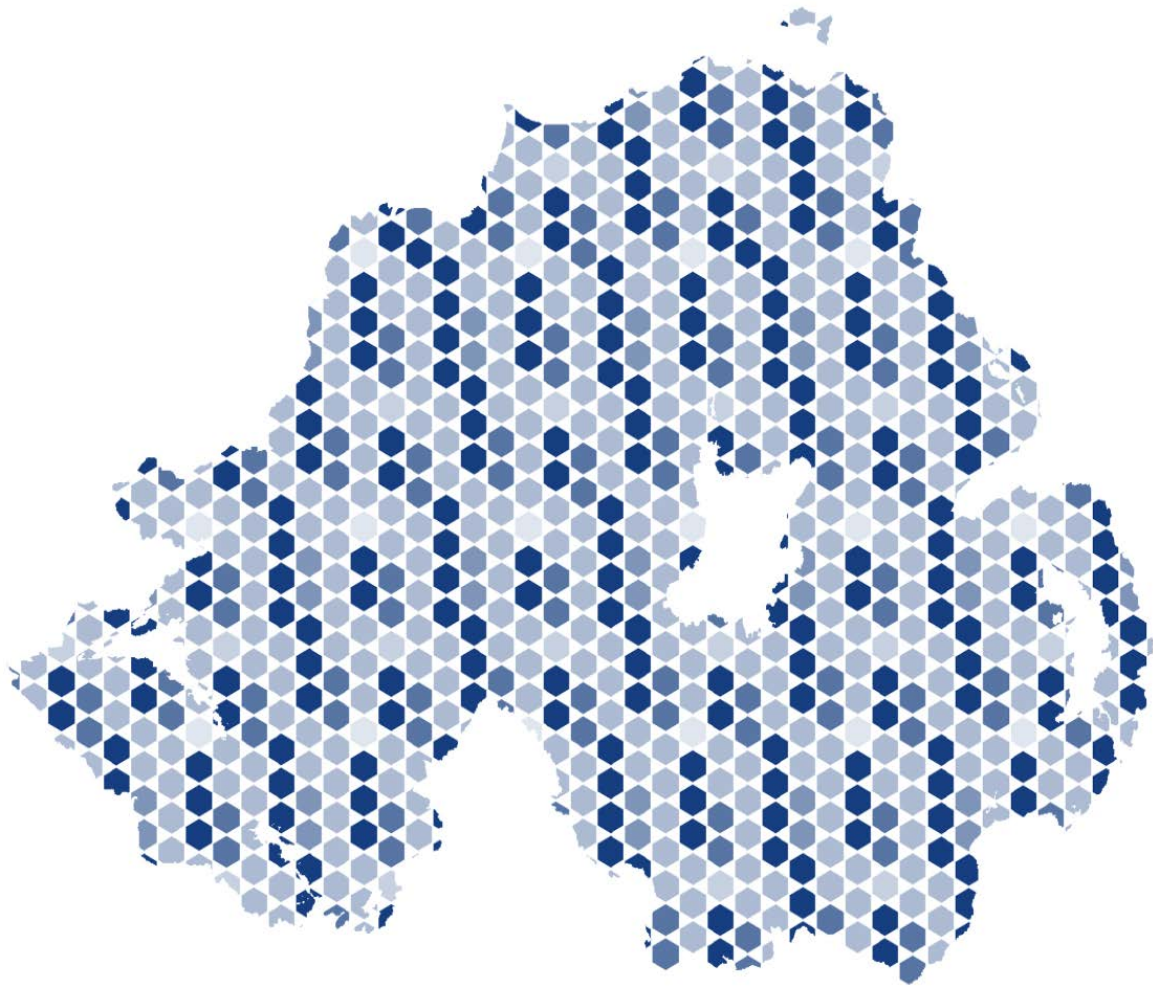


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Aidan's High School,
Derrylin, Co Fermanagh

Non-selective, 11-16, co-educational school

Report of an Inspection in
March 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. Nineteen percent of families (28) and all of the staff responded to the questionnaires; almost all of the responses were positive. The parents who made written comments were positive in support of the school and commented on the caring ethos and strong pastoral care for the pupils. The few issues raised in the staff questionnaires, mainly in relation to communication and resources, were discussed with the principal and representatives of the governors.

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

St Aidan's High School is situated in the village of Derrylin, County Fermanagh and draws its pupils from the village and surrounding rural areas. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals has more than doubled in the last year to just over 26%. Approximately one-half of the pupils (51%) have been identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The school has recently appointed an acting principal and two acting senior leaders who, at the time of inspection, had been in post for less than six months. The governors, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, are considering potential options regarding the educational plan for post-primary schools in the area.

The school demonstrates a commitment to the principles of shared education. Recent changes to post-primary education in the area have restricted opportunities for shared education links and partnerships.

St Aidan's High School	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Year 8 Intake	26	36	37	40
Enrolment	170	177	171	176
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.2 (91.4)	94.2 (91.3)	94.4 (92.0)	N/A
FSME Percentage ¹	9.41	12.99	9.94	26.14
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN ² register	41.18% (70)	53.11% (94)	54.39% (93)	51.14% (90)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	16	18	21	23
No. of newcomers	6	9	*	13
<i>Intake⁴:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English ³ (Number)	*	*	*	-
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics ³ (Number)	*	*	*	*
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English (Number)	84.62% (22)	58.33% (21)	78.38% (29)	20.00% (8)
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics (Number)	80.77% (21)	61.11% (22)	86.49% (32)	25.00% (10)
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Achievements and standards

- The pupils are confident, motivated and have a positive disposition to learning. Their behaviour is exemplary and it is clear they are proud of their school. As they progress through the school, the pupils display increased self-confidence, independence and maturity and are prepared well to contribute positively to the community and the local and wider economy.

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

² Special educational need

³ From 2013, key stage (KS) 2 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 public examinations, the average attainment in five or more examinations at GCSE level, or equivalent subjects, at grades A*-C was below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools (in the same free school meals category) for two of the past three years. In 2014, this attainment was almost 20 percentage points above the average for similar schools. When GCSE English and mathematics at A*-C grades are included, standards over the past three years are broadly in line with the NI average.
- The percentage of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals attaining at the expected standard has been consistently above the NI average for the past 3 years.
- Most of the pupils achieve well in English. The percentage of pupils attaining a grade A*-C in English at GCSE, over the past three years, at 59% is approximately five percentage points above the NI average for similar schools. The department plans very effectively for the learning and teaching, in particular at key stage (KS) 4, and most of the pupils are developing effective oral and written communication skills in English.
- In mathematics, the pupils are motivated and enjoy learning. They attain high standards in public examinations and there has been a notable improvement in the percentage attaining GCSE grades A*-C in the past three years, which remains well above the average for non-selective schools.
- The assessment information, along with the inspection evidence, shows that the pupils acquire, develop and build upon their knowledge, understanding and skills across the subjects as they move through the school. A higher than average number of pupils progress to study GCE A Level and level 3 courses in other schools or further education.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning interact confidently with their peers and are integrated well to the life and work of the school. They attain very well in GCSE courses, in particular mathematics and the vocational subjects.

6. Quality of provision

- Planning, teaching and assessment were effective (good or better) at promoting learning in four-fifths of the lessons observed. The most effective practice is characterised by: good pace and challenge in the learning and teaching; appropriate opportunities for the pupils to work together in engaging activities which promote well their thinking skills; and effective questioning to encourage the pupils to expand their thinking and to ensure that there are opportunities for extended oral responses.
- In the less effective practice (satisfactory or below), in one-fifth of the lessons observed, differentiation is not adequately planned for. In these lessons, the teachers' questioning strategies are less effective, giving pupils too few opportunities to explain their answers and express their opinions. Overall, the use and analysis of assessment data to inform planning, learning and teaching is not used in a consistent manner across the school.

- Literacy and numeracy are appropriately identified as priorities in the school development plan (SDP)⁴; the systems to evaluate the quality of the provision, ensuring that the relevant skills are being developed consistently and effectively across all of the subjects, are not consistently informing the co-ordinators of the quality of the learning and teaching across the school. It will be important for the respective co-ordinators to develop further and implement consistently across the school, systems to robustly monitor the quality of learning and teaching.
- The pastoral provision is a major strength of the school. An inclusive and caring ethos is underpinned by mutual respect between pupils and staff. The strong sense of community is fostered by highly effective links with parents and through extra-curricular activities, which support the personal and educational development of the pupils. The pupils report that they feel safe in school and know who to speak to if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.
- Pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified early. They are supported well by classroom assistants and effective learning support classes which are planned well to address their individual needs. The reading partnership programme is highly beneficial; almost all of the pupils make gains in their reading ability. While individual education plans (IEPs) are in place for each pupil identified as requiring support with aspects of their learning, the plans lack specific detail on the learning and teaching strategies and require further monitoring and evaluation of the intervention strategies to promote improvement.
- The provision for career education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is a key strength in the work of the school. There is effective planning for employability at KS3 and for CEIAG provision at KS4. A framework for progression helps the pupils to develop relevant key skills and personal capabilities. There are well-established links with local employers; all of the pupils benefit from work experience which is matched well to their career aspirations and helps them to make informed choices.
- While the KS4 curriculum has been reviewed to increase the number of vocational courses and raise standards, it does not meet the minimum statutory requirements of the Entitlement Framework (EF). The SDP identifies the need to develop collaboration in order to meet the EF, but it is inappropriate that there are no supporting targets or actions to achieve this. There is some flexibility which allows pupils to access an additional GCSE subject as an extra-curricular option. Overall, the opportunities for the pupils to access a broader curriculum and study courses in collaboration with other local schools or in conjunction with the local further education college are too limited.

7. Leadership and management

- Notwithstanding the early stage of development of the newly formed senior leadership team (SLT), the recently appointed acting school leaders work collaboratively and effectively in their various areas of responsibility. They are highly committed to meeting the pastoral and academic needs of the pupils.

⁴ The SDP complies with the Department of Education School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

- Recent restructuring arrangements have empowered key staff to embark upon an extensive and effective consultation process to inform the new cycle of school development planning. The SLT promote a strong sense of collegiality and inspire confidence and respect amongst staff and the wider school community. At present, senior leaders have multiple areas of responsibility which is limiting the pace of the change. The school has begun appropriately to develop and implement a distributive model of leadership through a review and revision of the roles and responsibilities of co-ordinators and team members.
- While the SDP identifies appropriate priorities for improvement, the associated action plans do not establish clear baseline positions and lack concise strategies with quantitatively and qualitatively measurable targets. The action planning process needs to be developed further to sharpen the focus of the plans and include arrangements to monitor and evaluate progress effectively and to measure improvement regularly and robustly.
- The governors are well informed about, and engaged in, important aspects of the life and work of the school; they promote and value its work in the local community. The governors provide a support and challenge role for the acting principal. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, there can be 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.

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 areas for improvement include the need to:

- share the most effective classroom practices to promote teaching and learning which matches more appropriately to the needs and abilities of all of the pupils;
- develop further the action planning process in order to support effective self-evaluation; and
- broaden the curriculum at KS4 to at least meet the minimum statutory requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision and the school budget, in order to address the current and the future needs of the pupils and the staff.

The school has demonstrated the capacity to effect continued improvement; the Education and Training Inspectorate will continue to monitor the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

Examination performance and other statistical data

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

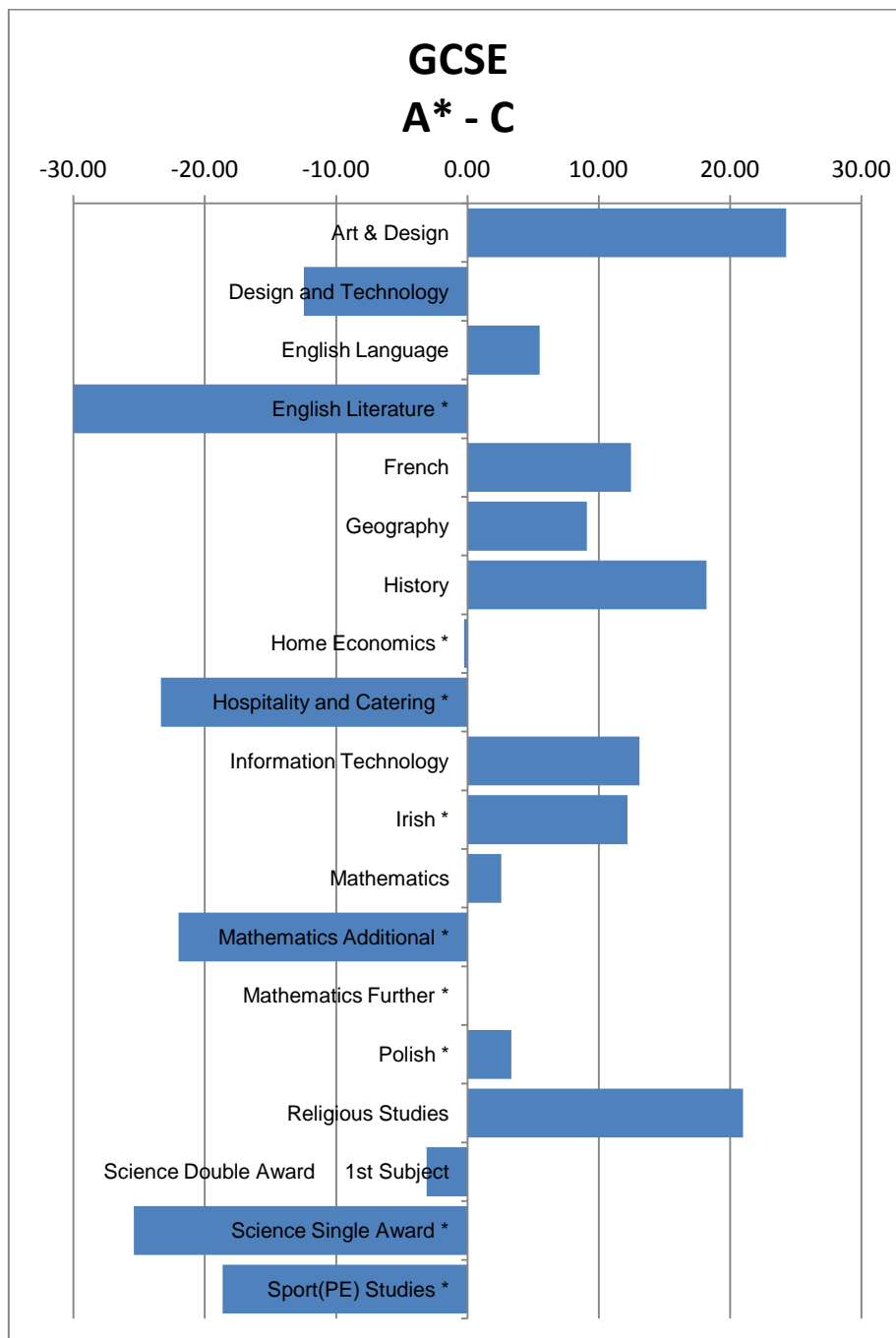
Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving 5 or more GCSEs (A* to C and A* to E) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category⁵.

<i>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</i>	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	55.17	58.33	88
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁵</i>	<i>67.7</i>	<i>69.9</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	44.83	41.67	48
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>45.2</i>	<i>45.6</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	93.1	94.44	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)	50	25	33.33

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 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 and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject at grades A*-C, in all examination 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 the NI comparative 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

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

Level 2	2012	2013	2014	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
BTEC Construction	-	-	100	16
Occupational Studies	100	75	85.71	37
Industrial Studies	100	100	-	10

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils from St Aidan's High School who leave to enter other schools, further education, work-based learning (training), or employment or are seeking employment. The figures are compared with the average for non-selective schools in Northern Ireland for the academic year 2013/14.

	School	2013/2014 NI	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)
Total number of leavers	36	13498		
Employment	0	8.6%		
Other Schools	41.7%	-		15
Further Education	33.3%	43.7%	1	11
Higher Education	0	22.0%		
Work-based learning (Training)	25%	18.4%	9	
Unemployed	0	3.9%		
Unknown	0	3.4%		

Health and safety

- There is a need to carry out a health and safety risk assessment, focussing on better securing the site and improving access control.

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