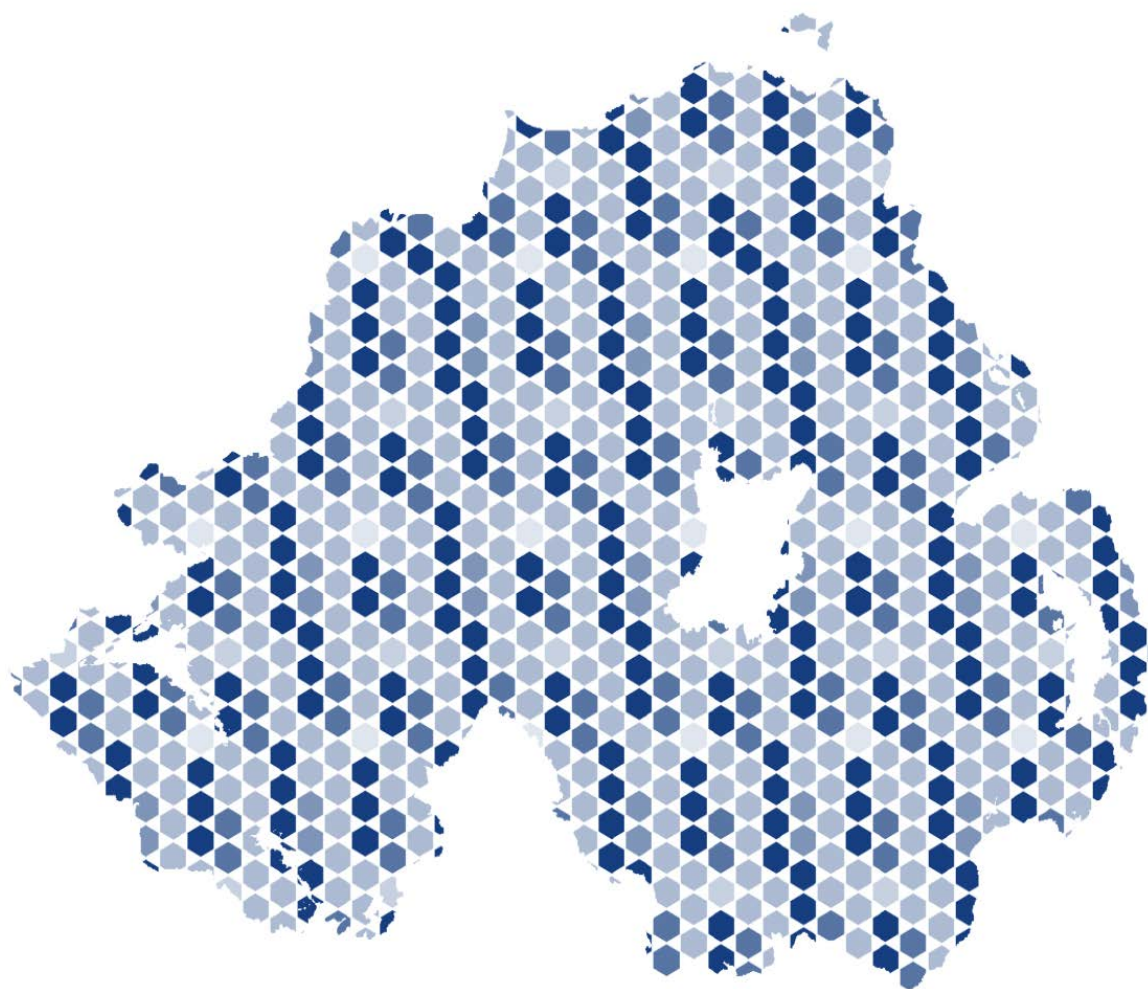


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Mary's College, Irvinestown

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

Report of an Inspection in
April 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.eti.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, staff with specific responsibilities, a group of parents and community representatives.

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. Nine percent of families (12) and all of the staff responded to the questionnaires; nearly all of the responses were positive. The parents who made written comments were positive in support of the school; in particular, they highlighted the caring ethos, pastoral care and support for the pupils. The staff questionnaires were wholly positive about the school and its work. The responses to the questionnaires were shared with the principal and representatives of the 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
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

3. Context of the school

St Mary's College is a co-educational, non-selective maintained school and draws most of its pupils from Irvinestown, Ederney and the surrounding rural area. The region is designated in the top 25% of the most socially and economically deprived areas of Northern Ireland (NI). The school currently has 153 pupils enrolled. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) has increased over the past years and is approximately 50%. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is almost 48%, which is above the NI average for non-selective schools. Since September 2014, the principal has been on a temporary secondment and the vice-principal has taken on the role of acting principal.

The school is an active partner in the Fermanagh Learning Community, has links with the South West College in Enniskillen and also has collaborative arrangements within the Omagh Learning Community.

The school is committed to the principles of shared education and links routinely with local primary and post-primary schools in offering shared education opportunities for the pupils.

St Mary's College	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Year 8 Intake	21	26	28	26
Enrolment	161	187	182	153
% Attendance (% NI Average)	92.3 (91.4)	91.4 (91.3)	91.4 (92.0)	n/a
FSME Percentage ⁴	34.8	31.0	35.2	50.3
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	49.4 (82)	41.7 (78)	40.1 (73)	47.7 (73)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	15	17	21	25
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*
<i>Intake⁵:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	5.3	4.2	0.0	0.0
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	5.3	8.3	3.7	7.7
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	63.2	66.6	37.0	72.0
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	57.8	66.6	55.5	60.0
<i>Source:</i> data as held by the school.				

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Quality of achievements and standards

- The pupils are well-motivated and demonstrate a positive disposition to their learning. When given the opportunity, they can articulate and discuss their learning and work well in pairs and small groups. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities, including those arising from strong community links, through which the pupils are developing positive social and personal skills. During the inspection, their behaviour was exemplary

⁴ The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals

⁵ 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

- Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE examinations or equivalent at grades A* to C has been well above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for non-selective schools in the same free school meal band. In two of the last three years, when English and mathematics are included, the percentage of pupils attaining grades A* to C at GCSE or equivalent is similarly above the NI average for similar non-selective schools.
- The attainment in GCSE examinations by pupils entitled to free school meals has fluctuated significantly over the last three years; in two of the last three years it has been below the NI average.
- In English, the pupils achieve well and the three year average for GCSE English at grades A* to C has been more than 5% above the NI average for similar schools. In two of the last three years, while only a small number of pupils have entered English Literature, all of them achieved success at grades A* to C.
- In mathematics, a minority of the pupils make insufficient progress during Key Stage (KS) 3 to enable them to progress and achieve their full potential at GCSE. The achievement of the pupils in GCSE mathematics at grades A* to C, over the last three years, is well below the NI average for similar schools. In 2014, there was a significant improvement in the pupils' attainment which is now in line with the NI average for non-selective schools.
- In September 2012, the school introduced post-16 provision. The percentage of pupils in this first cohort achieving three or more GCE A levels or equivalents at grades A* to C was below the NI average for non-selective schools. The A level results in four of the six subjects provided are significantly below the respective NI averages. All of the pupils in year 14 achieved two or more vocational A level equivalents at grades A to E.
- The numbers of pupils who progress to higher and further education are broadly in line with the NI average for similar schools.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning attain GCSE accreditation across a range of subjects. The internal school data indicates that all pupils with special educational needs make progress commensurate with their ability.

6. Quality of provision

- Planning, teaching and assessment were effective (good or better) at promoting learning in 87% of the lessons observed. The most effective practice is characterised by: well-planned activities focused on optimising the learning for all pupils; good pace and appropriate challenge to enable progression in their learning; meaningful contexts which build on prior knowledge and engage the pupils; and opportunities for the pupils to reflect on and discuss their learning.
- In the less effective practice (satisfactory or below), in 13% of the lessons observed, the teaching is over-directed, the pupils spend too much time completing tasks and worksheets leading to low levels of engagement and the planning does not cater well enough for the full range of abilities.

- Overall, the use and analysis of assessment data to inform planning, learning and teaching and to track pupil attainment is not sufficiently developed or embedded across the school.
- Literacy is a well-established whole-school priority and reading, spelling and writing-for-success are promoted effectively in all areas of learning. The opportunities for talking and listening, however, for the pupils to develop further their oral and inter-personal skills are underdeveloped.
- Within English, the planning is effective and promotes progression. In the better practice, teaching and learning is informed by, and builds on, the assessment of prior learning, and the pupils are appropriately challenged and supported to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding by extending their responses. It will be important to monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision in English, through a range of first-hand evidence, to ensure consistent, high quality learning experiences for the pupils.
- While the teachers have received appropriate training to help them identify where numeracy naturally occurs within their subject areas, more needs to be done to ensure that there are more consistent approaches to numeracy across the school. During the inspection, most of the teachers used their planning to good effect to identify opportunities for the pupils to develop and apply numeracy in their subject. In a few of the lessons observed, opportunities to augment the pupils' mathematical concepts and skills were not exploited fully enough.
- In the good or better (71%) mathematics lessons observed good use is made of active learning strategies. Use of interesting and meaningful assignments engages the pupils well in their learning, particularly when good questioning strategies are also employed. In a minority of the lessons observed, however, the provision for mathematics requires improvement. In the less effective lessons (satisfactory or below), insufficient use is made of formative assessment to plan for the pupils' learning and, consequently, the learning intentions are not appropriate for the activities being completed. Also, there is insufficient differentiation for learning.
- The staff are highly committed to ensuring the pupils are well supported and their emotional health and well-being needs are effectively met. A particular strength of the pastoral care provision is the pupils' valuable contribution to, and participation in, both the mentoring programme and the school council. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to consider and discuss relevant issues and contribute appropriately to the formation of school policies. The wide range of extracurricular activities supports effectively the development of the talents, skills and dispositions of the pupils as well as raising their confidence and self-esteem.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning work well alongside their peers and are integrated fully into all aspects of school life. The individual education plans (IEPs) contain appropriate strategies to underpin the pupils' progress in their learning. The targets set within the IEPs, however, are not sharply enough focused on the individual needs of the pupils and require more effective measurement and evaluation of the pupils' progress and the value of the learning, teaching and intervention strategies used. The school supports well those pupils at risk of marginalisation through a range of flexible pastoral and educational strategies which are effective and ensure their inclusion and full participation.

- The pupils have access to a good range of careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) through the taught careers lessons, targeted especially at the key transition years, and from external advisors. There are appropriate careers events and speakers throughout the school year and across the various year groups, which are organised independently and through effective schools partnerships. At KS4, the pupils have insufficient workplace experiences and the school has appropriately decided to re-establish work experience to include all of the pupils.
- An appropriately broad and balanced curriculum is in place at KS3. At KS4, the school is meeting the minimum requirements of the Entitlement Framework (EF); although the pupils undertake some level 2 courses through the South West College and through collaborative arrangements with other schools, the range of curriculum choices are much too narrow.
- At post-16, through collaborative arrangements the curriculum currently meets the minimum statutory requirements of the EF and the pupils have access to a range of courses. However, the small class sizes limit opportunities for the development of the pupils' wider skills and capabilities. The number of pupils accessing post-16 courses falls well short of the Department of Education minimum requirements and is therefore deemed not sustainable. Moreover, and very importantly, the post-16 provision does not have the Department of Education or employing authority approval.

7. Leadership and Management

- The senior leaders work proactively and with commitment to improve the quality of the provision, raise the pupils' achievements, extend their opportunities for progression and to build the school's links with the community. They inspire confidence and respect amongst staff and the wider school community and are highly committed to meeting the social, pastoral and academic needs of the pupils. The senior leaders have high expectations of the staff and the pupils, which underpin the very effective pastoral care arrangements.
- Recent restructuring has included the formation of a middle leadership team. Although at an early stage of development, the team has embarked upon appropriate middle leadership training and are leading staff in improving further the quality of the provision. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of the teaching and learning is, however, inconsistent across the school and insufficiently rigorous.
- The school development plan (SDP)⁶ has been informed to good effect through extensive consultation to identify and confirm the priorities for whole school improvement. The areas for improvement have been reviewed and prioritised within the three-year cycle and are appropriate. The associated action plans, however, lack concise monitoring and evaluation strategies, including the analysis and use of quantitative data, to assess improvement regularly and robustly.

⁶ The SDP complies with the Department of Education School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010

- The governors are well informed about, and engaged in, important aspects of the life and work of the school. They are aware of the need to develop further a support and challenge role for the senior leaders of the school. However, based on evidence at the time of the inspection, with the lack of approval for the post-16 provision for the current year 13 and 14 pupils, the parents, staff and school community can have, in this regard, limited confidence in the governors. The governors need to continue to consult with the employing authority and the Department of Education on the post-16 provision as a matter of priority.
- 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 know who to speak to 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 areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the standards in public examinations, particularly in GCSE mathematics;
- develop further the consistent use of formative assessment in order to improve the planning, learning and teaching and so meet better the needs of all the pupils;
- monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of provision to raise further the achievements and standards; and
- broaden the curriculum choices at KS4 and continue to consult with the Department of Education and employing authority on the post-16 provision.

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 ETI 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 St Mary's 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 category⁷. 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 exclusions⁸	2012 (*)	2013 (*)	2014 (6)
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	82.4	89.3	93.3
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁷	68.2	69.0	72.0
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	44.1	25.0	50.0
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	33.2	35.0	43.5
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	100	100	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)	43.8	*	25.0

* fewer than 5

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

⁸ The number of pupils whose performance in external examinations has been excluded from statistics for this year

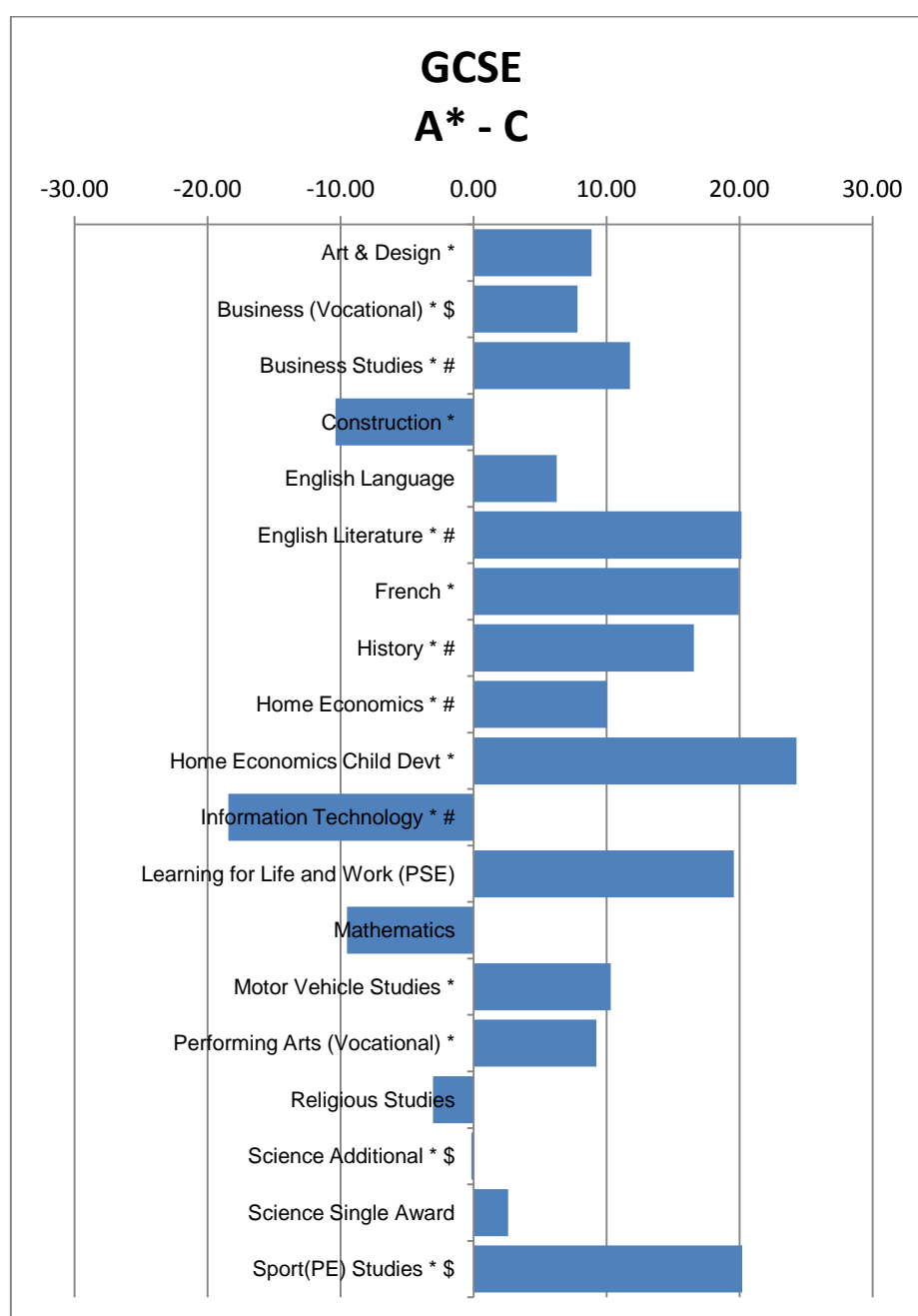
Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2011-12 to 2013-14

Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving pass grades, and grades A* to C and A* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining boards for the subjects in these tables to facilitate comparison.

Level 2	2012	2013	2014	Total entry over 3 years
	% <i>pass</i>	% <i>pass</i>	% <i>pass</i>	
BTEC First Certificate in IT Level 2	100	100	100	51
BTEC First Certificate in Travel and Tourism Level 2	N/A	100	100	57
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (Asdan - level 2)	N/A	100	100	26
Essential Skills Communication Level 2	N/A	100	N/A	5

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* 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

indicates that there were entries in only one of the three years

\$ indicates that there were entries in two of the last three years

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C in 2013-14

Based on data held by the school and verified 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, 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	-	-	81
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	-	-	37
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	-	-	100

Other examination results: post-16

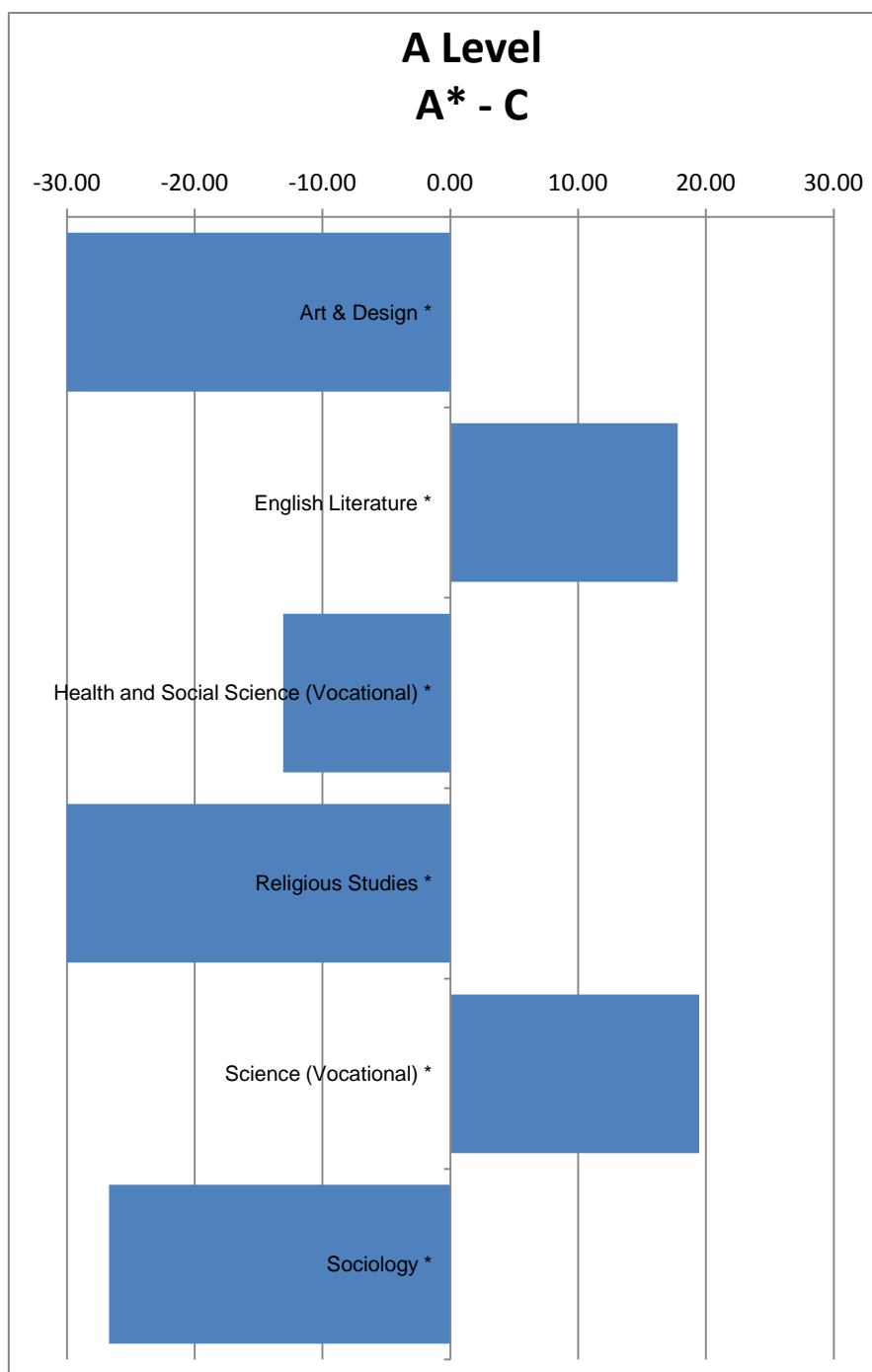
Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils at St Mary's College achieving pass grades in a vocational/applied course equivalent to GCE A level. No average is available from the examining board for the subject in these tables to facilitate comparison.

Level 3	2012	2013	2014 ϕ	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in IT	-	-	100	15
BTEC Level 3 Certificate in IT	-	-	100%	3
BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Sport	-	-	100	9
CCEA Level 3 Certificate of Personal Effectiveness	-	-	100	19

ϕ These results are for one cohort of year 14 pupils

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

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCE subject, in all exam boards, compared with the average 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 that the averages fewer than 20 entries*

NB this chart contains the statistics and averages that are available for this first year of GCE results

Staying On Rate

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils from St Mary's College 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 non-selective schools from school census returns to the Department of Education for the most recent year for which data is available.

	School	NI Average
% Yr12 staying on to Yr13	40.0	52.8
% Yr13 staying on to Yr14	50.0	77.6

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 St Mary's College who leave school to enter further education, higher education, employment, work-based learning (training) or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

St Mary's College, Irvinestown Leavers data 2013-14	School	NI	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 3+ (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	55	13498			
Another school	18.2%		0	10	
Employment	5.4%	8.6%	3		
Further Education	41.8%	43.7%	2	9	12
Higher Education	20%	22.0%		0	11
Work-based Learning (Training)	12.7%	18.4%	7		
Unemployed	0%	3.9%	0		
Unknown/ other	1.8%	3.4%	1		

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