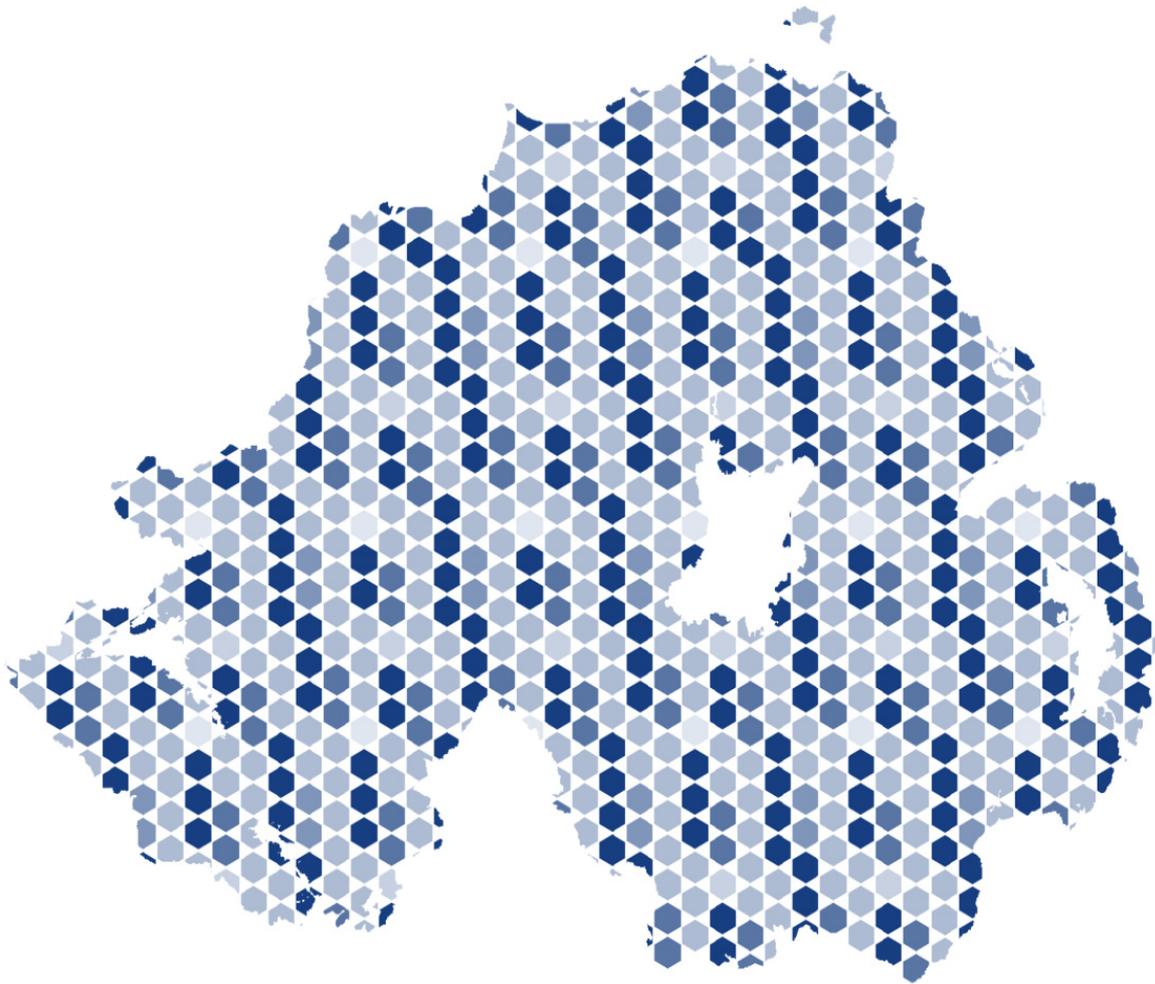


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Coleraine High School

Controlled, Grammar, Girls', 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection
in October 2011



Providing Inspection Services for
Department of Education
Department for Employment and Learning
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER
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EXCELLENCE



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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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

The term 'similar schools' refers to schools in the same free school meal category, whether they are selective or non-selective, as defined by the Department of Education.

CEIAG	Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
DE	Department of Education
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FSM	Free School Meals
GCE A	General Certificate of Education Advanced Levels
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KS	Key stage
NI	Northern Ireland
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Coleraine High School is **over-subscribed**. The school is attracting pupils with a widening range of academic ability and, since 2008, at least 20% of the school's Year 8 intake comes from applying non-academic criteria.

Coleraine High School	2008	2009	2010	2011
Enrolment	799	797	792	813
FSM (Band 1) Percentage	4.4	4.3	4.5	5.4
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	1 (8)	1 (8)	0.8 (7)	0.7 (6)
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	0	1	0	1
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	0	2	5	0
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	NA	62	52	40
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	NA	80	67	56
% of Y8 pupils with L4 English	NA	37	48	56
% of Y8 pupils with L4 mathematics	NA	19	30	41

Source: Data as held by the school.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

2.1 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 inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The ETI will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are very good¹.

KEY FINDINGS

The pupils demonstrate a very positive disposition to learning and develop very good social skills. In most lessons they interact confidently with their teachers, other school staff and peers. They are well motivated and keen learners who have high expectations. They apply their well-developed communication and ICT skills across the curriculum.

¹ For detailed results in public examinations, including in vocational subjects, see Appendices 1 and 2.

Comparisons based on FSM Band 1	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	96.7	95	99.2
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	92.4	89.2	97.6
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Below the average</i>	<i>Above the average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including English and mathematics	90.8	89.2	97.6
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Below the average</i>	<i>Well above the average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	95.8	97.5	99.1

Source: Data on Year 12 (KS4) performance as held by the school, with DE benchmarks.

The pupils attain good GCSE outcomes, comparable with similar selective schools and which increased significantly in 2011.

Over the past three years over two-fifths of subjects surpassing the Northern Ireland average at GCSE level by 5% or more. The school aims to improve the number of pupils achieving A and A* grades through the introduction of individual challenge targets².

Comparisons based on FSM Band 1	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	95	100	97
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	68	88.7	77.4
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	<i>Below the average</i>	<i>Above the average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>

Source: Data on Year 14 (A2) performance as held by the school, with DE benchmarks.

The pupils attain very good GCE A level outcomes that are comparable with similar selective schools. Almost half of the individual subjects at A level are 5% points or more above the corresponding NI averages, over the past three years³.

4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1 The quality of provision for learning is good.

The provision in English is good, in mathematics it is satisfactory and in physical education it is very good⁴.

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of just over three-quarters of the lessons observed was good or very good, in almost equal measure, with strengths in almost all aspects.

The pupils' thinking skills and their independence as learners is well-developed through open-ended questioning prompting good quality discussion. Well-structured lessons provide learning activities which are set in meaningful and interesting contexts, supported appropriately by the use of ICT (including the use of on-line learning).

² See Appendix 2, Table 2

³ See Appendix 2, Table 4

⁴ See Appendix 3

Around one-quarter of lessons, while satisfactory, were over-directed by the teachers and failed to provide learning activities that were closely matched to the needs, interests and abilities of all of the pupils.

The quality of provision for SEN is satisfactory.

The teachers are responsive to the pastoral needs of the pupils who have literacy and numeracy difficulties and promote well their health, well-being and welfare. There is insufficient analysis of the assessment data available to identify the specific nature of difficulty and the degree of under-achievement to ensure that these difficulties are addressed effectively.

The inspection confirms that the continued sharing of examples of good teaching and assessment practice remains a priority for the school leadership.

Most of the pupils take part in an appropriately wide range of non-formal and extra-curricular activities, including community-based, sporting, enterprise and arts activities, which meet their needs and interests. The pupils apply their skills and capabilities in a good range of out-of-class initiatives, such as the maths mentoring programme shared with a nearby maintained secondary school and a special school.

4.2 The quality of the care, guidance and support of pupils is good.

KEY FINDINGS

The pupils' leadership and communication skills are well developed through extensive involvement in well-conceived enrichment opportunities, such as school assemblies and a highly effective School Council. The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary and they are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety or well-being.

The school's care and support for pupils experiencing personal and emotional difficulties, including a very small number at risk of dropping out of school, is a strength. There is effective communication with parents and external agencies to support the welfare of these pupils and to promote their inclusion through individually tailored strategies.

The quality of the taught pastoral programme is inconsistent. There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to learn how to respond to situations affecting their wider welfare.

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is good.

KEY FINDINGS

At KS3, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. At KS4 and at post-16 the school has made good progress in recent years in increasing the curriculum choice offered by widening the range of applied courses. It is a committed and active member of the Coleraine Area Learning Partnership (CALP) and over the past two years, approximately 10% of all KS4 and post-16 pupils take up options through CALP. The school recognises that it needs to increase further the range of applied courses available.

The provision for CEIAG is good. At post-16, the pupils have access to a well-planned, coherent careers education programme which prepares them well for higher education and employment. The pupils develop the skills necessary for employment through, for example, STEM initiatives, work placements in year 13, entrepreneurial initiatives and industrial visits. The KS4 careers provision lacks the coherence to guide the pupils well towards the education, training and employment opportunities available to them.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and the management are good.

KEY FINDINGS

The Principal provides very good leadership: she has a clear vision for improving the school to ensure that the pupils attain high academic standards. She is well supported by two committed Vice-principals and a senior teacher, who lead and manage well the pastoral and curriculum provision.

The quality of the middle management is good. The subject leaders and co-ordinators have begun to implement effective strategies to improve the quality of learning and teaching, such as the introduction of more consistent planning and the gathering of pupil performance data. There are inconsistencies in how this data is used to inform classroom practice, to identify pupil under-performance and to diagnose the need for remedial strategies.

A good quality SDP (which meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005) identifies, through consultation, a number of appropriate priorities to address the needs of all the pupils. Implementation of actions is closely monitored by the Principal and Vice-principals.

Well-managed links with local employers promote awareness of careers and wider links with other schools across the community support the school's work in community relations.

The school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

6. 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 inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The area for improvement is the need to:

- make better use of all of the assessment information gathered, to ensure that the learning and teaching, the SEN provision and the key stage 4 careers provision meets more completely the diverse needs of all of the pupils.

The ETI will monitor the school's progress in addressing the area for improvement.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Coleraine High School
 ii. School Reference Number: 341-0033
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Standard
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 03/11/11
 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 8 Intake	121	105	121	122	120
Total enrolment	806	799	797	792	804

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	96.1	95.6	95.3	93.6	96.5	96.7	94.3	95	95
% Attendance young people on Special Educational Needs Register									

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 50.267
- iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.776
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 15.995
- Number of Teachers involved in Area of Study: 22
 (Focused only)

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Girls	120	122	122	118	112	103	107	804
Enrolment: Total	120	122	122	118	112	103	107	804
PTR	18.086	18.629	18.69	18.069	18.069	12.557	14.32	

- 1.5 Staying On Rate (2009/10) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	92.5	NI Av Year 13	93.9
Year 14	85.7	NI Av Year 14	86.9

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	12		94	
Another School	8%	30.7	1%	1.7
Employment	0%	3	0%	3.6
Full-time Further Education	92%	54.1	7%	10.2
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	88%	80.6
Full-time Training	0%	6.5	0%	0.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	0.7	0%	1.3
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	4.9	4%	2.0

TABLE 1 outlines the school's GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

HEADLINE STANDARDS

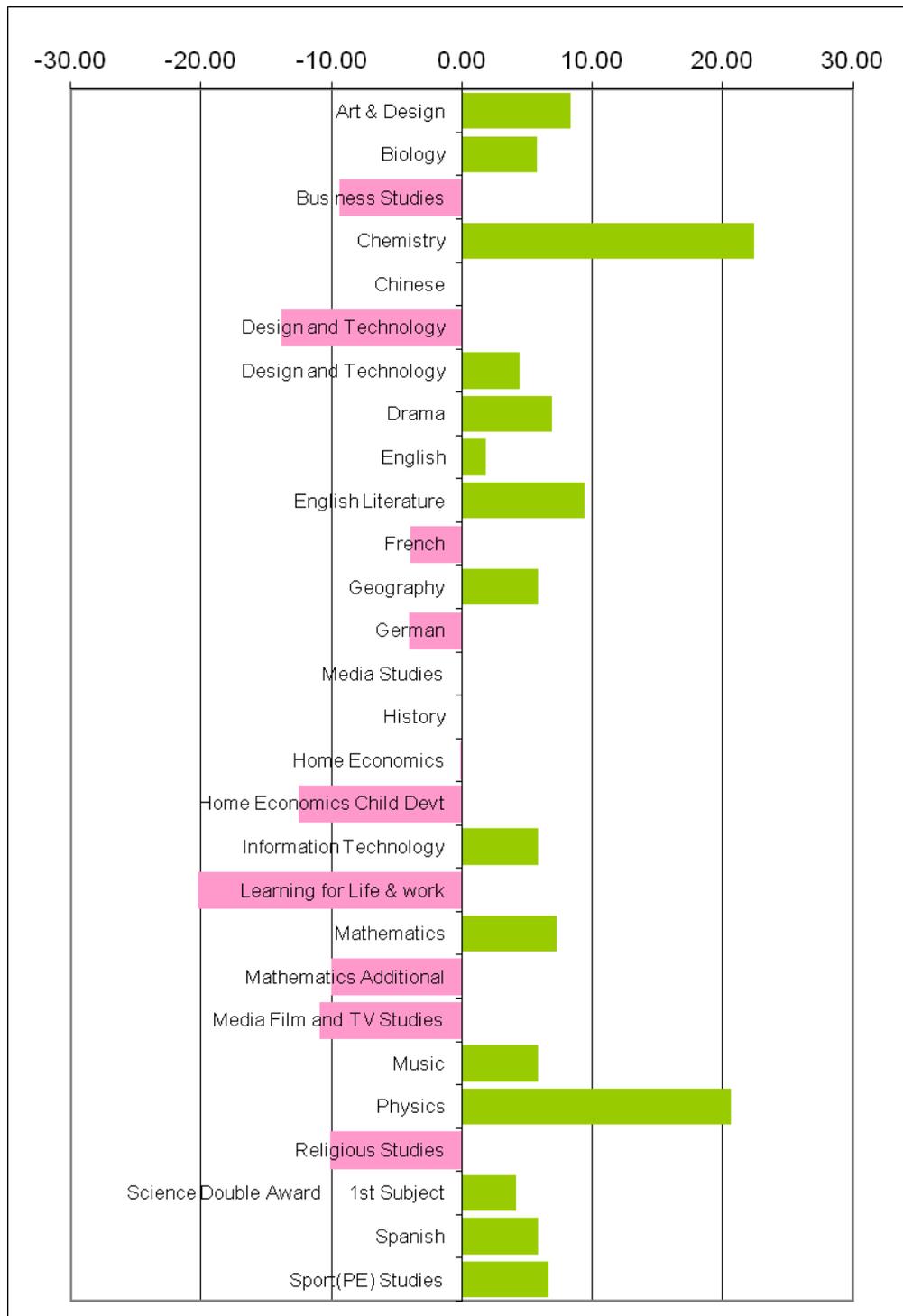
NB: The NI average for all non-selective schools of pupils obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics in 2010 is 34.9%

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

Comparisons based on FSM Band 1	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalent in at least 7 subjects	96.7	95	99.2
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	92.4	89.2	97.6
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Below the average</i>	<i>Above the average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including English and mathematics	90.8	89.2	97.6
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Below the average</i>	<i>Well above the average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	95.8	97.5	99.1

Source: Data as held by Department of Education (NI) and as agreed with the school.

TABLE 2 shows the **3 year average performance of each individual subject at GCSE Grades A*-B**, compared with the corresponding Northern Ireland average



The following subjects had an entry of less than 30 pupils over three years to June 2011: Chinese, Design and Technology, Drama, Home Economics Child Development, Information Technology, Media Studies and Sport (PE) Studies.

TABLE 3 outlines the school's GCE (A2) EXAMINATION RESULTS

HEADLINE STANDARDS

NB: The NI average for all selective schools of pupils entered for A2 level or equivalent: who achieve:

3 or more grades A*-C = 77.7%

2 or more grades A*-E = 99.6%

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

Comparisons based on NI average for selective schools in FSM Band 1	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	95	100	97
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	68.1	88.8	77.4
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Below the average</i>	<i>Above the average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including English and mathematics	100	100	93.1

Source: Data as held by Department of Education (NI) and as agreed with the school.

TABLE 4 shows the **3 year average performance of each individual subject at GCE 'A' Level Grades A*-C**, compared with the corresponding Northern Ireland average



The following subjects had an entry of less than 30 pupils over three years to June 2011: Chinese, Design and Technology, German, History of Art and Design, Music, Politics and Spanish.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The overall quality of the provision for English is good.

The strengths of the work include:

- the very good standards achieved by pupils in GCSE English and English Literature and the excellent standards achieved in A Level English;
- the collegiate approach in the English department including its close links with Drama and Media Studies;
- the promotion of the love of reading through initiatives such as ‘the reading Olympics’, Carnegie Shadowing and Kids’ Literature Quiz;
- the wide range of extracurricular opportunities for pupils to develop writing and oracy skills; and
- the effective leadership of the Head of Department who has implemented important programmes such as target setting and encouraging pupils to plan, review and evaluate their own work.

The areas for improvement are:

- the need for a sharper focus on differentiation in planning and schemes of work in order to improve further the standards of all the pupils as identified by the department; and
- the need to disseminate the very good practice that exists within the department.

Mathematics

The overall quality of the provision for mathematics is satisfactory.

The strengths of the work include:

- the very good standards achieved by the pupils in mathematics at GCSE level;
- the highly motivated pupils who enjoy learning mathematics and work well, both collaboratively and independently;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, a majority of which was good or very good;
- the appropriately wide range of strategies used by the teachers to engage the pupils actively in their learning;

- the collegiality and commitment of the large departmental team to improving the mathematics provision; and
- the review of the Year 8 scheme, which has a sharper focus on disseminating effective learning and teaching strategies.

The areas for improvement are:

- to develop self-evaluation by the teachers of their teaching to improve further the quality of the provision; and
- to raise the levels of attainment in additional and GCE A level mathematics.

Physical Education

The quality of the provision for Physical Education is very good.

The strengths include:

- the supportive ethos and very good relationships between staff and pupils in all the lessons observed;
- the very good standards achieved by the pupils in public examinations;
- the quality of teaching which was very good or better in the majority of the lessons observed;
- the high levels of participation in physical education and the very good standards which most of the pupils' achieve in their practical work
- the excellent leadership of the head of department supported by the hard working, enthusiastic teachers;
- the extensive range of extra-curricular sport activities and the sporting successes of the school.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Coleraine High School focused on achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and on leadership and management across the school as a whole. The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in these three aspects 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>. The evaluation, based on the quality indicators, enabled ETI to make a judgement about the public value provided by the school.

Inspectors scrutinised documentation and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities. Specialist inspectors paid particular attention to English, mathematics and physical education providing detailed oral feedback to the teachers in these areas. Detailed findings are reported in Appendix 3.

The inspection also focused on the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for child protection; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life and on progress towards the Entitlement Framework.

The arrangements for the inspection included:

- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire to the inspection;
- meetings with representatives from the governors; and
- meetings with groups of pupils from years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	163	104	63.8	39
Teachers	54	42	77.7	16
Support Staff	20	14	70	3

Source: Returns from questionnaires to DE.

The returns from the majority of questionnaires sent to the teachers, the support staff and the parents were positive in most respects. A number of teachers commented on weaknesses in aspects of communication and management; some parents were concerned about shortcomings in aspects of the school's provision. The ETI reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and, where appropriate, these have been commented on within the report.

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