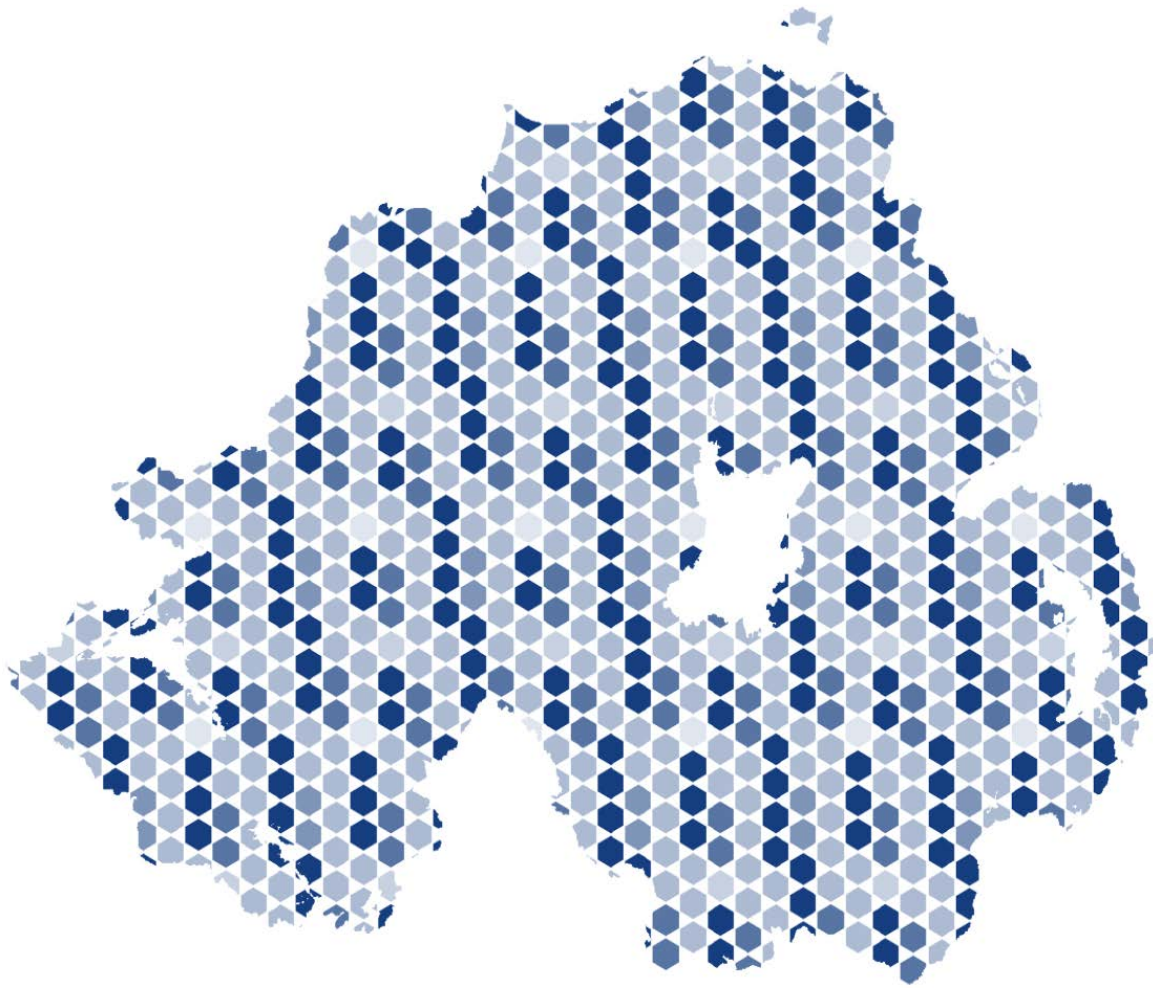


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

The Wallace High School,
Lisburn

Co-educational, selective, 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection in
January 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 year 13 pupils were absent from school during the inspection due to their participation in work experience placements.

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.

Just under thirteen percent of families (120) and around 47% of staff (60 teachers and support staff) responded to the questionnaires. The staff and parents responded positively in the main. The parents' comments reflected positively on the out-workings of the Wallace ethos, as demonstrated through the high quality pastoral support and the commitment of the staff in securing the welfare and learning of the pupils. A few concerns about communication and consultation, and some individual issues, were shared with the governors and the Principal, and where relevant, are addressed in this report.

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

The Wallace High School is over-subscribed regularly and draws its pupils from the city of Lisburn and the wider hinterland. On entry, almost all of the pupils have attained at, or above, the expected level in English and mathematics and the percentage of pupils who stay on from year 13 to year 14 is above the Northern Ireland average.

Since 2010, significant leadership and management restructuring has taken place to support improvement in aspects of the provision and pupil achievement. The prevalent use of tablet computers to enhance learning and teaching is a key feature of the provision and the school's pioneering use of this technology aims to prepare well the pupils for the digital demands of the 21st century and to be global and outward-looking in their aspirations and experience.

The Wallace High School, Lisburn	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Year 8 Intake	172	175	171	172
Enrolment	1163	1169	1164	1164
% Attendance (NI Average)	96.6 (95.7)	96.7 (95.3)	96.0 (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	2.5	2.3	2.3	5.2
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	4.0 (46)	4.5 (52)	5.7 (66)	6.4 (75)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	5	8	5	6
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*
<i>Intake²:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	93.6	82.9	29.8	n/a ³
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	83.7	92.0	46.8	n/a
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	99.4	100	99.4	n/a
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	99.4	100	99.4	n/a
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

* fewer than 5

4. Overall findings of the inspection

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

5. Quality of achievement and Standards

- The pupils have excellent dispositions to learning and engage purposefully in lessons. They offer mature oral and written responses to appropriately challenging learning tasks and think critically and creatively across a range of subjects. By year 14, pupils are well-rounded individuals, who can manage their learning and are well prepared for the next stage of their education and life.

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

³ Due to industrial action, not all data from end-of-key-stage 2 assessments in 2014 was made available to the school by the contributory primary schools

- There are high levels of pupil participation and achievement in the wide range of sporting, cultural, entrepreneurial and charitable opportunities which the school provides. The school community talked with great pride of the very many local, national and international achievements and there is particular satisfaction with the pupils' charitable and philanthropic successes, which pay fitting tribute to the founder of the school, Sir Richard Wallace, and the sustainability of his legacy. The pupils are confident and respectful; their behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, is exemplary and working relationships between the staff and the pupils are excellent.
- In English, the pupils achieve excellent outcomes in GCSE and GCE A level examinations. The outcomes are consistently above the corresponding Northern Ireland averages for similar schools. A notable strength is the pupils' attainment in GCSE English Literature, for which almost all of the pupils are entered.
- The pupils' oral and presentational skills are well developed. As they progress through the school, they use an increasingly sophisticated vocabulary to articulate and justify their ideas and opinions. The pupils write very confidently and accurately in a wide range of genres, for different audiences. The pupils' enjoyment of reading and their competence as readers are developed well through, for example, the reading for pleasure classes, the Read-On initiative and the use of an attractive and well-stocked library.
- Literacy is promoted effectively throughout the school and this is reflected in the high quality written and oral responses offered by the pupils. The recently-established literacy and special educational needs working group, comprising representatives from all departments, has facilitated the sharing of good practice with a view to raising standards further in writing and in talking and listening. The school recognises the need to evaluate rigorously the impact of this initiative, in going forward.
- Achievement and standards in mathematics are outstanding. The pupils are motivated, enjoy their learning and work well independently. The level and standard of pupils' work is appropriately high and they can summarise and communicate mathematical understanding confidently. The pupils make expected, or better, progress across key stage 3 and key stage 4. Outcomes in GCSE and GCE mathematics are consistently above the average, when compared with similar schools, and there is a very strong uptake of mathematics post-16.
- Learning in mathematics is pitched at an appropriately high level and teachers and pupils hold high expectations. Mathematics lessons are rigorous and well structured; previous learning is reviewed well and there are plenary sessions which consolidate effectively the learning. The pupils would, however, benefit from having broader mathematical learning experiences. During the inspection, there was limited evidence of numeracy and using mathematics being promoted across the curriculum.

- The impact of tablet computers on developing appropriate ICT and wider skills is a strength of the school. The pupils benefit from using technology which allows them to achieve more diverse and valuable learning successes. From mind-mapping, to digital presentations and exchanges, to podcasting and film making; such learning-focused experiences contribute to improving how pupils organise their thinking, express themselves and share their work with a wider audience. The virtual learning environment, 'My Big Campus', is a developing learning environment that makes good efficiency in the use of learning resources, while ensuring pupils have very good access to a fountain of knowledge in terms of a range of on-line learning materials.
- The pupils achieve excellent outcomes in public examinations; these reflect well the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils.⁴
- The percentage of pupils achieving 7 or more GCSE examinations including GCSE English and mathematics at grade A* to C is consistently above the NI average for similar schools; almost all pupils achieve at this level. Each year, a small number of pupils achieve at the highest levels in individual GCSE subjects across Northern Ireland, with pupils gaining top places at a regional level in subjects such as: journalism, home economics, German, and further mathematics.
- The performance of most of the individual subjects is above the corresponding NI three-year average at GCSE grades A*-B for selective schools, with around one-third of subjects performing at more than ten percentage points above this average.
- At GCE A level, the percentage of pupils achieving 3 or more subjects at grades A* to C has increased over the past three years and, for the past two years, is above the average for similar schools in the same free school meals category. In 2014, in one-half of the subjects studied at A2 level, all pupils attained at grades A* to C; and, in four of the subjects studied, all pupils attained at grades A* to B. The attainment of pupils in vocational/applied subjects at GCE A2 level is a particular strength.
- Over the past three years, almost all of the pupils requiring support with aspects of their learning attain well at GCSE and A2 level; and, the small percentage of pupils who have free school meals entitlement attain consistently high standards in line with their peers.
- Throughout all of the key stages, the pupils have opportunities to participate in a wide range of external competitions; they achieve a high level of success and develop important skills in effective self-management, leadership and communication.
- The percentage of pupils who stay on from year 13 to year 14 and the percentage of pupils who leave to go to higher education are both above the Northern Ireland average.

⁴ The examination data and an analysis of trends in examination standards over the past three years are given in the appendix.

6. Quality of provision

- Planning, teaching and assessment are effective at promoting learning in almost all of the lessons observed, and one-half of the lessons observed were very good or better. The consistently good or better lessons were well-planned and facilitated by teachers, who were very secure in their specialism and who could draw out extended responses and higher level thinking skills through effective questioning, consolidation and purposeful plenary sessions. The pupils make excellent progress because of appropriate challenge, enabling tasks, supportive interventions, and informative and effective assessment.
- The pupils benefit from high quality care guidance and support. The staff are highly committed to meeting the pupils' physical, emotional, spiritual and cognitive needs, dovetailing well the academic and pastoral dimensions of the provision.
- Effective pupil consultation takes place through surveys, school council and focus groups with the aim of enriching school life further. There is an excellent range of extra-curricular activities, many of which develop well the pupils' inter-personal, social and technical skills.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are integrated well both educationally and socially and are involved fully in many aspects of school life. They benefit from the inclusive ethos throughout the school and, in particular, from the sensitive support of their peers.
- The highly effective provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance enhances the pupils' understanding of career options available to them, enabling them to make informed choices. As a result, nearly all school leavers enter further or higher education, with a very small percentage going to training or employment.
- The school is a Centre of Excellence for Young Enterprise, with notable success. Almost one third of the year 13 pupils are involved and they have excellent opportunities to apply their entrepreneurial skills, experience the roles and responsibilities that exist within business, and to develop their creative and collaborative thinking in problem-solving within the world of work.
- The planning for, and development of, the curriculum is given a high priority by the school and is matched well to the needs and aspirations of almost all of the pupils. The school curriculum is broad and balanced and takes sufficient account of external labour market intelligence. Consequently, there is an appropriate focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics subjects, underpinned by well-embedded information and communication technology. The collaborative links with the further education college and a neighbouring school enable the pupils to access a wider range of general, applied and vocational courses and pupils benefit from these wider options.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum at KS3 and currently meets the requirements of the entitlement framework at KS4 and post-16.

7. Quality of leadership and management

- The school development plan⁵ (SDP), which is informed by appropriate consultation and effective self-evaluation, includes a range of appropriate priorities for school improvement. The associated action plans are general, but are linked to more detailed documentation that has thorough targets for improvement which enable leadership to track and monitor the impact of strategies for improvement at whole school, department and individual pupil level.
- The leadership team is highly committed to school improvement, which is underpinned by strategic planning, structures and processes. They set high standards and expectations and provide excellent in-house professional development opportunities to continue to extend the capability of staff in understanding and fulfilling their roles more effectively; they possess complementary leadership, management and professional skills and provide highly effective strategic guidance for the school. The leadership team promotes a clear sense of identity and purpose; consequently, there is a great sense of pride and loyalty to what the school stands for: commitment, opportunities, respect and excellence, which is frequently referred to as being, 'Wallace, *to the core*'.
- There is significant evidence of well-planned actions leading to improvement, which is linked to a well-embedded culture of self-evaluation that has become increasingly prevalent across the school in recent years. Over the last five years, there is a trend of rising achievement in public examinations. The school's improvement work is pupil-centred and it has a clear focus on enhancing their experiences, opportunities and outcomes. This improvement work is underpinned by the school's well conceived professional development programme, which is building capacity very successfully.
- The middle managers provide very effective leadership and management of their areas of responsibility; they are responsive to change and are developing more innovative practices which have improved the pupils' learning experiences, their well-being and their attainments. They are committed to the collegial vision of building resilience, promoting independence and enhancing experiences, opportunities and outcomes for all.
- The governors are well committed to, well informed about, and actively engaged in, the life and work of the school. In discussions with ETI, a minority view was expressed that was critical of aspects of communication, consultation and decision making; however, the weight of testimony received from the governors at the time of the inspection was almost unanimously highly positive. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

⁵ The SDP conforms to the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations, 2010

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people which 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 this 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.

APPENDIX

Examination performance and other statistical data

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

The table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Wallace High School achieving 7 or more GCSEs (A* to C) and equivalent subjects 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 (no pupils)	2012	2013	2014
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	97
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	99	96	97
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	94.2	96.4	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	99	96	97
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	92.6	94.1	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	98	100	97
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)	100	100	80

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

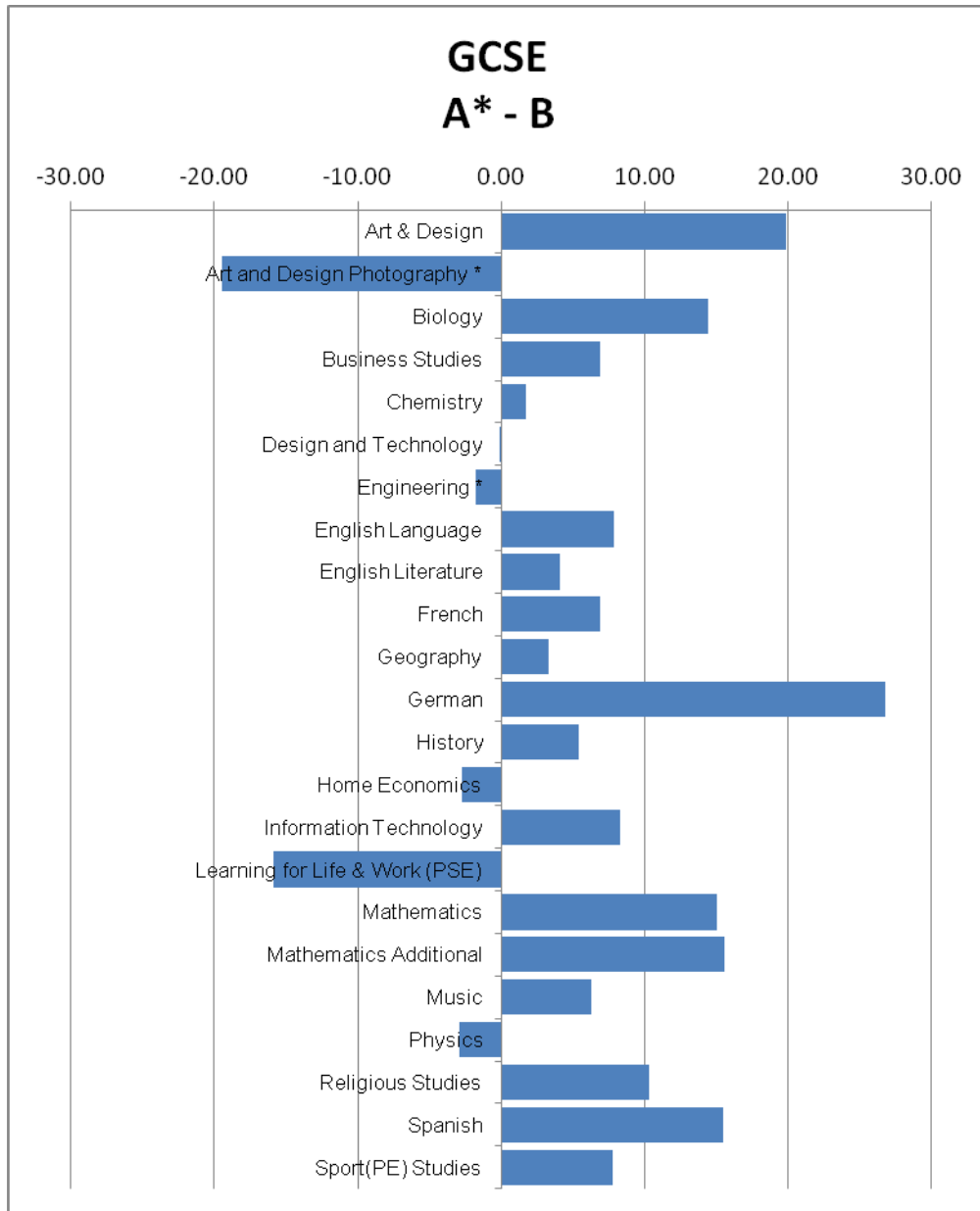
The table below shows achievements by the pupils in a GCSE examination for which NI benchmarking data for this examination is not available.

Level 2	2012	2013	2014	Total entry over 3 years
	% A* to B	% A* to B	% A* to B	
Journalism	96	86	92	74
Moving Image Arts	76	85	88	50

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 grades A* to B 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, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in 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

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

The table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Wallace High School achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C. 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 category⁷.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2012	2013	2014
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	98	99	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	71	81	82
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	75.5	78.8	N/A

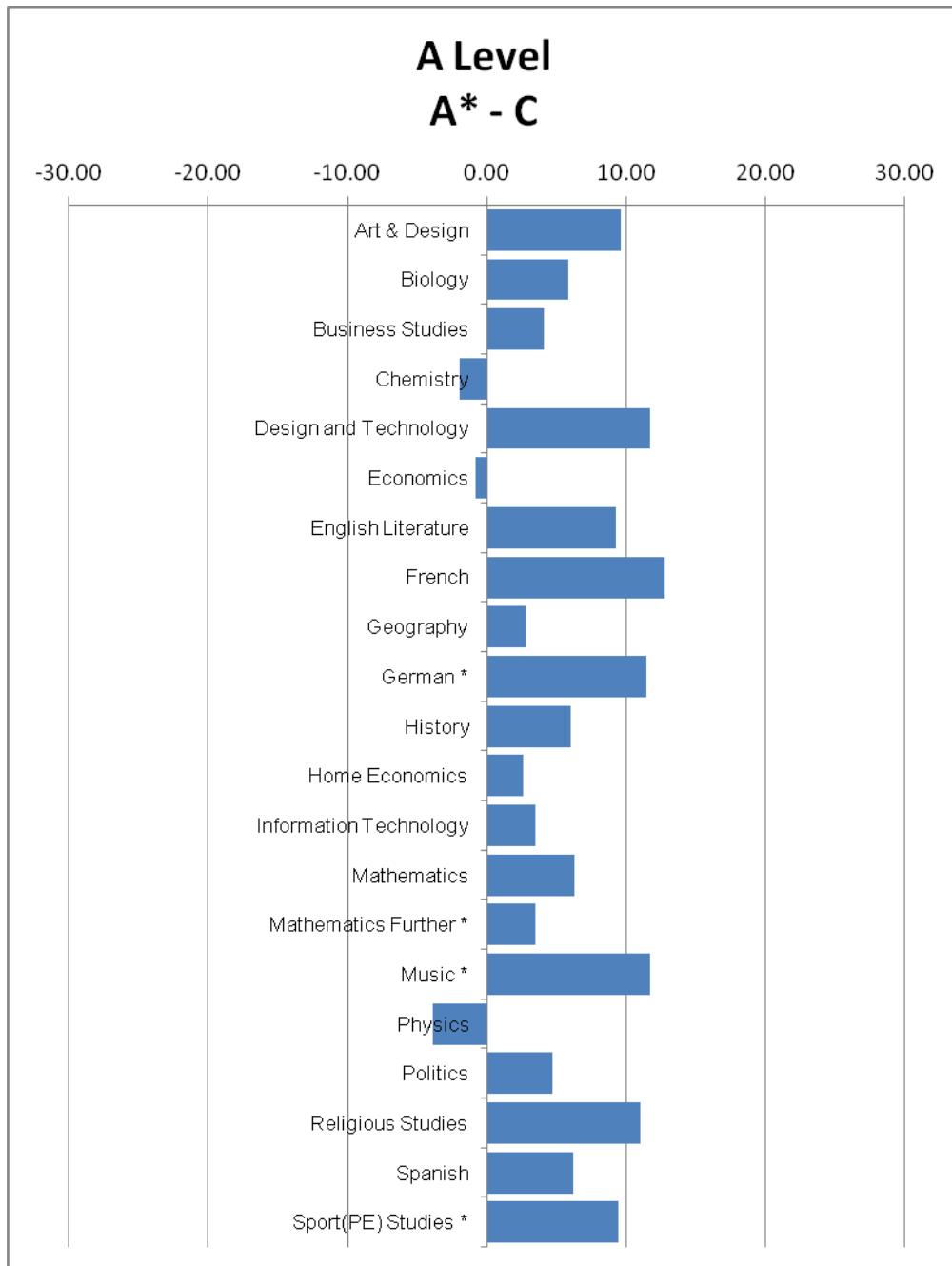
The table below show the percentage of year 14 pupils in Wallace High School achieving grades A* to C in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCE A level. No average is available from the examining boards for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison.

GCE Subject	2012	2013	2014	Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-C	% A*-C	
Health and Social Care	--	75	100	23
Moving Image Arts	100	100	100	36
Travel and Tourism	100	100	100	7

⁷ 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

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

Staying on rate

Based on data verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows that the percentage of the pupils who stay on at Wallace High 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 (2012/13).

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	95.7	85.4*
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	94.3	97.4

* Partially due to the size of the Year 13 cohort being capped.

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of pupils who leave Wallace High School to enter further education, training, higher education or employment, or seeking employment, compared with the average for selective schools for the academic year 2012/13.

	School % (No.)	NI %	Level 2 % (No.)	Level 3 % (No.)	Level 3+ % (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	160	9503			
Employment	2.5 (4)	3.4			
Further Education	11.3 (18)	21.2	0	13	5
Higher Education	77.5 (124)	72.0	0	0	124
Training	1.3 (2)	1.2			
Unemployed	0	1.2			
Unknown	7.5 (12)	1.1			

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