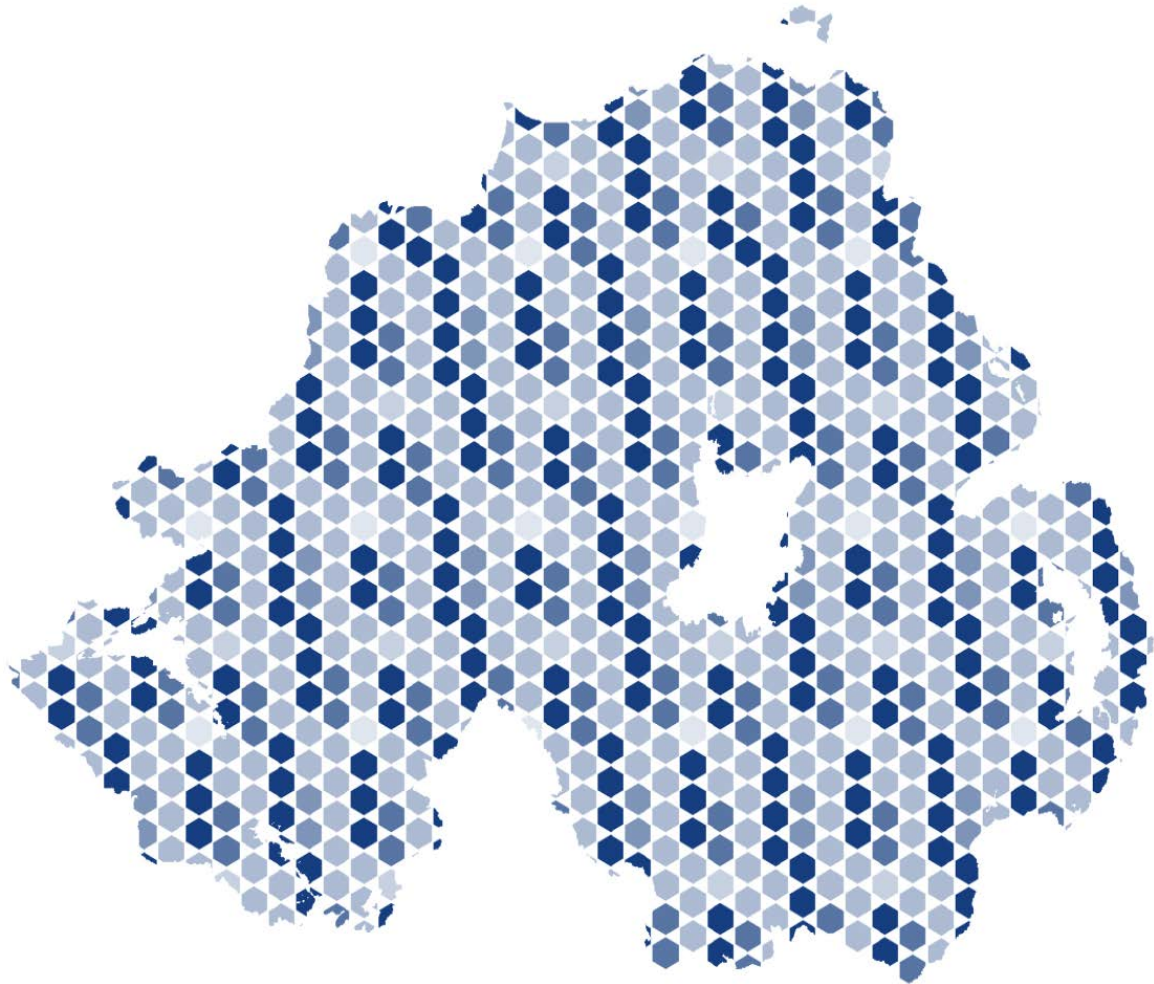


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## Castleberg High School

Controlled, co-educational, 11-18, non-selective school

Report of an Inspection  
in April 2013



Providing Inspection Services for

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

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



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## CONTEXT OF THE INSPECTION (METHOD)

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 Inspectorate's 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 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 from years 8, 12, 13 and 14; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Data on the questionnaire returns is shown in the table below.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	119	72	61%	39
Teachers	33	33	100%	10
Support Staff	25	21	84%	*

\* fewer than 5

## 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 (Inspectorate) use the following performance levels (grades) in reports:

<b>Performance Level</b>	<b>Descriptor</b>
Outstanding	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which the school has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Castledearg High School draws its pupils from the surrounding rural areas within a radius of 20 miles; most of the pupils travel to school by bus. Approximately one-sixth of the 472 pupils are in the sixth form. Some three-quarters of the pupils enter year 8 with the expected levels of attainment in English and mathematics.

Castledearg High School	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 8 Intake	86	81	71	69
Enrolment	464	477	473	472
% Attendance (NI Average)	92.8	93.5	92.5	-
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	20.3	22.0	27.1	27.8
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	20.5(95)	17.0(81)	23.0(109)	20.8(98)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs	27	29	31	32
No. of newcomers	*	*	*	*
<b>Intake</b>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	19.8	14.8	18.3	17.4
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	18.6	22.2	25.35	29.0
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	82.6	71.6	83.1	75.4
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	79.1	76.5	77.5	73.9

**Source:** data as held by the school.

\* fewer than 5

### 1.2 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Castledearg High School focused on achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and on leadership and management across the school as a whole.

Specialist inspectors paid particular attention to English, mathematics and geography provision, and provided detailed oral feedback to the teachers in these areas; a summary of the findings is reported in Appendix 2.

The inspection also focused on: the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection and safeguarding; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life; the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG); and the progress towards meeting the requirements for the curriculum as set out in the Entitlement Framework.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

### 1.3 OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Provision for Learning</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Good</b>

## 2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### 2.1 The overall standards achieved by the pupils are good<sup>2</sup>.

#### KEY FINDINGS

Most of the pupils have a positive attitude to school and to their learning. On almost all occasions, when given the opportunities, they work well together and participate fully in class discussions. Appropriately, the school is focusing on developing further independent learning skills for all of the pupils. By year 12, the pupils take on responsibility willingly and with confidence.

#### Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance:

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	2010	2011	2012
*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	63.2	72.3	65.3
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	48.5	46.2	26.4
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Below average</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	79.4	92.3	97.2
Percentage of FSM entitled school leavers achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A*-C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	21.4	33.3	12.5

**Source:** Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks<sup>3</sup>

Over the last three years, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs<sup>4</sup> at grades A\*-C has been above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for schools of a similar type. In two of the past three years, the proportion of pupils who achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C including English and mathematics has also been above the average for similar schools. In 2012 the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at A\*-C including

<sup>2</sup> For additional performance data in public examinations, including in vocational subjects, see Appendix 1

<sup>3</sup> DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

<sup>4</sup> General Certificate for Secondary Education

these important subjects fell to below the average. The senior management of the school is aware of the exceptional circumstances that brought about this fall and has put in place appropriate strategies to address them. The formative assessment data which the school holds for the current year 12 pupils demonstrates that these strategies have been effective and that the outcomes for these pupils will be in line with those achieved in earlier years.

In 2011, the proportion of FSME pupils who achieved five or more grades A\* to C including English and mathematics was in line with the NI average for similar schools, but in 2012 this proportion also fell to below the NI average.

The performance of a majority of the individual GCSE subjects over the past three years, at grades A\*-C, is above the corresponding three-year NI average.

Given their assessment scores on admission to the school, pupils who require additional support with their learning achieve well. They make good progress in literacy and numeracy and improve their interest in learning and their level of engagement in class. The majority, on leaving school, gain further education places; a minority return to the school for sixth form study. All develop important social skills to assist them as they progress.

**Data on Year 14 (A2) performance:**

<b>GCE A Level or equivalent</b>	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalentents in at least 3 subjects	40.6	50.0	55.6
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	96.9	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	12.5	17.5	37.8

*Source: Data as held and verified by the school.*

An increasing proportion of pupils who return to school for post-16 study has been entered for three or more GCE A<sup>5</sup> levels or equivalentents. The proportion achieving three or more subjects at grades A\*-C or equivalent has improved steadily. Most of the results in the A level subjects are in line with the corresponding three-year NI average for grades A\* to E; at grades A\*-C, however, nearly all are significantly below the NI average. The performance of the pupils taking vocational qualifications at an equivalent level to GCE A level is good. A significantly greater number of pupils than the average for similar schools progress from year 14 into higher education.

**3. PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

**3.1 The overall quality of the provision for learning is very good.**

**KEY FINDINGS**

**3.1.1 The quality of the provision for learning, teaching and assessment is good**

The provision in mathematics is very good, and in English and geography, it is good<sup>6</sup>.

The overall quality of short-term and whole-school planning is good. In the best practice, it is thorough and provides sufficient guidance for the teachers to ensure that that the pupils have a good range of learning experiences. The quality of the planning is, however, inconsistent across the school. In some instances it is too generic and does not identify

<sup>5</sup> General Certificate of Education Advanced

<sup>6</sup> For detailed findings of the provision in English, mathematics and geography see Appendix 2.

adequately how the teaching strategies and resources are to be adapted to meet the learning needs of all of the pupils. It is appropriate that the departmental action plans have identified and are addressing these inconsistencies.

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to inadequate, with most being good or better; in two-fifths the lessons observed, it was very good or outstanding.

In the more effective lessons, a wide range of strategies engage the pupils actively in the learning process. Lessons are carefully structured; effective questioning ensures that all the pupils are challenged to give extended responses. Purposeful paired and small group work is used effectively. Innovative use of interactive whiteboards provides good quality stimulus resources and, on occasions, good reinforcing materials. Sufficient time was allowed at the end of the lessons to assess the extent to which the pupils had absorbed key learning points.

In the less effective lessons, the learning tasks were low level, the pace of the lessons was too slow and, at times, the pupils were not engaged. The teaching strategies and resources did not challenge the more able pupils adequately nor support the pupils who were having difficulty with their learning.

The overall quality of assessment is good. The school has recently introduced a more systematic approach to assessing and tracking the pupils' progress through the year. The assessment outcomes are analysed, and targets for improvement are set for individual pupils. The pupils are aware of these targets and have responded positively to them. The quality and extent of effective questioning and marking for improvement, is, however, inconsistent across the classes. The school has identified the need to address these inconsistencies.

The use of ICT<sup>7</sup> to support teaching and learning is good. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and there are plans to enhance further the infrastructure for ICT throughout the school. The school is developing a virtual learning environment which is intended to facilitate the pupils learning from home. Due to timetable restrictions, and the location of many of the computers in specialist accommodation, subject departments can find difficulty in accessing ICT when they need it. In addition, post-16 pupils have some difficulty accessing the Internet in their private study time.

### **3.1.2 The quality of the care, guidance and support of pupils is very good.**

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

##### **The quality of the pastoral care is very good.**

The caring and supportive environment that exists in the school encourages the pupils to participate in lessons, develops their confidence and raises their self-esteem. The key features of the provision include: the very good quality of most of the relationships throughout the school; the very good behaviour of the pupils during the inspection; and the transition arrangements for the year 8 pupils which includes well-planned induction and peer mentoring programmes. A high value is placed by staff on the views of the well-established student council which contributes effectively to the work of the school. There is clear evidence to show that if the pupils have any worries about their safety and well-being, they are aware of what to do and with whom to talk.

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<sup>7</sup> Information and communication technology



In discussions with the inspectors, the pupils commented particularly on the teachers' willingness to provide additional time after school to support them in their studies. Concerns raised by a small number of pupils during an interview with the inspectors were reported to the principal who immediately initiated appropriate actions to address them.

The taught personal development programme has been reviewed recently to include, appropriately, more active learning approaches which are designed to raise the pupils' confidence and self esteem and to build their personal skills.

Although the co-ordinator of pastoral care has been in post for a relatively short time, she has conducted the review of a number of important pastoral policies including a professional code of conduct (behaviour) for staff, positive behaviour for the pupils and guidance on behaviour management.

The school promotes the adoption of healthy lifestyles by the pupils by encouraging them to choose healthy food options in the canteen. The pupils also participate in a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities and engage in physical activity in the outside spaces and well-used football pitches during break and lunchtime.

**The overall quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.**

The special educational needs co-ordinator provides extensive information to staff on the specific learning needs of individual pupils. She also provides the teaching staff with and appropriate in-service training and guidance on meeting these needs. The learning support assistants are effective in ensuring individual pupils engage fully in lessons and improve their standards in literacy and numeracy. Appropriately, the school has identified the need to review and improve the current format and approach to individual learning plans.

**The quality of the provision for CEIAG is very good.**

The pupils have a very good understanding of the education, training and employment opportunities that are available to them as a result of the high-quality guidance and individual support provided by the specialist careers team and Department of Education and Learning advisor. As part of an innovative careers programme, the pupils at key transition points benefit from the opportunities provided to talk to older pupils about their subject choices.

The discrete curriculum provision for employability and careers throughout the school is well-planned, comprehensive and progressive with a sharp focus on developing the pupils' employability and wider skills. The pupils make very good use of a range of careers information, including relevant ICT software and labour market information, to inform their career planning. In addition, they access a suitable range of work-related learning opportunities, including work placements, and interview skills training, which are tailored closely to their needs.

**3.1.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is very good.**

The senior management of the school is committed fully to providing all of the pupils with access to a broad and balanced curriculum. The pupils in year 10 are provided with an appropriate range of subjects to follow to GCSE or equivalent level. Significant links have been made with other schools in the area through the Derg and Mourne Learning

Community to ensure that the pupils are given the opportunity to follow courses in a wide range of subjects at GCSE and GCE A level or the equivalent. The courses on offer cover an appropriate range of subjects and the level of qualification ensures that the pupils are provided with good opportunities for progression to further or higher education or employment.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

##### **4.1 The overall quality of leadership and the management is good.**

###### **KEY FINDINGS**

The principal and vice-principal took up their positions in January 2012 after a period of unsettled leadership and management arising, in part, from an extended leave of absence of the previous principal.

The principal has a clear strategic vision for the development of the school and takes a measured approach to putting this into practice. The vice-principal shares this vision and has taken the lead, under the direction of the principal, in the development of a number of key areas of management including the development of a school development plan and accompanying action plans. In the short time since their appointments, they have had to address a number of important issues, in particular the sharp drop in the GCSE English results which occurred in 2012 and managing change following the voluntary redundancy of two senior members of staff. A new senior leadership team (SLT), which includes two co-opted members, has been formed to meet the needs of the school. Throughout this time of significant change, the principal, vice-principal and SLT have provided effective leadership and management of the work of the school and have maintained successfully the confidence and support of almost all of the staff.

Members of the SLT, in addition to their collective leadership responsibility, take the lead in key areas of the school provision, for example, pastoral care, special educational needs, careers and management information. They work with enthusiasm and commitment, providing very effective leadership and management in their respective areas.

The majority of teachers have leadership responsibilities, for example, as heads of subjects or year heads. The quality of management at this level is good. They are developing well their roles in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the provision within the areas for which they hold responsibility. These processes of monitoring and evaluation are, however, at an early stage of development. Appropriately, subject departments complete self-evaluation and draw up suitable action plans to address identified priorities. Subject leaders review regularly the targets for pupil achievement and complete annually a detailed analysis of their examination results. The principal provides effective challenge to the subject leaders on any underachievement.

The current school development plan meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (NI) 2010. A strength of the process is the comprehensive evaluation of the previous year's plan, including a detailed analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks, which helped to identify the priorities for the current plan.

The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school and, in particular, receive regular reports on issues relating to safeguarding. They support well the work of the principal, vice-principal and SLT and, appropriately, also provide a challenge function to aid the effective running of the school. A number of sub-committees enable the governors to manage and fulfil their role. The parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

The ETI reported to the principal and the representatives of the governors the very few concerns emerging from the questionnaires and, where appropriate, these have been commented on within the report. The governors expressed their strong appreciation of the work of the principal, vice-principal and staff.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children/young people which broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school, however, must continue to monitor the outworking of the professional Code of Conduct (Behaviour) which needs to be implemented consistently by all of the staff.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision. The inspection has identified areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address.

5.2 The main area of improvement is the need to:

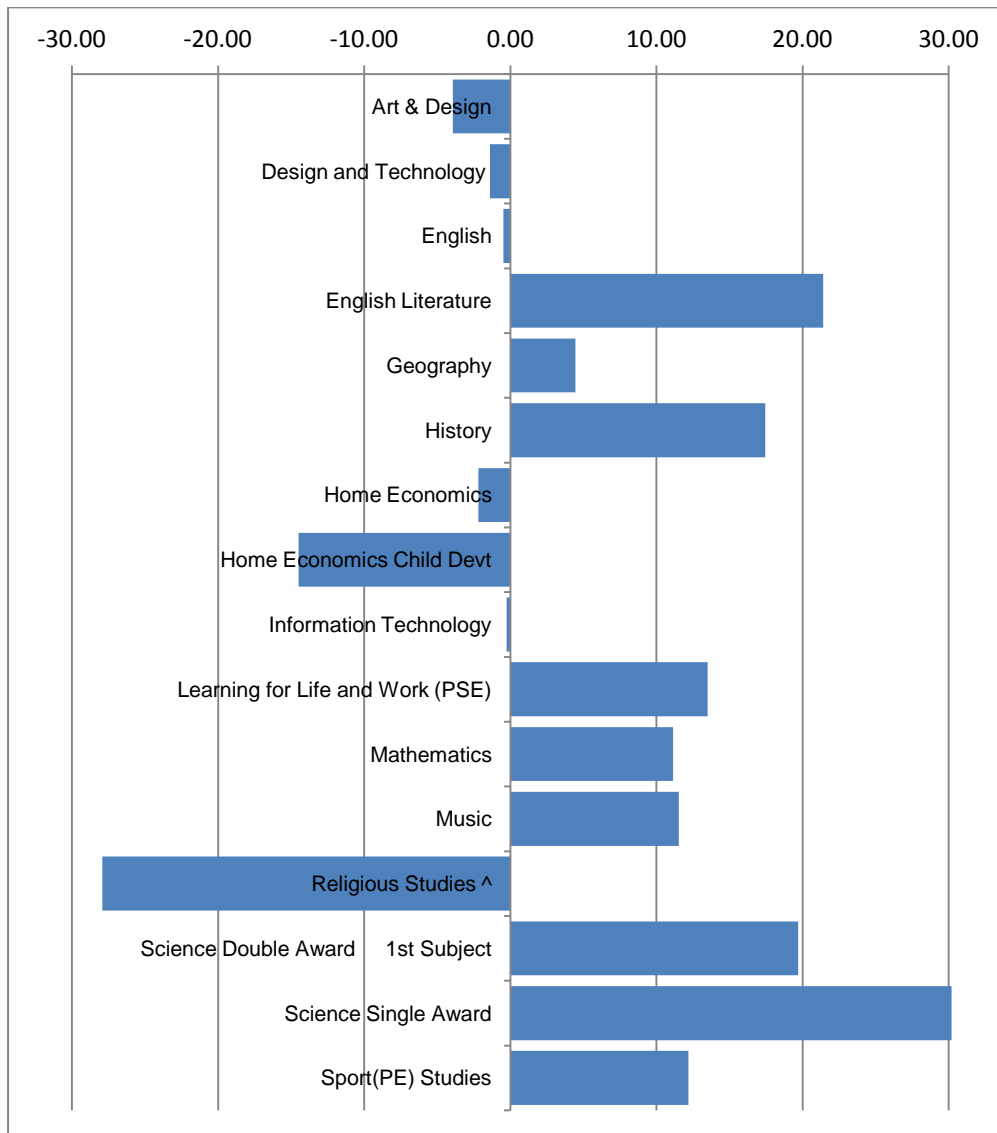
- develop further the capacity of the SLT and middle managers to plan and implement appropriate monitoring and evaluation strategies in order to improve the quality of the pupils' learning experiences and outcomes.

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

5.4 The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

**GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS**

**Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A\* to C 2009-10 to 2011-12**



^ no pupils entered in 2010

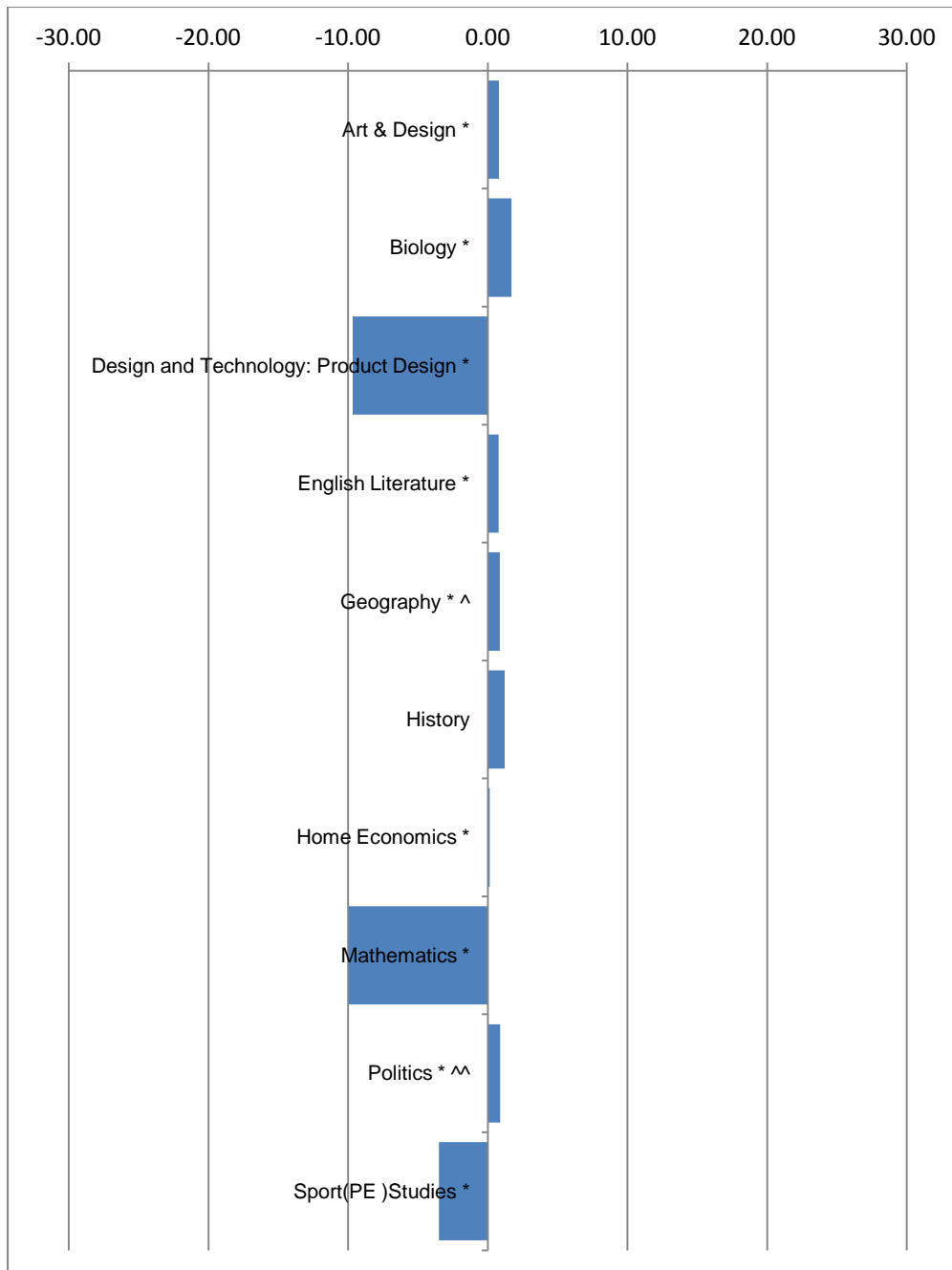
## OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

GCSE Subject	2009/10 Double Awards		2010/11		2011/12		Total Entry over 3 Years
	% A*- C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Hospitality and Catering			100	100			10
Business (vocational)	85.0	100	20.0	60.0	58.3	83.3	42
Health and Social Care	36.8	76.3	70.0	100	30.0	100	58
Leisure and Tourism	100	100	100	100	85.0	100	73
Manufacturing	100	100	93.3	100	100	100	42

Level 2	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12 Double Awards		Total Entry over 3 Years
	% Pass A*- C	% Pass A*- G	% Pass A*- C	% Pass A*- G	% Pass A*- C	% Pass A*- G	
Occupational Studies Level 2	73.1	100	85.7	100	66.6	100	58
BTEC Business					100	100	7
BTEC Agriculture					100	100	8
BTEC Construction					100	100	5
BTEC Engineering					84.6	84.6	13

## GCE EXAMINATION RESULTS

### Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A\*- E 2009-10 to 2011-12

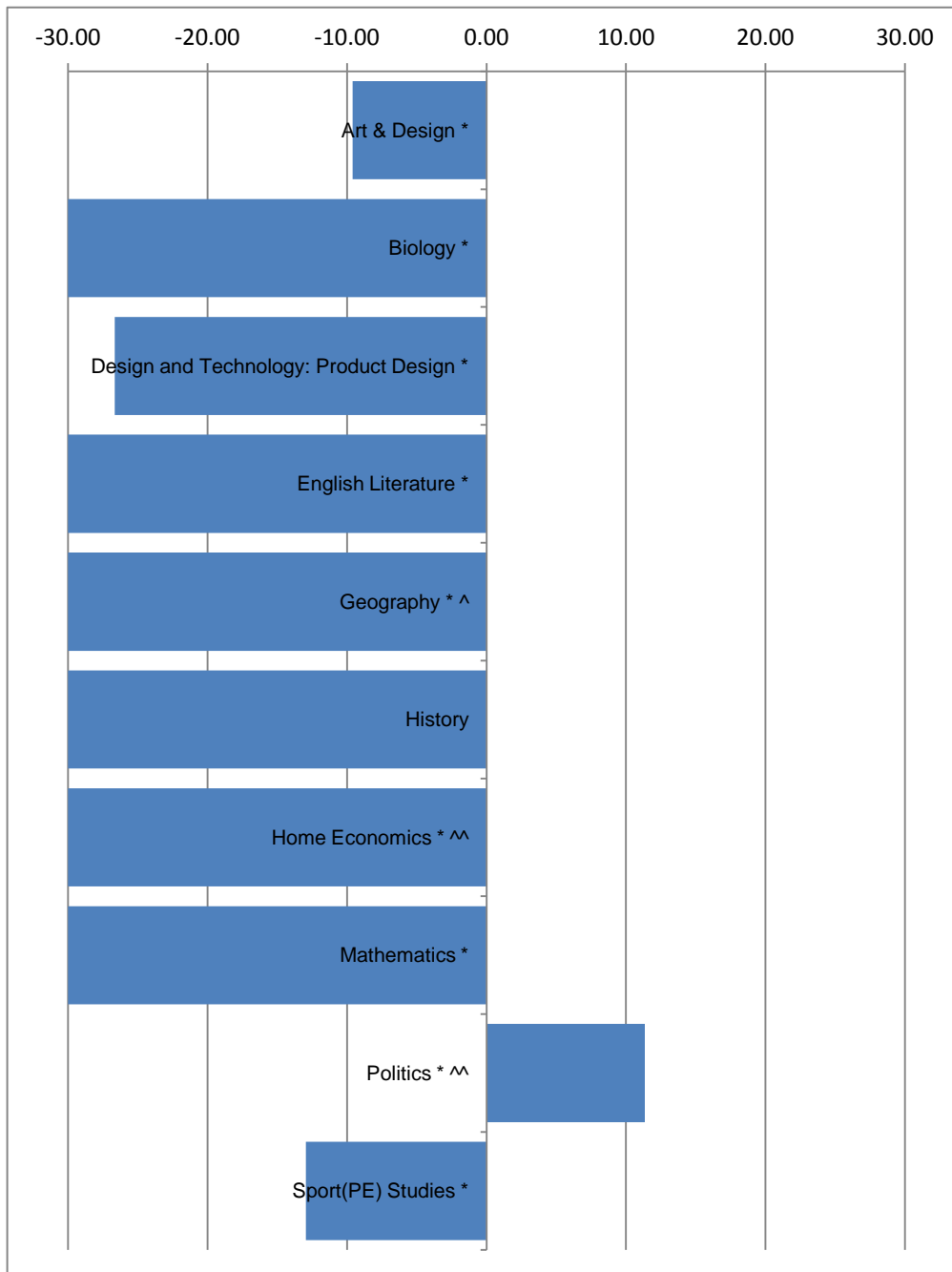


\* fewer than 20 pupils

^ no pupils entered in 2010

^^ no pupils entered in 2010 and 2011

**Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A\*- C 2009-10 to 2011-12**



\* fewer than 20 pupils

^ no pupils entered in 2010

^^ no pupils entered in 2010 and 2011

## OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 5

GCE Subject	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		Total Entry over 3 Years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Business (vocational)	50.0	100	85.7	100	100	100	24
Health and Social Care	-	-	66.7	100	80.0	100	22
Information Technology (vocational)	80.0	100	90.0	100	70.0	95.0	40
Leisure Studies	63.6	100	89.5	100	100	100	37
Music Technology	75.0	100	0	100			9
Geography (delivered through collaboration with Strabane Grammar School)	0	100	0	100			*

Level 3	2009/10		2010/11		2011/12		Total Entry over 3 Years
	% Pass A*-C	% Pass A*-E	% Pass A*-C	% Pass A*-E	% Pass A*-C	% Pass A*-E	
BTEC National Award Agriculture					100	100	*
BTEC National Award in Childrens' Care, Learning and Development					100	100	*
BTEC Media	50	100	0	100			*
BTEC Engineering	100	100					*

\* fewer than 5



**STAYING ON RATE** (Current year13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	50.0	NI Av. Year 13	47.9
Year 14	50.7	NI Av. Year 14	36.5

**LEAVERS' DESTINATIONS**

	Year 12	NI %	Yr 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	37		44	
Another School	3%	15.8	0%	2.5
Employment	8%	4.4	18%	11.7
Full-time Further Education	81%	45	27%	31.1
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	55%	38.5
Full-time Training	5%	28	0%	6.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.5	0%	6.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	3%	3.3	0%	3.1

## SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS: ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND GEOGRAPHY

### English

#### **The quality of provision in English is good.**

The main strengths of the English provision are:

- the pupils' positive disposition to learning and the very good working relationships in all of the lessons observed;
- the quality of the learning and teaching which was good or better in just over four-fifths of the lessons observed;
- the strategic development of the work of the department provided by the recently-appointed Head of English and her commitment to raise standards in the interests of the pupils;
- the improvements made to the quality of the provision through the effective use of data to identify pupils who are able to benefit from a range of appropriate intervention strategies; and
- the consistently good examination outcomes in GCSE English at grades A\*-C up to 2011 and the very good outcomes in English Literature at GCSE grades A\*C, which are well above the corresponding NI average over the last five years.

The areas of improvement include the need to:

- continue to address the causes of the sharp decline in GCSE English outcomes at grades A\*-C that occurred in 2012; and
- improve the quality of the provision further through continuing to develop more engaging resources tailored to meet the needs and interests of all of the pupils, and particularly to address the specific learning needs of boys.

### Mathematics

#### **The quality of provision in mathematics is very good.**

The main strengths of the mathematics provision are:

- the hard work and commitment of the teachers who work well together to share good practice and resources;
- the good relationships between the teachers and the pupils;
- the good or better quality of the teaching and learning in nearly all of the sessions visited, with the majority seen being very good;
- the high levels of individual support provided to the pupils; and
- the very good results achieved by the pupils in GCSE Mathematics.

The areas of improvement include the need to:

- develop further the processes for self-evaluation and monitoring of the provision to improve further the outcomes for all the pupils.

## **Geography**

**The quality of provision in geography is good.**

The main strengths of the geography provision are:

- the very good working relationships between the teachers and the pupils in the lessons observed and the positive attitude of the pupils towards their learning;
- the quality of the learning and teaching which was good or better in most of the lessons visited;
- the good outcomes achieved by the pupils at GCSE level;
- the very effective use of ICT and practical resources to motivate the pupils and develop their interest in relevant events and issues;
- the good opportunities for investigative fieldwork throughout KS3; and
- the effective leadership of the head of department and his commitment to developing the provision and raising further the standards achieved by the pupils.

The areas of improvement include the need to:

- develop further the quality of the marking and feedback to help the pupils improve their own work and achieve higher standards; and
- continue to review the planning for KS3 to guide learning and teaching and promote best practice.

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