. Almost two-thirds of the pupils enter the school with the expected level in English and mathematics. Approximately 14% have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning, including 29 pupils who have a statement of education need. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals has increased over the past three years to approximately one-quarter of the total enrolment.

The current sixth form enrolment is 78 pupils. Approximately one-half of the year 12 pupils continue into sixth form, in line with the NI average for non-selective schools.

The school participates actively in the Magherafelt Learning Partnership (MLP) to: extend the curriculum provision for Key Stage (KS) 4 and post-16; provide staff with opportunities to collaborate on joint policies and professional development; and enable the pupils to engage in shared education opportunities.

Sperrin Integrated College	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Year 8 Intake	87	79	88	88
Enrolment	495	492	499	501
% Attendance (NI Average see below)	95.5% (91.4%)	95.7% (91.3)	95.5% (92)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	21.2%	19.2%	21%	26.5%
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	46.1% (228)	35.4% (174)	27.5% (137)	13.7% (68)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	23	24	29	29
No. of newcomers	24	24	33	10
<i>Intake²:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	9.2%	16.5%	1.1%	5.7%
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	3.5%	17.7%	2.3%	3.4%
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	72.4%	74.7%	64.8%	63.6%
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	70.1%	72.2%	71.6%	64.8%
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

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

5. Quality of achievement and standards

- Nearly all the pupils are motivated and display positive attitudes to learning. They are extremely well-behaved and engage purposefully with their teachers and peers. Most of them are able to apply their subject knowledge and understanding and, when given the opportunity, make good progress in the acquisition and application of a range of skills. The pupils contribute well in paired and small group activities.
- As they progress through the school, the pupils display leadership and mentoring skills and demonstrate high levels of personal and social responsibility which prepares them well for the next stage of their education. The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are well-motivated and supported to develop their self-confidence and social skills.
- The pupils achieve very good outcomes in public examinations. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE subjects at grades A* to C has been above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools for two out of the past three years. When GCSE English and mathematics are included the achievement is consistently above the NI average for similar schools and has increased by ten percentage points over the same period. Almost all the pupils who take a broad range of vocational qualifications achieve well.
- The attainments of the GCSE pupils entitled to free school meals has fluctuated over the past three years but is generally in line with their cohort.
- There is some variation in the performance of individual subjects at GCSE. While most of the subjects are performing in line with or above their NI averages and one-third are well above, around one-fifth of the subjects are below their respective averages, a few of them well below.
- At GCE A level, over the past three years, the proportion of pupils achieving three or more GCE A levels and equivalents at grades A* to C has been consistently above the NI average for non-selective schools. Last year, the proportion rose significantly to around 30 percentage points above the NI average.
- Over the same period, the majority of subjects at GCE A level are performing in line with or above the NI average at grades A*-C. All subjects are in line with or above the NI average at grades A*-E.
- In English, the standard of attainment of the pupils is a significant strength of the school with the proportion of pupils achieving grades A* to C in GCSE English and English Literature being well above the NI average for similar schools over the past three years. Similarly, at GCE A Level the pupils' performance over the past three years at grades A*-C is consistently well above the corresponding NI average.

- In mathematics, over the same period, the attainment by the pupils has also been above the NI average. The school has identified that over one-fifth of the pupils achieve a GCSE grade at A* to C in either English or maths but not both and, appropriately, has identified this as an area for attention.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning attain well in GCSE and vocational subjects in line with their ability.

6. Quality of provision

- Most of the lessons observed were effective (good or better) in promoting learning; approximately one-third were very effective (very good) and characterised by: carefully planned and well-paced activities; the use of effective and probing questions by the teachers which engaged the pupils in meaningful discussions and challenged them to explain and justify their responses; the use of digital media to stimulate the pupils' curiosity; and opportunities for the pupils to review their work and that of their peers. In these lessons, the pupils contributed confidently and progressed well in their learning, in response to the appropriately high expectations of the teachers.
- In almost one-quarter of the lessons observed where the teaching was less effective (satisfactory) at promoting learning, the lessons were over-directed by the teacher, individual and group tasks were not sufficiently challenging and there was limited consolidation and extension of the learning. As a result, the pupils were unduly passive with missed opportunities to develop their communication skills, independence and creativity.
- The teachers use a range of assessment tools to check the pupils' progress in learning and in most lessons the teachers' feedback encourages the pupils to engage further with the task. There is variation in the extent and quality of the marking of the pupils' work; in the more effective practice the pupils respond positively to the teachers' written comments to improve the quality of their own work. It will be important to continue the sharing of best practice in planning, learning, teaching, and assessment to ensure consistently high quality learning experiences for the pupils.
- In English, the very good quality of almost all of the teaching reflects the high standards achieved by the pupils. The teachers use successfully a range of teaching, learning and assessment strategies to engage and challenge the pupils. The pupils write competently in a range of forms and for a variety of contexts and audiences. They draft and edit work independently to produce pieces of a high quality. Literacy is promoted very effectively across the school through a range of well-conceived opportunities to develop the pupils' communication skills. Enjoyment of reading is fostered through initiatives such as Read On and Literacy Week, and the teachers provide appropriate opportunities to stretch and challenge the more proficient readers.
- In mathematics, there was variation in the quality of the teaching and in the pupils' learning experiences. In the most effective practice, in just over one-half of the mathematic lessons observed, the teachers used a range of effective assessment strategies and the pupils were given appropriate opportunities to justify their thinking. In a significant minority of the lessons observed, there were only limited opportunities for the pupils to develop their reasoning and

problem-solving skills and improve their mathematical understanding. Appropriately, the mathematics department has prioritised the development of its planning and the dissemination of teaching and learning strategies to improve the provision. The entry policy for post-sixteen mathematics is under review at whole school level as there are varying degrees of success in examination outcomes and the department is continually attracting overly low numbers.

- Numeracy is developed effectively across the curriculum through meaningful tasks and a connected learning theme. The pupils use mathematics accurately and effectively in purposeful situations. In addition, they are given well-planned opportunities to apply their skills during numeracy week, mathematics fun days and competitions. The school recognises, correctly, the need to monitor and evaluate more closely the numeracy provision to ensure the actions are effecting improvement.
- A key strength of the very good pastoral provision is the highly consultative and evaluative approach of the pastoral team. As a result, the pupils, parents and staff play an active role in evaluating the provision and contributing to the decision-making processes within the school. The school provides a caring environment and there are respectful working relationships at all levels. There are very effective measures in place to ensure new pupils are welcomed into the school community. The pupils benefit from an extensive range of enrichment activities that develops well their interests, confidence and independence.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early through the effective baseline testing arrangements. They are included in all aspects of the life of the school and are supported well in class by the learning support assistants and through the effective withdrawal classes for literacy and numeracy. The targets and strategies to guide the work of the teachers and learning support assistants within the individual education plans are not set out clearly enough and lack sharpness. Also, there needs to be more effective monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the interventions put in place to support pupils. The small number of newcomer pupils benefit well from the effective additional English support classes provided by a specialist teacher.
- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is effective and well-led; a high priority is given to the promotion of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) careers. The discrete CEIAG programme focuses appropriately on key transition points, the educational needs of each pupil and their access to impartial advice and guidance. The head of the department has identified accurately key priorities to further develop the CEIAG provision. These include: evaluating the effectiveness of the contribution of individual subjects to the CEIAG provision programme; and reviewing the programme of events, guest speakers, mock interviews and industrial/business visits to ensure that they are developing and consolidating well the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the employment, training and education opportunities available. By year 14, most of the pupils have a good understanding of the world of work and the education and employment opportunities that are available to them.

- The school is developing appropriately its curriculum provision to meet better the changing needs and career aspirations of individual pupils. Over the past four years, the school has managed carefully, within budget constraints, its curriculum offer to ensure a sufficient range of applied and general subjects at appropriate levels of qualification to provide the pupils with good opportunities for progression to further education, higher education or employment. Over four-fifths of the leavers access courses in further and higher education, which is significantly above the NI average.

7. Quality of leadership and management

- The senior leadership team (SLT) provides effective strategic leadership within all its areas of responsibility and is committed strongly to meeting the pastoral needs of the pupils and staff, and raising further the pupils' achievements and standards. The SLT has led well the development of the school from its formation, instilling a clear sense of identity and strong integrated ethos. The leadership inspires the respect and confidence of the school community.
- The well-constructed school development plan identifies, through effective consultation, appropriate priorities that focus on raising standards and enhancing the pupils' learning experiences, for example, extending the systematic use of assessment outcomes to inform pupil progress and support. The improvement process is supported well by an appropriate staff development programme. In taking forward this important improvement work, and in light of the inspection findings, the SLT needs to review the key priorities and establish more formal systems of monitoring, evaluation and sharing of best practice in learning and teaching to promote further improvement.
- Most co-ordinators and subject leaders lead well their respective areas of responsibility. While an action-planning process has been established at the middle management level across the school, which is aligned to the priorities in the school development plan, the associated action plans vary significantly in quality and are not based upon a rigorous enough self-evaluation process. As a result, the identified actions lack the required focus to bring about the necessary improvements, especially in the consistency of learning and teaching. Also, the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating progress need to be more explicit, and supported and challenged as necessary by the SLT. It is appropriate that the SLT has identified the need to develop further the capacity of leadership at this level.
- The governors are well informed about the work of the school and about the standards the pupils attain. They play an active role in the school's development and provide appropriate challenge and support for both the principal and the key staff who report to them. 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.

- 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 their concerns are dealt with effectively. They are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address, namely to:

- disseminate further the existing best practice in learning and teaching; and
- develop a more rigorous approach to self-evaluation at middle management level to identify specific targets and strategies to effect improvement.

ETI will monitor the school's progress on the areas for improvement.

Examination performance and other statistical data

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

Based on data held by the school in SIMS³ and verified with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Sperrin Integrated College 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 category⁴. It also shows the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs including English and mathematics (grades A* to C).

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2012	2013	2014
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	69.2	67.1	75.9
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁵</i>	<i>57.8</i>	<i>69.9</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	38.5	47.4	48.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>31.8</i>	<i>45.6</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	93.6	92.1	94.9
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)	50	16.7	46.7

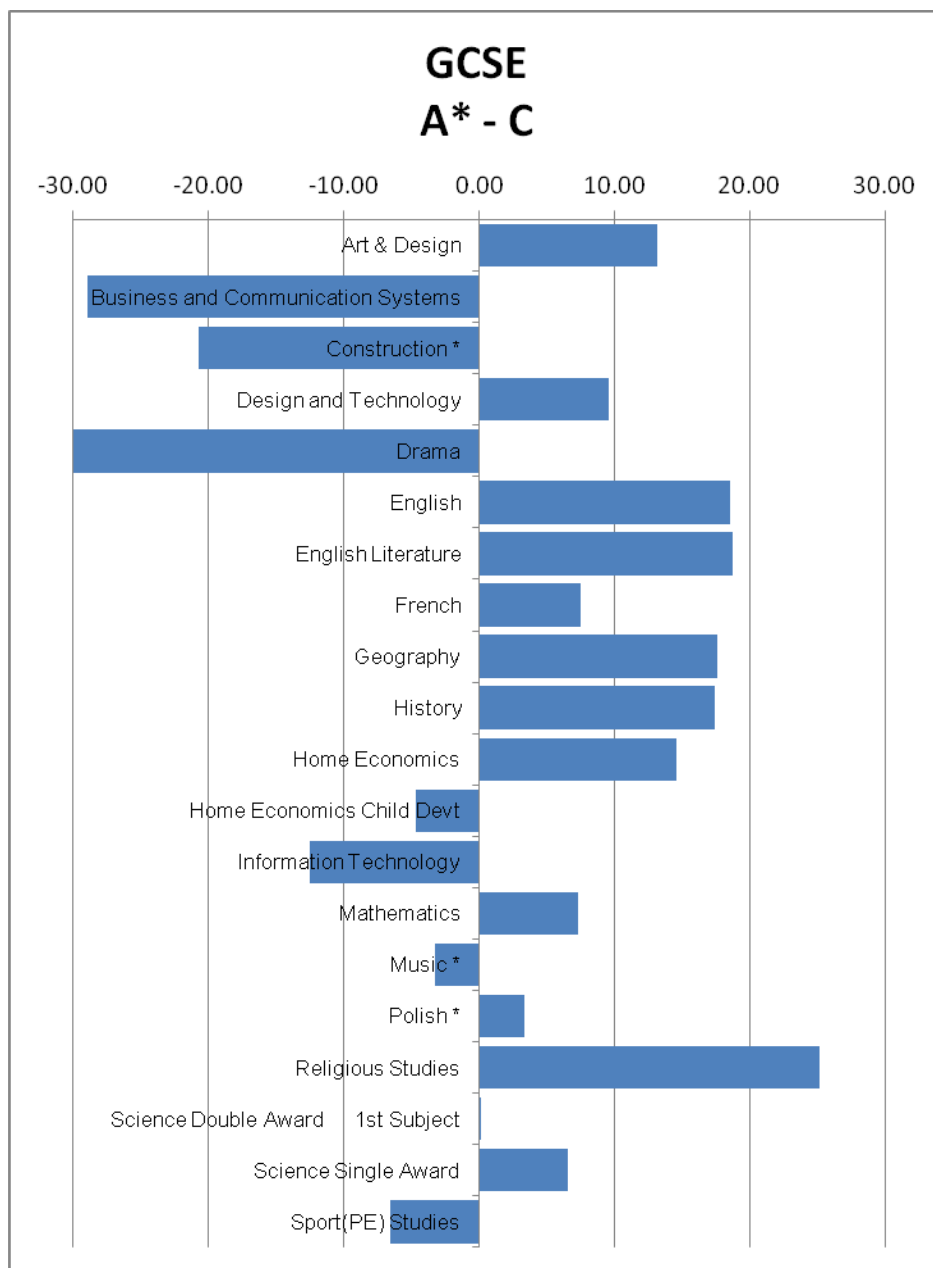
³ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁴ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁵ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to C from 2011-12 to 2013-14

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school in SIMS⁶ and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject at grades A* to C, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in non-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

⁶ SIMS: School Information Management System

Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2011-12 to 2013-14

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

	2011-12 to 2013-14		Total number of entries
	Level 2	Level 1	
Occupational Studies (Business and Service)	96%	100%	23
Occupational Studies (Construction)	97%	100%	31
Occupational Studies (Technology & Innovation)	85%	100%	48
Occupational Studies (Engineering)	93%	100%	14
Occupational Studies (Design & Creativity)	78%	100%	46
Occupational Studies (Environment & Society)	92%	100%	39
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE)	100%	100%	28

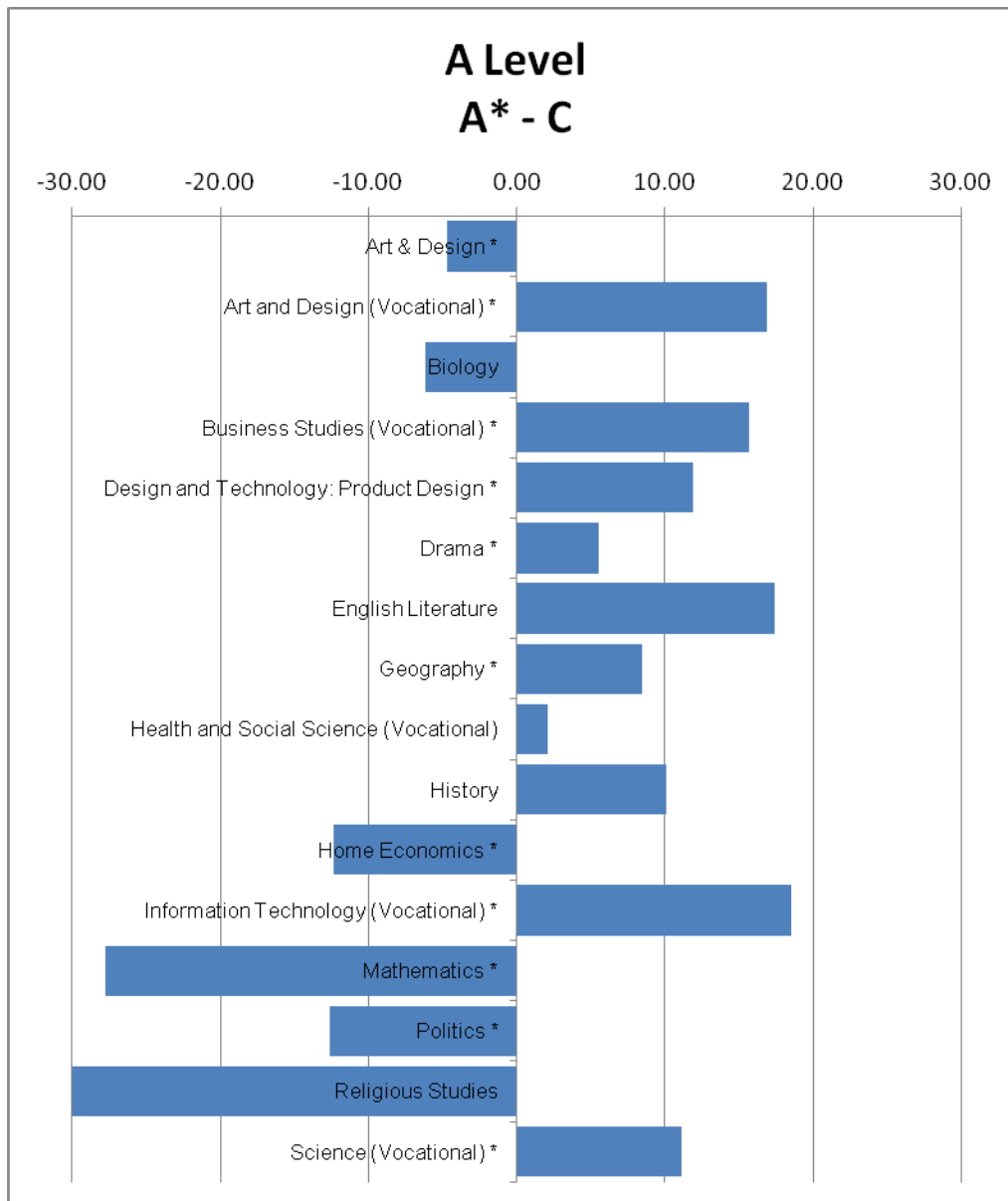
GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2011-12 to 2013-14

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Sperrin Integrated College 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	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	55.9	53.3	75
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	95.5	96.9

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A* to C from 2011-12 to 2013-14

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCE A level subject at grades A* to C, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in non-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 20 entries over 3 years

Other examination results: post-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Sperrin Integrated 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 subject in this table to facilitate comparison.

GCE Subject	2012		2013		2014		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Moving Image Arts	100	100	100	100	100	100	21

Level 3	2012	2013	2014	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE)	100	N/A	100	17

Staying on rate

Based on data held in SIMS by the school and verified 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 non-selective schools from school census returns to DE for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	52.8	52.4
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	77.6	87

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of pupils who leave Sperrin Integrated College to enter further education, work-based learning (training), higher education or employment, or seeking employment, compared with the average for non-selective schools for the academic year 2012/13.

	School % (no)	NI	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 3+ (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	87	13498			
Employment	5.7% (5)	8.6%			
Further Education	49.4% (43)	43.7%	15	14	14
Higher Education	29.9% (26)	22.0%			26
Training	14.9% (13)	18.4%			
Unemployed	0%	3.9%			
Unknown	0%	3.4%			

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