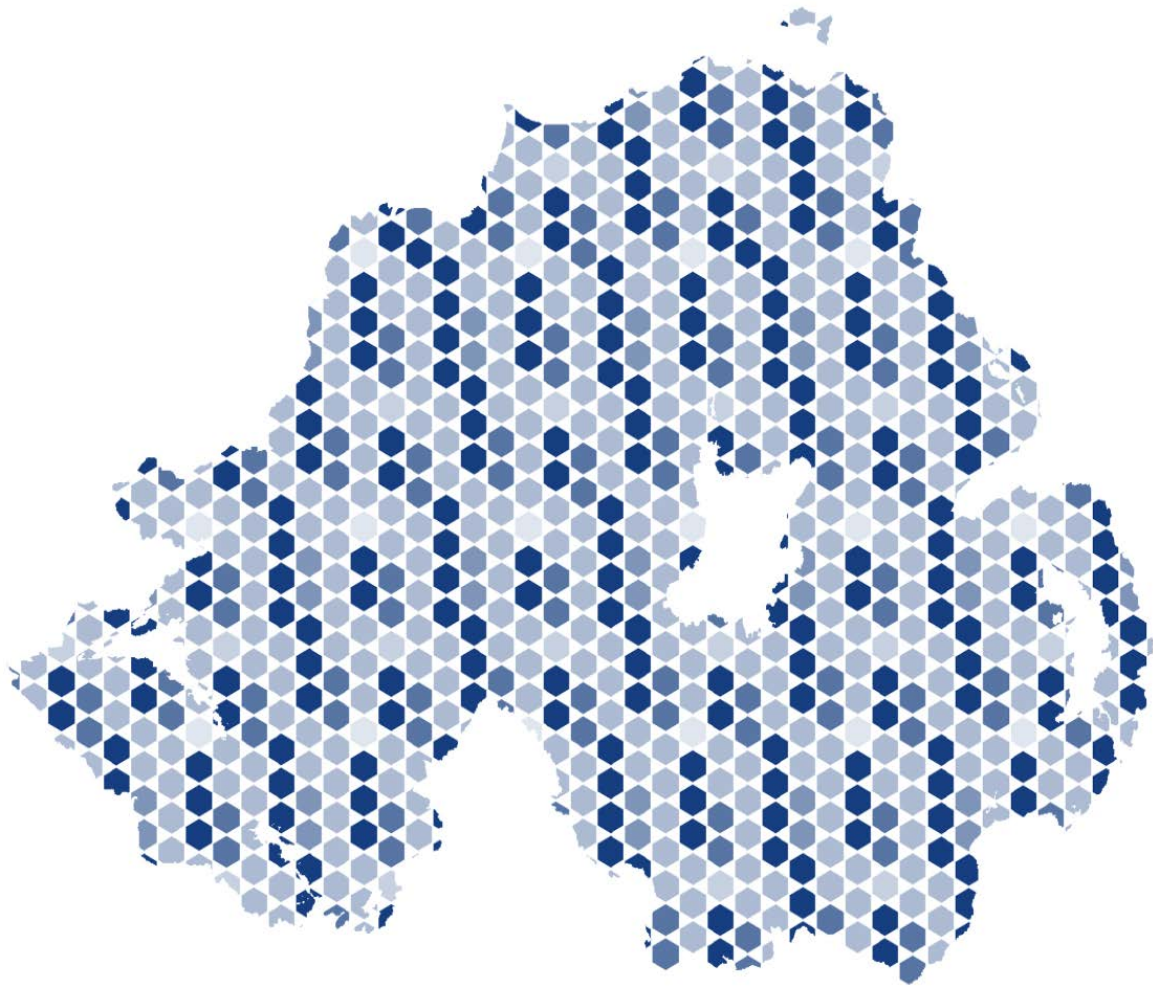


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's High School,
Keady

Catholic maintained, co-educational, 11-18, non-selective,
all-ability school

Report of an Inspection in
November 2013

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 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	738	21 ¹	15%	11
Teachers	64	40	63%	6
Support Staff	17	17	100%	*

* fewer than 5

2. Context

The school provides for a broad range of ability including high achievers and learners with moderate and severe learning difficulties; almost all of the pupils from the nine local primary schools transfer to the school. Just over three-quarters of the pupils enter the school with the expected levels in mathematics and English, which is just below the NI average for primary schools.

St Patrick's High School	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Year 8 Intake	172	134	149	170
Enrolment	1045	1015	1001	1020
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.6 (92.3)	95 (92.6)	95 (93)	n/a
FSME Percentage ²	18.3	18.0	19.7	21.9
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	27 (282)	19 (193)	22 (223)	24 (241)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	49	58	57	57

¹ The Education and Training Inspectorate 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 questionnaires may be low

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

No. of newcomers	7	12	18	31
<i>Intake³</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	18.6	17.9	19.5	2.4
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	20.4	24.6	25.5	2.4
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	79.1	80.6	84.6	70
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	77.3	67.9	82.6	70
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

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	Very Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

5. Achievements and standards

The pupils are confident, motivated learners; their behaviour during the inspection was excellent. They approach their work positively and when given the opportunity, in the majority of classes, they talk about what they learn with a high degree of confidence. They work effectively in pairs and in groups to develop well their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum.

In literacy, the school is working very effectively to make connections across most subject departments and to promote a love of literature. The whole-school approach to raising the pupils' literacy skills is also reflected in the very high standards attained in English and English Literature examinations, particularly at GCSE level. In numeracy and in ICT, almost all of the pupils demonstrate good or better standards of work in line with their abilities; very good standards are attained in GCSE mathematics and GCSE ICT examinations.

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

Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE examinations at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, was significantly above the average for similar schools⁴. Over the past three years, the majority of subjects were more than 10 percentage points above the average at grades A* to C, and a significant minority were more than 20 percentage points above the average. At grades A* to B, the majority of the subjects were more than 10 percentage points above the average and just over one-half were more than 20 percentage points above. Half of the pupils entitled to free school meals achieve at the expected level in GCSE examinations.

Over the past three years, most of the pupils in year 14 were entered for at least three GCE A levels, and the percentage obtaining grades C or better in three subjects increased significantly to 20 percentage points above the NI average. While overall standards are strong, the school has recognised the need to address some variation in attainment at grades A* to C across all of the subjects; the inspection findings endorse this as an appropriate priority.

Those pupils who require additional support with their learning develop their social and personal skills well and most make very good progress, attaining standards at GCSE level comparable with their peers.

A majority of the pupils proceed to higher education which is almost three times the NI average; and just under one-third of the pupils proceed to training which is almost twice the NI average.

6. Provision

In the lessons observed, the planning, teaching, learning and assessment ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. Almost nine-tenths of the lessons seen were good or better; and over one-half were very good or outstanding. The provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT across the school is very good and has an appropriate emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning and sharing good practice. Excellent learning partnerships have been established with the local primary schools, resulting, for example, in year 7 and year 8 transition schemes of work agreed with the primary schools.

In the most effective classroom practice, the teaching is characterised by: high expectations; well-planned work in a suitable context that enables the pupils to build on their prior learning experiences; effective questioning which promotes the pupils' thinking skills; well-chosen teaching strategies matched effectively to the varying learning styles in the class; oral and written feedback from the teachers which helps the pupils to improve; individual education plans (IEPs) based on diagnoses which informs planning for differentiation in learning and teaching; and, effective plenary sessions which reinforce and assess the pupils' learning at the end of the lessons.

In the minority of lessons needing improvement, there was an over-emphasis on whole-class activities which lacked pace and challenge and, in particular, did not take account of the wide range of abilities within the class, or develop sufficiently thinking skills and independence in learning.

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

The school supports well those pupils who are at risk of marginalisation, and has effective strategies in place which ensure their inclusion and retention in school. The quality and level of skills that all pupils with special needs develop to overcome barriers in their learning is very good. The school gives very good attention to nurturing the pupil's emotional development, providing a basis for them to learn successfully and to be included.

Those pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are identified at an early stage and benefit from well-planned individual support, based on IEPs which include effective strategies, provided by the learning support assistants and the learning support teachers.

The school is characterised by an outstanding, caring, inclusive and holistic approach to care. The pupils benefit from very effective pastoral structures, including a well-conceived and wide-ranging rewards system and excellent working relationships with teachers and each another.

On the basis of evidence available at the time of inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance of the Department of Education. The children report that they feel safe and secure in school and know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety and well-being.

The pupils have an excellent understanding of the variety of progression routes available to them and these are well matched to their subject choices. They benefit from careers, education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) of outstanding quality. The school has excellent links with local employers and providers of further and higher education, as well as professional careers advisors who visit the school regularly to help prepare the pupils for further study or work.

A comprehensive curriculum meets well the pupils' abilities, interests and career aspirations and is reviewed regularly to ensure that the provision provides good progression opportunities. At key stage (KS) 3, the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and meets well the needs of the pupils. At KS4, following a review, the school extended its curriculum to include a range of applied and vocational courses which meets the Entitlement Framework requirements at KS4 and post-16. The school is a committed member of the Rural Learning Partnership and accesses a number of courses through the Southern Regional College.

Across the school, the pupils benefit from a wide range of sporting and non-sporting extra-curricular opportunities which enhances their learning experiences. The school works well with other agencies, for example through a partnership with workers in the Keady Recreation Centre and the local council which exemplifies effective working links between a school and a local council.

7. Leadership and management

The school development plan (SDP)⁵ is of an outstanding quality, identifying appropriate areas for improvement including the necessary further dissemination of the existing very good practice. Overall, school development planning is underpinned by a good culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement. The school is appropriately, improving its self-evaluation practices by focusing on disseminating better the already existing effective practice in learning and teaching. Under the leadership of the Principal, the working links between the members of the SLT and middle management have been strengthened to this end.

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

The senior management of the school have a clearly defined strategic vision and they have allocated appropriate resources to support the provision. The governors, principal, senior leadership team (SLT) and staff are focused strategically and very effectively on maintaining and improving the high standards and outcomes obtained by the pupils. The governors support the principal and staff effectively in implementing the SDP and make a positive contribution to the work of the school. The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. To develop their role further, the governors need to review a greater range of evidence and to challenge, where needed, the effectiveness of the actions taken by post holders at SLT and middle management level.

After a well-conceived audit of the whole-school provision for teaching and learning, the principal instituted a new management structure and associated working arrangements, focused sharply on ensuring effective distributive leadership to meet the needs of all learners and empowering leadership at all levels to lead and manage major changes in teaching, learning and assessment throughout the school. For example, the system of banding pupils on entry to the school in year 8 was reviewed in consultation with the staff, and a pilot of mixed ability groupings is now in place. There is clear, compelling evidence, from qualitative and quantitative data gathered internally by the school and confirmed by the inspection, that the arrangement has improved significantly the quality of the teaching, the learning experiences and the standards reached by the pupils including, particularly, the less able. The principal's regular "learning walks" involving lesson observation and constructive feedback to individual teachers on the quality of their work is a key and noteworthy factor in improving the quality of learning and teaching. Furthermore, the constructive attitude taken by staff to the feedback, and the clear actions taken in response, were critical factors in ensuring the effective implementation of these new curricular arrangements.

The work of the middle managers, led well by the principal, is strongly and effectively focused on delivering excellent examination results and the further improvement of the already high level of the pupils' thinking skills and personal capabilities. The teachers are using a good range of first-hand evidence to monitor, evaluate and adjust the provision to meet the needs of the pupils.

8. Conclusion

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the 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.

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 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 category⁶.

<i>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</i>	2011	2012	2013
*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	76.3	74.3	85.7
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁷</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>67.7</i>	<i>58.9</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	52	62	70
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>45.2</i>	<i>33.9</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	95	91	96
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)	27	41	50

⁶ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the tables below show the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving grades A* to C and A* to E in vocational and/or applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining board(s) for the subjects in these tables to facilitate comparison due to the small size of the cohort.

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

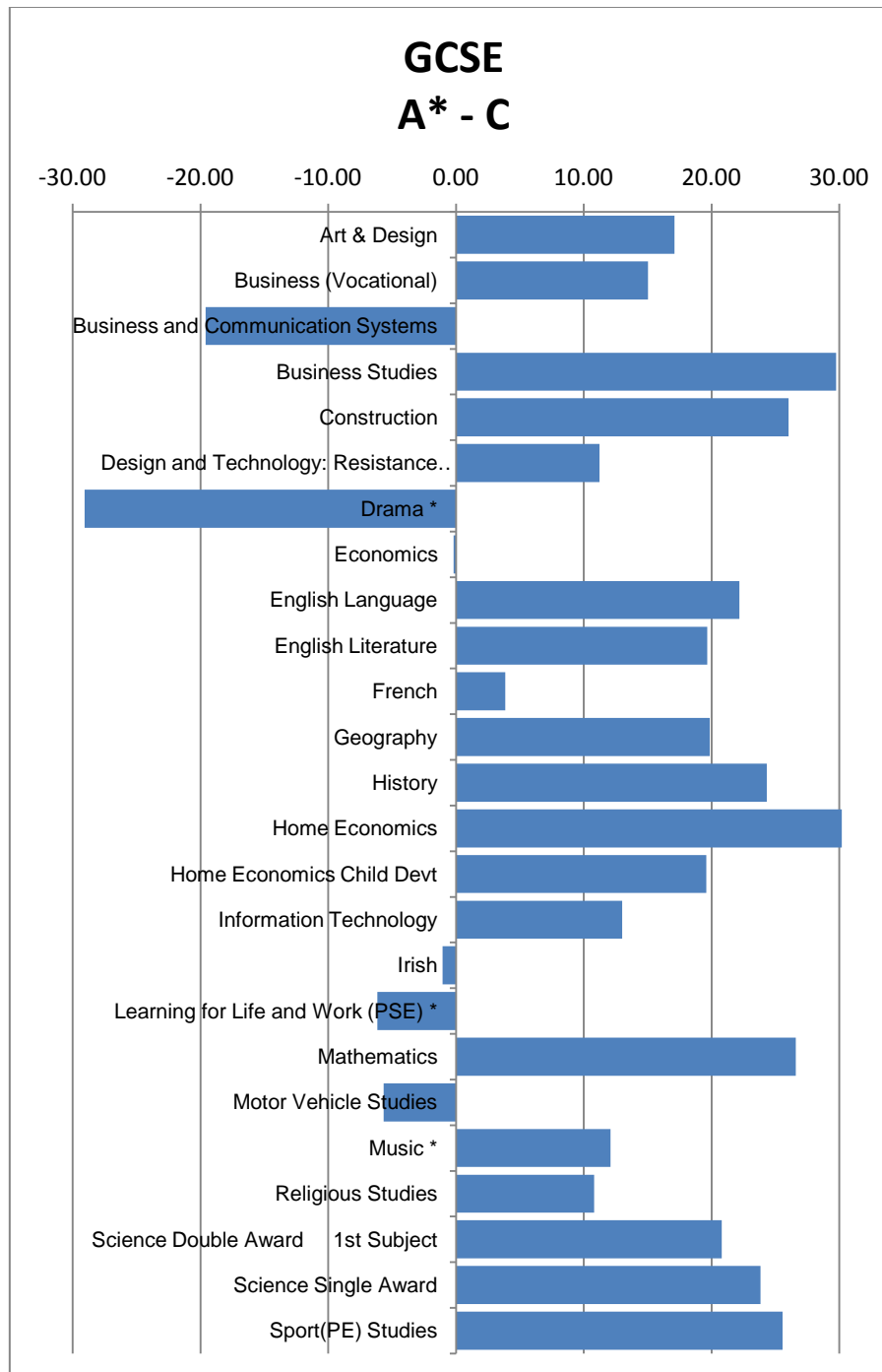
GCSE Subject	2011		2012		2013		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
BTec Countryside and Environment	-	-	-	-	100	100	10
BTec Retail	-	-	-	-	100	100	2

Level 2	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
<i>Communication</i>	-	37.5%	50%	26
<i>Application of Number</i>	-	-	93.8%	16

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE 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 GCSE 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 should be treated with caution.



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 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, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A* to E. The table compares the percentage achieving three or more GCEs (A* to C) with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category⁸.

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, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A* to E. The table compares the percentage of achieving three or more GCEs (A* to C) with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁹.

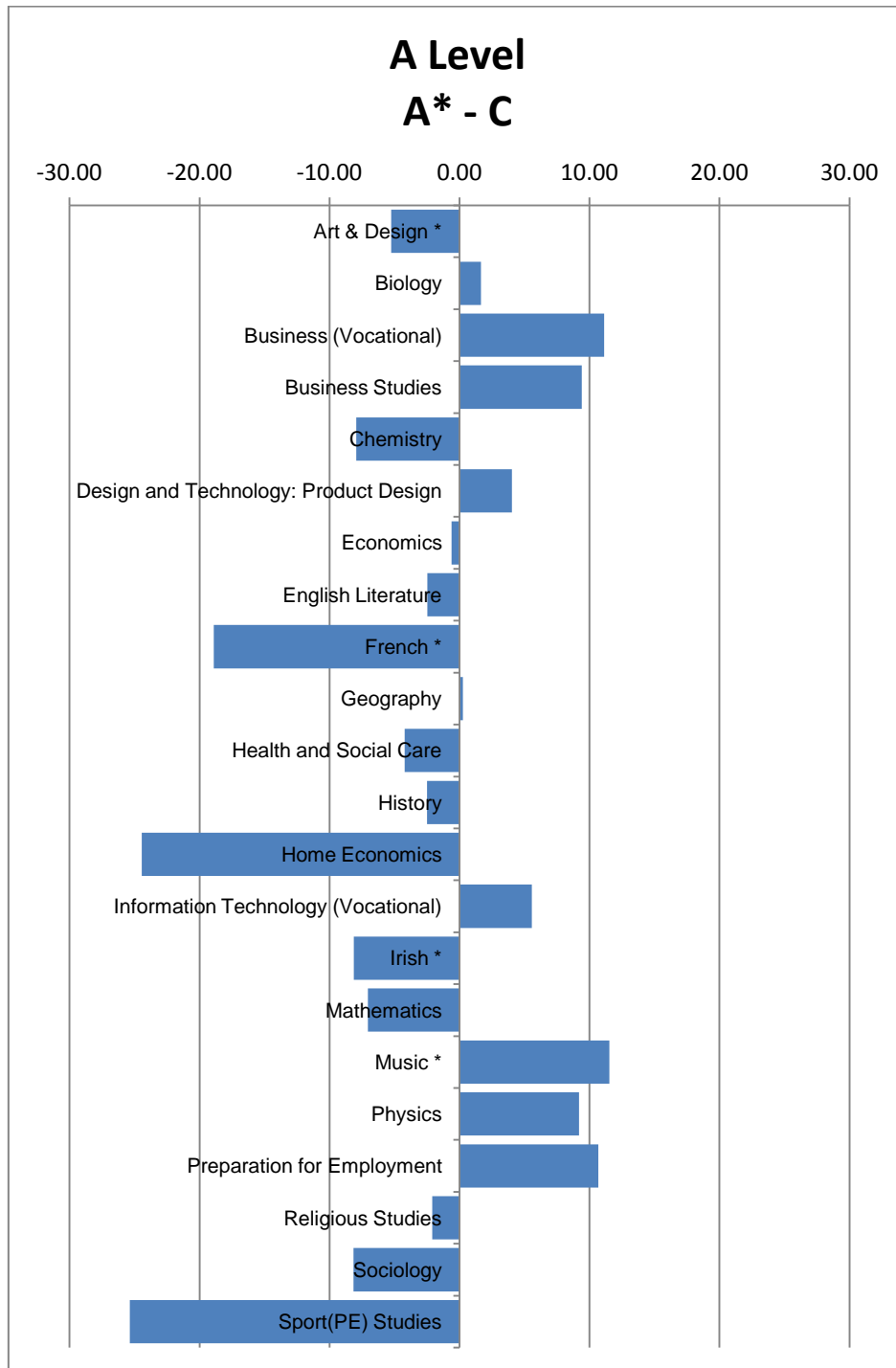
GCE A Level or equivalent	2011	2012	2013
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalentents in at least 3 subjects	90	87	87
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	58	57	65
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	99	99

⁸ 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

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.



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST-16

Other [level 3] courses taken in the last three years.

Level 3	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
<i>ICT</i>	100	100	100	203
<i>Communication</i>	100	100	100	78
<i>COPE</i>	100	100	100	34

STAYING ON RATE (Percentage staying on from year 12 to 13 and from year 13 to 14)

Based on data held and verified by the school 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 all schools and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	52	81
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	80	87

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 non-selective schools.

	2011/12 NI %	2011/12 School %	2011/12 School Nos.
Total number of leavers	13024		158
Employment	8	1.3	2
Further Education	46	10.1	16
Higher Education	20	57.6	91
Training	18.2	31	49
Unemployed	4.4	0	0
Unknown	4.1	0	0

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