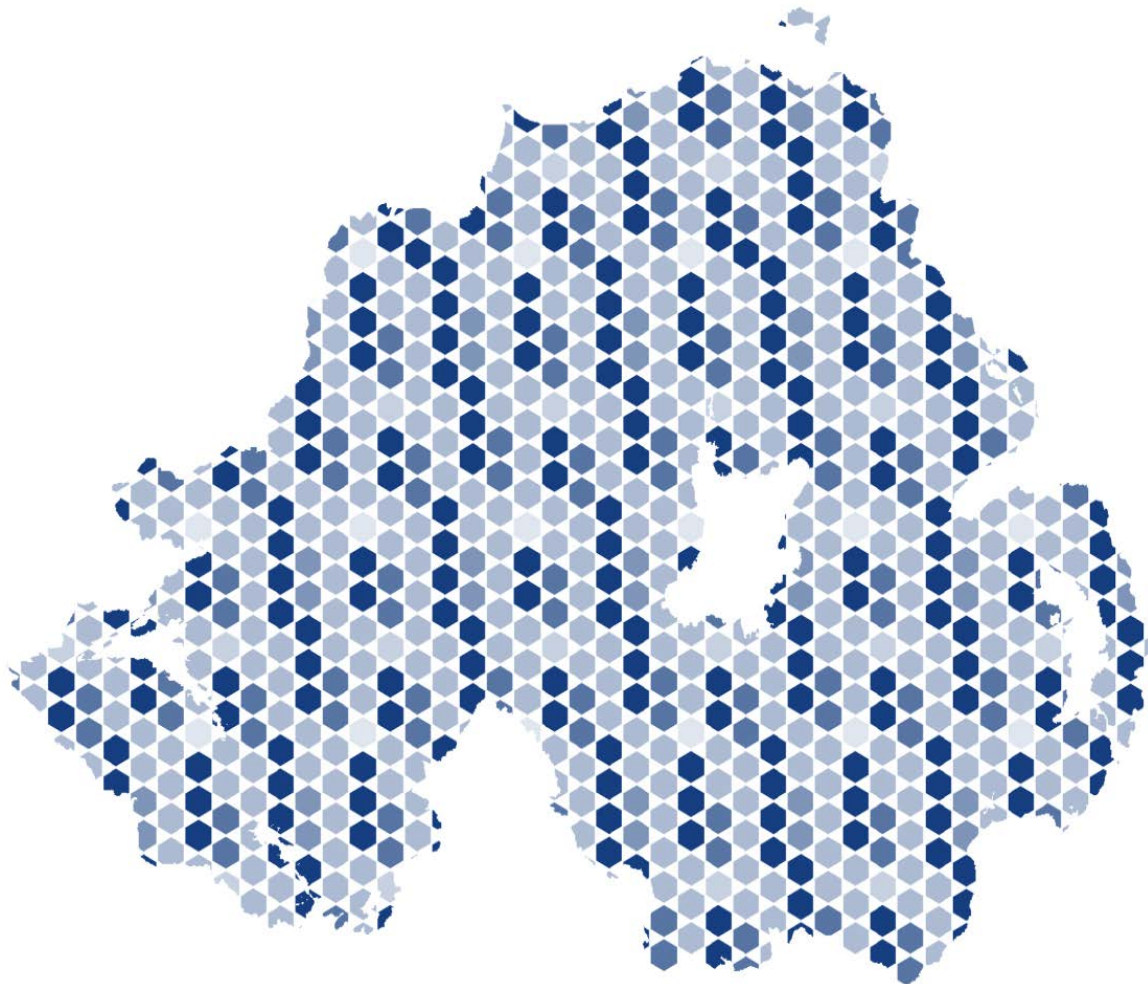


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Malachy's College

All Boys' Selective 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection in
March 2014



Providing Inspection Services for

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



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	944	49	5 ⁽¹⁾	15
Teachers	67	24	36	7
Support Staff	45	24	53	*

* fewer than 5

2. Context

St Malachy's College is situated at the bottom of the Antrim Road in Belfast, drawing pupils from the surrounding areas of north Belfast and from a wider geographical area including south and west Belfast and from outside the city. The school is increasingly over-subscribed and the enrolment has risen slightly over the past three years.

St Malachy's College	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Year 8 Intake	155	151	154	156
Enrolment	1025	1024	1033	1064
% Attendance (NI Average)	94.0 (92.6)	95.6 (93)	94.8 (92.9)	95.4
FSME Percentage ²	9.66	9.86	9.00	7.33
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	7 (72)	10.7 (110)	8.9 (92)	9.8 (105)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	21	23	24	36

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 questionnaire may be low

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

No. of newcomers	*	0	*	*
<i>Intake:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	62.6	54.3	68.2	26.9
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	86.5	79.5	85.7	44.2
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	98.7	99.3	99.4	92.3
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	99.4	100	100	94.2 ³
<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	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

5. Achievements and standards

- The boys are highly motivated with high levels of maturity and self-confidence. They have well-developed personal and social skills and demonstrate excellent learning behaviours. They take pride in their work and respect their environment. They work independently, in pairs and in groups, in an effective way, showing support and concern for others. They reflect critically and maturely on their learning and respond eagerly to constructive feedback from their teachers and peers. The important contribution of the pastoral provision to supporting learning is evidenced by the boys managing and taking responsibility for their own learning and developing a broad range of independent learning skills. They benefit from applying their skills and learning in relevant contexts, and from challenge to their own prejudices to develop their sense of fairness and open-mindedness. They participate, in large numbers, in an extensive range of extra-curricular and curricular enrichment activities, taking on roles and responsibilities maturely, which contributes significantly to their physical, spiritual, social and cultural development, preparing them well as contributors to society.

³ 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.

- As a result of a comprehensive range of appropriate strategies designed to raise standards, the school's performance in GCSE has improved significantly over the past three years and is in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average⁴. At grades A*-B, most subjects demonstrate an improving trend and the majority are in line with or above the NI average for boys in selective schools. The school has introduced appropriate measures to address the variation in performance across subjects and to increase the achievement for all subjects at grades A*- B, thereby preparing the boys better for progression to A level.
- At GCE A level, the percentage of boys achieving three grades at A*-C over the past three years is in line with the average and most of the subjects are in line with or above their corresponding NI averages. The school is working effectively to improve the outcomes particularly at AS level, for example, through a suite of effective post-16 support programmes, which are designed to increase the below-average staying-on rate from year 13 to year 14. The boys entitled to free school meals achieve well especially at A level. Those who are identified with special educational needs make very good progress and, at A level, their attainment is in line with or above that of their peers.

6. Provision

- Most of the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to outstanding with one-half of the lessons being very good or better. In the most effective practice, the teachers plan effectively and set the learning in meaningful contexts to engage and challenge the boys, and use purposeful exposition and effective questioning to develop and deepen understanding. The teachers use ICT innovatively to enhance, support and encourage participative approaches to learning as exemplified through the boys' skilful use of digital tablets to support their learning.
- There is a well-structured, effective cycle of assessment and the teachers use information well to track the progress made by all of the boys and plan personalised interventions, actions and support. The teachers' adept analysis of performance data helps them to effect significant improvement in the quality of the teaching and in the outcomes achieved, through the setting of precise individual targets to raise the boys' expectations, and by identifying specific aspects of their subjects to address.
- The systematic promotion of literacy and numeracy, through appropriate policies and action plans, develops associated skills throughout the school. The effectiveness of the school's strategies are monitored and evaluated, and appropriate improvements are identified. As a result, the boys communicate orally, and in their written work, to a high standard across all subjects. There are limited opportunities to develop the boys' numeracy skills more widely across the curriculum; the school has identified the need for a whole-school numeracy focus and is planning accordingly. Boys, at all key stages, who are identified as underachieving in literacy or numeracy, benefit from support programmes which are effective in helping to raise standards.

⁴ See Appendix for data: note that when averages are compared, they are with the average for non-selective or selective schools, as appropriate, with a similar proportion of the pupils entitled to free school meals.

- In English, the collegial and collaborative approach to raising standards is reflected in the outcomes which, at GCSE level, are consistently above the NI average, and for A level English Literature have improved significantly over the past four years to well above the NI average. In mathematics, a particular strength is the progress made across the key stages resulting in the boys achieving high standards in public examinations, especially at A level. At GCSE level the standards are consistently in line with the NI average, and for additional mathematics, the outcomes have improved significantly to above the NI average.
- The pastoral care provision in the school is of a very high quality. By successfully linking the pastoral and curriculum provision, a holistic approach to supporting the boys in developing their wider skills and dispositions in their learning, is secured. The boys participate in numerous projects with a wide and varied range of organisations locally and globally, thus making a valuable contribution to their school, developing an appreciation for equality and diversity, and promoting good community relations. The pastoral provision is kept under review through systematic monitoring, including consulting with the boys and their parents, and through the highly effective use of quantitative and qualitative data. The taught pastoral provision is tailored effectively to the needs of the boys and is proactive in raising their awareness of the social and emotional challenges which they and others face. In discussions with the boys, they indicated strongly that they know whom to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.
- The boys identified with special educational needs and additional learning needs benefit from a wide range of support available to them in class, through mentoring, the learning resource centre, the pupil learning centre, homework and after-school clubs, and links with external agencies. The special educational needs team are proactive in devising programmes to meet the specific, personal needs of boys and in sharing this good practice across the school. The classroom assistants work flexibly and very effectively with the boys to provide high levels of care within and beyond the classroom. As a result of extensive professional development, the learning support staff and mentors use effectively a range of learning strategies to help the boys with their work and track the progress they make to inform future support.
- The boys make well-informed career decisions in line with their interests, employment aspirations and abilities, which are increasingly being well-supported through the mentoring and tutorial system. They benefit from access to relevant advice and guidance, with a strong focus on STEM-related progression opportunities which is provided through an effective and well-resourced programme of employability and careers education, information advice and guidance. The programme comprises extensive links and partnerships with employers, other educational providers and agencies, and is planned effectively by the careers team and well-tailored to the needs of the boys.

- Across the key stages, there is a broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs, interests and abilities of the boys, characterised by a strong ambition for each boy to fulfil his potential. The school is meeting the requirements of the entitlement framework, and through collaboration with local schools, further education colleges and businesses, is able to offer the boys relevant curricular choice in line with their career aspirations. Increasingly, the curriculum provision is being extended, with the inclusion of relevant vocational courses, to ensure that all of the boys are prepared better for the next stage of their education, training and employment.

7. Leadership and management

- The school development plan (SDP)⁵ sets a clear and focused direction for the work of the school. The key priorities and associated targets are appropriate and are informed fully by a rigorous and regular analysis of pastoral and performance data and widespread consultation. First-hand evidence informs self-evaluation leading to improvement by leadership at all levels and by individual teachers, and is central to the school's improvement process.
- The principal and senior management team (SMT) together provide diligent strategic leadership by promoting very effective strategies to raise standards and improve provision through the development of a whole-school culture of quality assurance and self-evaluation. The work of the SMT is focused appropriately on achieving high-quality learning and teaching, and providing well-conceived continuing professional development of all staff. The SMT play a leading role in enabling improvement by monitoring and mentoring the work of individual departments, within a collegial culture of support and challenge. The principal provides outstanding strategic leadership; he leads by example and inspires the commitment and confidence of the staff, pupils and parents to continuing improvement, based on a clear and perceptive understanding of the current and future needs and interests of the boys, and the local and wider community. He communicates clearly the expectations of the school to all staff and pupils.
- The capacity of the middle managers to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work is developing well. The future development of their work continues to be the need to inform and support the dissemination of the very good and better planning and practice observed during the inspection to enable greater consistency throughout the school and to raise further the standards achieved.
- The parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in all the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors carry out their duties professionally; they have a shared vision for the developing role of the school within the local and wider community. They are well informed about the work of the school and provide high levels of leadership, support and challenge to enable ongoing development and improvement.
- 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.

⁵ The SDP meets fully the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

8. Conclusion

In most of the areas inspected the quality of the education provided by this school is very good and the quality of pastoral care is outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

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) with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁶. It also shows the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs including English and mathematics (A* to C).

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2011	2012	2013
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	99.3	98.7	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	82	91.9	92.3
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>94.9</i>	<i>93.7</i>	<i>93.7</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	79.9	91.2	90.4
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>93.7</i>	<i>91.3</i>	<i>91.3</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	94.2	97.3	98.1
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)	86.7	79	93.3

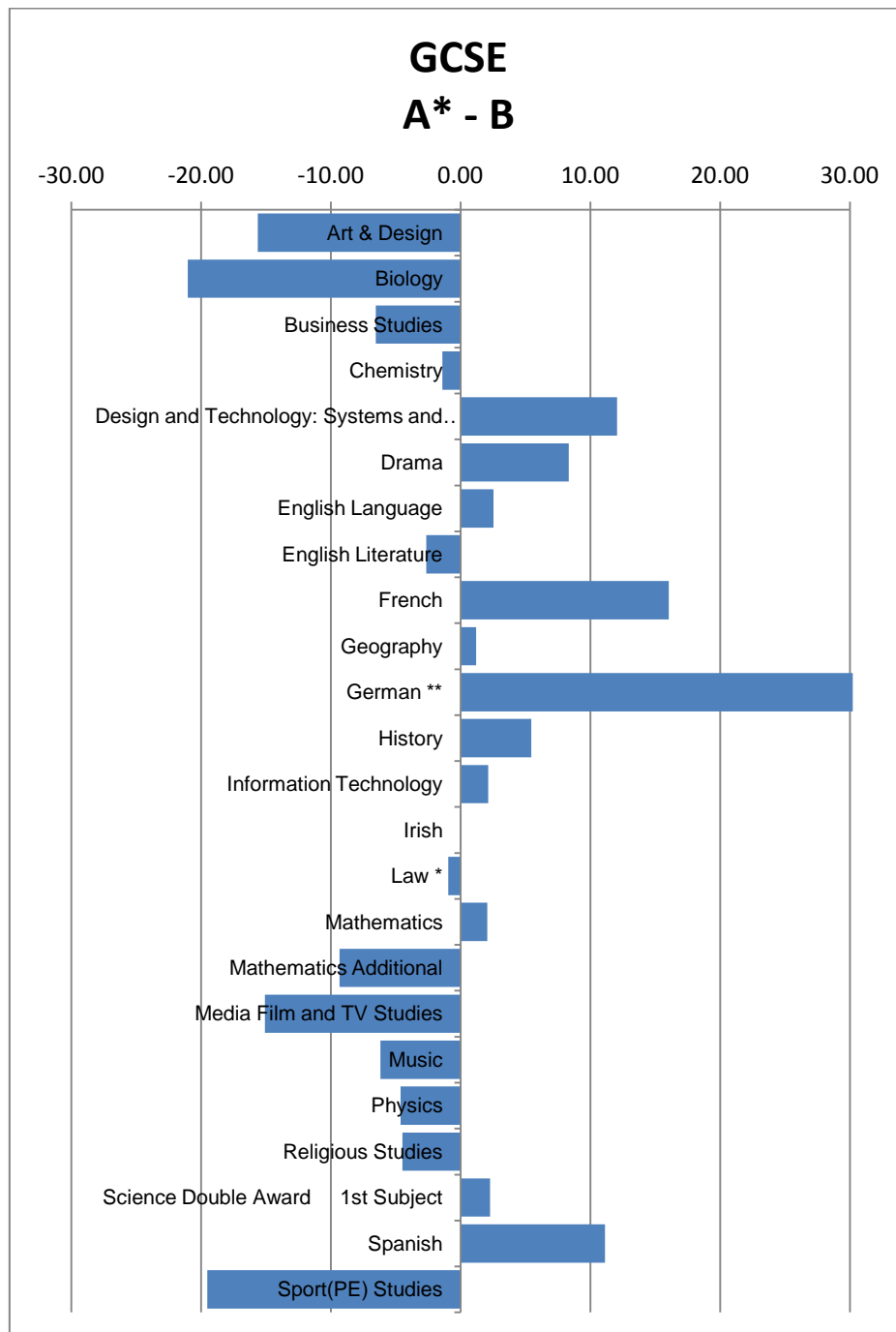
Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks

⁶ 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

**indicates fewer than 5 entries in one of the past 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. The table compares that percentage with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁷.

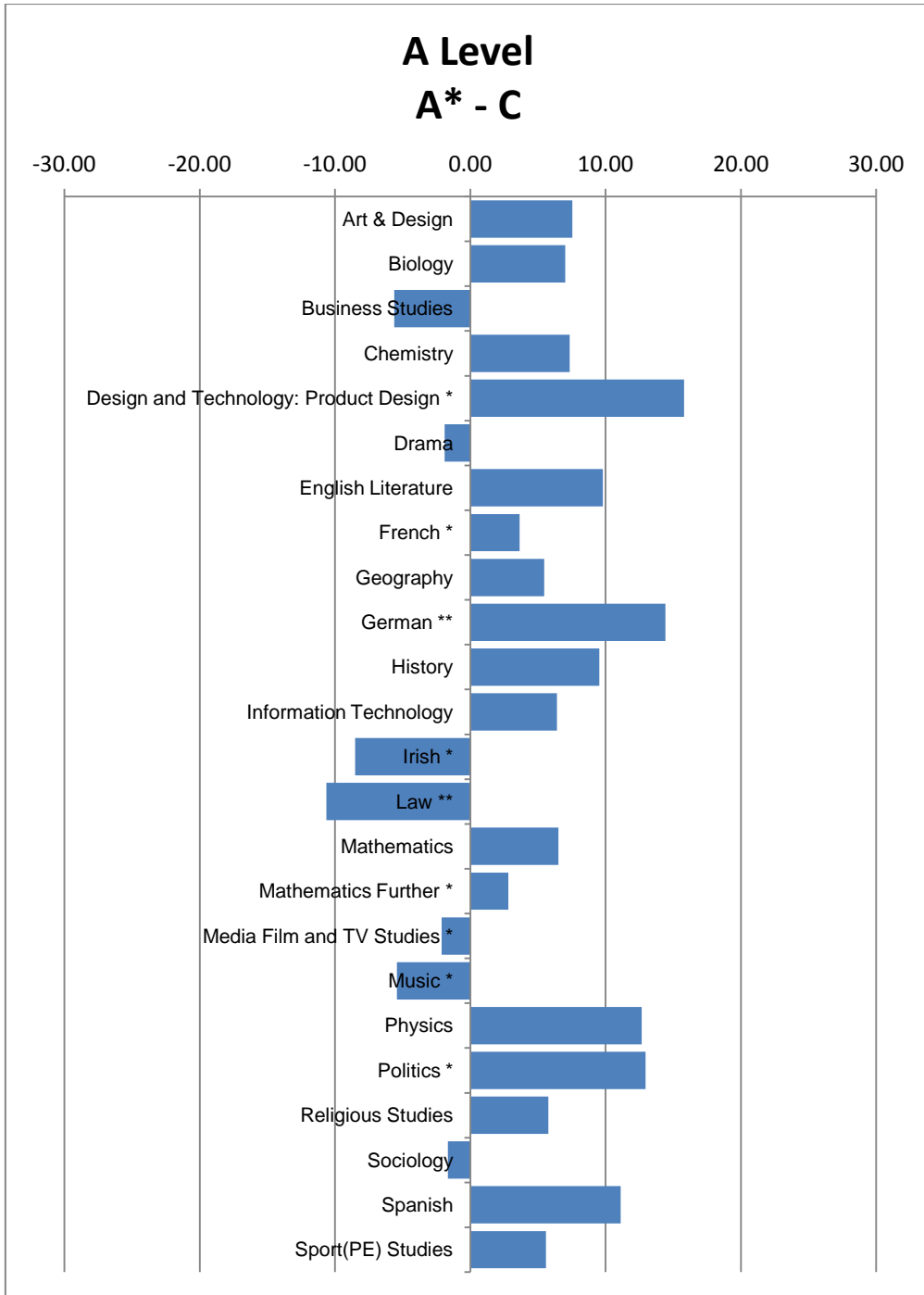
GCE A Level or equivalent	2011	2012	2013
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalentents in at least 3 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	81.1	74.5	72.9
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>78.0</i>	<i>75.2</i>	<i>75.2</i>

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.

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



*indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

** indicates fewer than 5 entries in one of the past 3 years

Other examination results: post-16

The table below shows achievements by the pupils in another examination; no benchmarking data for this examination is available.

GCE Subject	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-C	% A*-C	
Moving Image Arts	81.8	100	100	23

Staying-on rate and leavers' destinations

The tables below for leavers' destinations and staying on rates are based on data held by the school and verified by ETI and are compared with the appropriate NI average for selective schools.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	95	98.1
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	94.9	80.2

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			132
Employment	3.8	10.6	14
Further Education	19	12.9	17
Higher Education	72.7	68.9	91
Training	1.5	0	0
Unemployed	1.6	4.5	6
Unknown	1.4	*	*

*fewer than 5

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