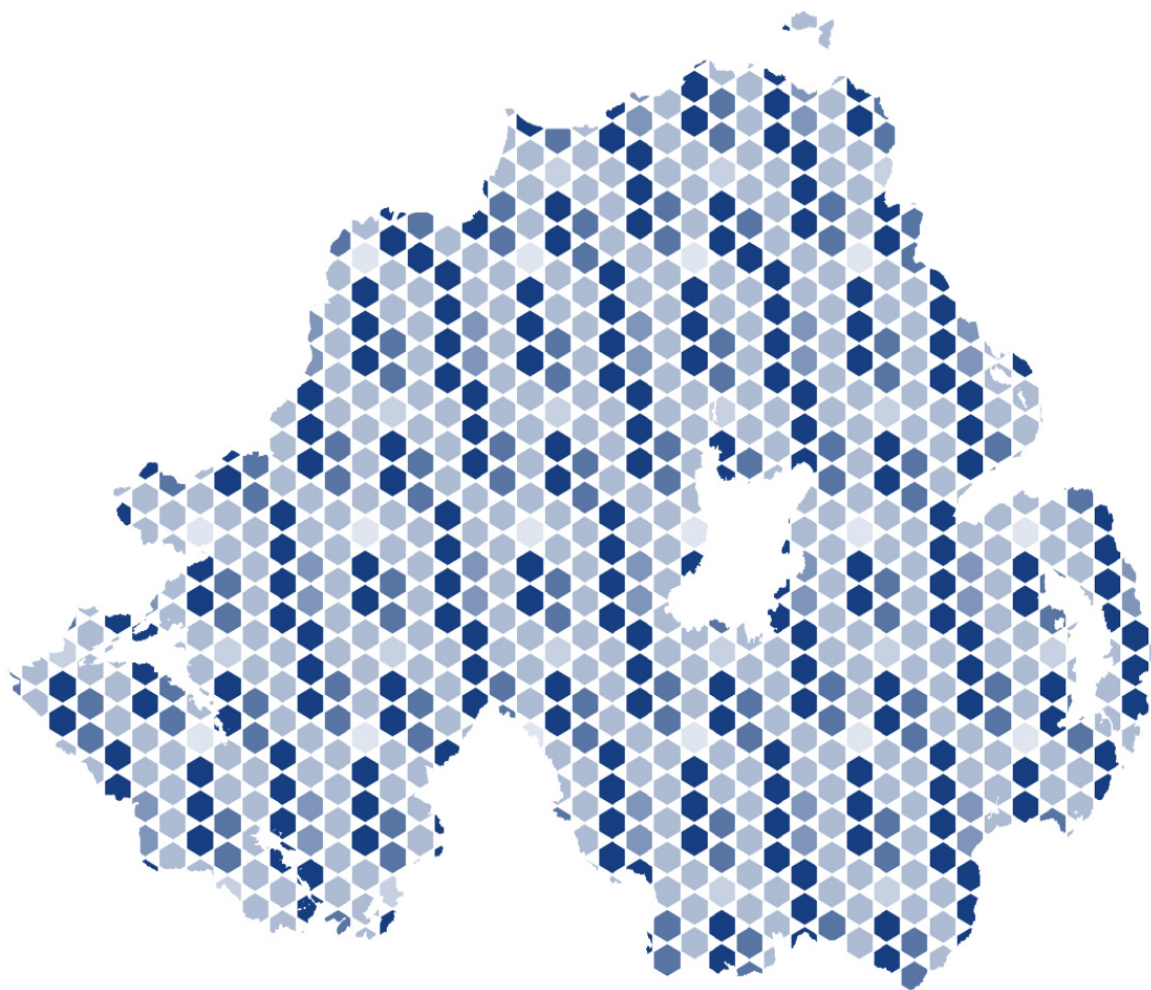


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

De la Salle High School,
Downpatrick

Maintained, non-selective, boys 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection
in January 2012

CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. CONTEXT	1
2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION	1
3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	1
4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING	3
5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	4
6. CONCLUSION	5
APPENDICES	
APPENDICES 1 and 2	Statistical Information
APPENDIX 3	Summary of Main Findings from the areas under focus: History, Mathematics and Science
APPENDIX 4	Scope and Method of Inspection

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 as defined by DE, whether they are selective or non-selective.

CASS	Curriculum Advisory and Support Service of the Education and Library Board
CEIAG	Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
DE	Department of Education
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
EF	Entitlement Framework
FSM	Free School Meals
GCE A	General Certificate of Education Advanced Levels
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KS	Key stage
PE	Physical Education
NI	Northern Ireland
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

1. CONTEXT

1.1 De la Salle High School is situated in Downpatrick. The sixth form provision was established in September 2009 and one cohort completed GCE A Level and equivalent courses in 2011. Over the last three years the enrolment of the school increased by around 10% due mainly to the introduction of the sixth form. The current enrolment includes a significant but decreasing number of pupils who require additional support with their learning. The school's attendance figures are in line with the NI average.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Enrolment	327	339	357	358
FSM (Band) Percentage	27.52	32.74	33.33	35.47
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	25.08 (82)	22.12 (75)	20.45 (73)	20.39 (73)
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	52	54	44	44
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	*	*	5	5
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	5.97	1.64	12.12	6.06
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	5.97	8.20	18.18	12.12
% of Y8 pupils with L4 English	46.27	60.66	68.18	72.73
% of Y8 pupils with L4 mathematics	59.70	59.02	72.73	72.73

Source: Data as held by the school: * fewer than 5

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

2.1 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.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors, and the staff plan for and manage issues related to the sustainability of the small sixth form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are very good.

KEY FINDINGS

The pupils' behaviour during the inspection was exemplary. They are respectful to their peers and teachers and display a clear sense of pride in their school. They respond well to the high expectations of their teachers and have positive attitudes to learning.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	48.98	37.5	40.0
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Significantly above average	Well above average	Well above average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	61.22	68.75	71.11
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Well above average	Well above average	Well above average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	94.81	100	100

Overall, the pupils attain outstanding GCSE outcomes, well above or significantly above the average for similar non-selective schools. Over the past three years more than one-half of subjects exceeded the NI average at GCSE level by 10% or more, with a further one-fifth surpassing the NI average by 5% or more.

In the past three years, 48% of the pupils attained grade A*-C in English and 54% attained grade A*-C in mathematics, both of which are well above the NI average for similar schools.

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	N/A	N/A	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	N/A	N/A	54.5
Comparison with the NI average			Well above average
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	N/A	N/A	90.91
Comparison with the NI average for all non-selective schools			In line with the average

In 2011, the pupils' attainment at GCE A2 Level for grades C or above in at least three subjects was well above the NI average. However, there is too wide a variation in results across the subjects, from more than 10% points above the NI average to more than 10% points below. The inspection confirms the school's stated priority to address this variation in order to improve the overall standards. A significant minority of pupils take applied subjects offered at GCE level and, in the lessons observed, attained good to very good standards.

Just over one half of the year 14 pupils leaving in 2011 progressed to higher education, which is well above the average for similar non-selective schools

4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1 Overall the quality of provision for learning is very good.

KEY FINDINGS

The provision in history, in mathematics and in science is very good.

All of the teaching observed was good or better, with a majority of the lessons being very good and a further small number outstanding. The experienced and knowledgeable classroom assistants provide appropriate support when required, and help the pupils develop as independent learners. The very good or outstanding lessons enable the pupils to apply their prior learning, skills and understanding in new contexts; the plenary sessions are consistently focused well on assessing and consolidating the pupils' learning.

The quality of provision for SEN is good.

The pupils identified with literacy difficulties make very good progress; they are effectively supported on an individual basis by the head of the Special Education Unit. The pupils who require additional help with numeracy benefit from a well-structured programme of withdrawal sessions in the main school. Those pupils who have a statement of educational need are effectively supported by subject teachers who are well informed and advised about the pupils' needs by the SENCO. From lessons seen, and from the attainments of these pupils, it is clear that almost all are making good progress. However, important information about the particular needs of those pupils at stages 1-4 on the SEN register, and strategies to support them effectively, are not shared consistently with the subject teachers. To help raise further the standards attained by all of the pupils who have been identified with additional needs, the school needs to distribute this information to all of the subject teachers.

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

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care is outstanding. The school's mission statement, 'Take care, teach care, show care, evoke care', is reflected well in the welcoming and inclusive ethos, in the excellent working relationships throughout the school and in the high standards achieved by the pupils. The pupils make a meaningful contribution through the school council to aspects of school life that are important to them; the school values their participation. They report that they feel safe and happy in school, and know what to do if they have any concerns about their work, safety and well-being.

The staff and the head of pastoral care respond sensitively to the social and emotional needs of the pupils. The school's well-established links with outside agencies support effectively those pupils who may be at risk of marginalisation, so that their life chances and potential prospects for employment are addressed and enhanced.

The school gives very good attention to promoting healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles; in particular, the boys participate in a well-structured PE programme and a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities.

4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is very good.

KEY FINDINGS

At KS3, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and meets effectively the diverse range of learning needs of all of the pupils. At KS4, the pupils have access to 27 courses. The school works well with parents and carers to ensure that suitable learning pathways are available which are matched to the learning aspirations of the pupils.

Although the numbers registered in the sixth form are rising, they are still too low. Nevertheless, the school's consortium arrangements, in particular those with an adjoining grammar school, make possible the shared offer of 27 courses in year 13 and 26 courses in year 14. The curriculum offer meets fully the requirements of the EF and, because the very close proximity of the grammar school reduces the cost of movement of pupils and staff, the additional financial cost for post-16 provision at present is low. In addition, this co-operation has allowed the selective and non-selective school to build up close curricular, sporting and social links.

The provision for CEIAG is very good.

The pupils are able to identify, assess and develop their skills and the qualities necessary to make well-informed and realistic career decisions through a range of very good opportunities including: interviews with the Careers Advisor; a two-week work experience placement in year 12; and another placement in year 13. They access a wide range of up-to-date and relevant resources, including ICT-based careers information materials. The head of CEIAG is supported well by the SLT, and the arrangements to monitor and evaluate the quality of CEIAG provision are very effective.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and the management are outstanding.

KEY FINDINGS

The Principal's leadership of the school is outstanding. The Principal and SLT provide clear strategic direction, are committed strongly to the school's caring ethos, and have overseen effectively the year-on-year improvement in GCSE outcomes. There is a strong culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement, underpinned well by the analysis and use of relevant quantitative and qualitative data. The curriculum team, supported well by the SLT and the school's CASS Officer, has adopted an innovative approach to the filming and dissemination of exemplary classroom practice; the quality and impact of this work is outstanding.

The excellent communication and working relationships at all levels support well the collegial ethos promoted by the SLT. The middle managers monitor and evaluate the work of their departments effectively and link their departmental priorities closely to those of the SDP. The quality of their action planning is very good and is focused appropriately on raising standards.

The SDP meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005. It identifies, through consultation, a range of appropriate priorities to meet the needs of all of the pupils. The format of the school development plan now requires some adjustment, in particular to ensure that the range of priorities set out can be monitored more easily and evaluated rigorously.

The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school; they work effectively with the Principal to ensure that the school is well managed and provide challenge where needed.

The school maintains very good links and partnerships with a wide range of organisations and external agencies, including the two local maintained post-primary schools, local businesses and support services which support well the pupils' career aspirations and personal development.

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

Given the findings of the inspection, the school meets the needs and expectations of the school community very effectively.

6. 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.

It will be important that the employing authority, school governors, and the staff plan for and manage issues related to the sustainability of the sixth form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: De La Salle High
 ii. School Reference Number: 423-0224
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Catholic Maintained
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 23/01/12
 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	58	67	61	66	66
Total enrolment	341	327	339	357	358

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	91.9	89.6	87.7	86.3	89.5	97.4	91.5	90.5	91

1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers:	25	iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact):	0.822
ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio):	14.32		

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	66	64	64	70	58	21	15	358
Enrolment: Total	66	64	64	70	58	21	15	358
PTR	16.043	15.11	15.11	14.166	12.879	14.142	10.102	

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

Year 13	27.9	NI Av Year 13	47.4
Year 14	17.7	NI Av Year 14	34.5

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	50		4	
Another School	2%	14.8	25%	2.4
Employment	2%	5.2	25%	12.3
Full-time Further Education	54%	47.5	50%	28
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	0%	42.5
Full-time Training	28%	25.1	0%	5.1
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.6	0%	5.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	14%	3.8	0%	3.9

TABLE 1 outlines the school's GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS**GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS****HEADLINE STANDARDS**

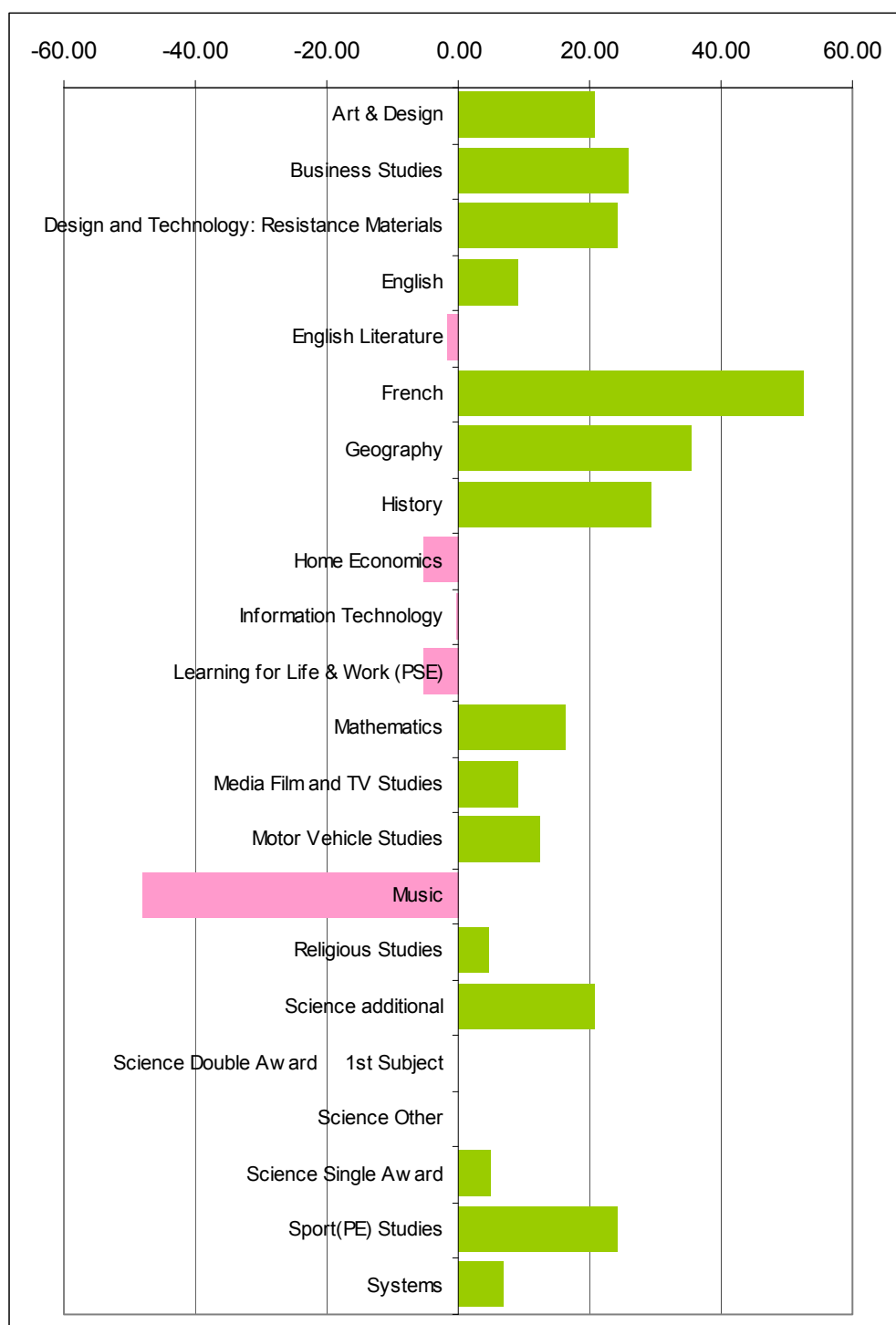
NB: The NI average for all non-selective schools of pupils obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics in 2010 is 34.9%

Data on Year 12(Key Stage 4) performance

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	48.98	37.5	40.0
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Significantly above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	61.22	68.75	71.11
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	94.81	100	100

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

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



The following subjects had an entry of fewer than 30 pupils over three years to June 2011: French, Home Economics, Learning for Life and Work, Media and Film Studies, Motor Vehicle Studies, Music, and Science Additional.

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

HEADLINE STANDARDS

NB: The NI average in 2010, for all schools, of pupils entered for A2 level or equivalent: who achieve: 3 or more grades A*-C = 42.7%. The NI average, for all schools, of pupils entered for A2 level or equivalent who achieve 2 or more grades A*-E = 94.7%.

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	N/A	N/A	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	N/A	N/A	54.5
Comparison with the NI average			Well above average
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	N/A	N/A	90.91
Comparison with the NI average for all non-selective schools			In line with the average

OTHER RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4**Applied and Vocational Courses taken in the last three years.**

Subject	2009		2010		2011		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Occupational Studies	70	100	80.8	100	77.3	90.1	78

OTHER RESULTS: POST-16

Applied and Vocational Courses taken in the last three years.
(All courses Level 3, unless otherwise stated)

Subject	2009		2010		2011		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
BTEC Travel & Tourism					100	100	8
BTEC Construction					100	100	6
GCE Media					100	100	6

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

History

The overall quality of the provision in history is very good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the outstanding working relationships between the pupils and teachers;
- the excellent standards attained by the pupils at GCSE level;
- the quality of teaching and learning which ranged from good to outstanding in the lessons observed;
- the high levels of participation by the pupils in class discussion and the quality of their extended responses;
- the ability of the pupils to make connections across their learning and to respond effectively to local and contemporary issues which affect their lives; and
- the highly effective leadership of the head of department who has brought about improvement through rigorous self-evaluation.

Mathematics

The overall quality of the provision for mathematics is very good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the hard work and commitment of the teachers, including the high level of individual support provided for the pupils;
- the good or better quality of teaching in all of the lessons observed;
- the very good standards achieved in GCSE examinations;
- the outstanding leadership and management of mathematics;
- the effective self-evaluation leading to improvement through, for example, Action Research projects undertaken by the mathematics team; and
- the wide range of activities being used to promote mathematics.

Science

The overall quality of the provision for science is very good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the positive working relationships and the willingness of the pupils to respond enthusiastically and apply their scientific knowledge when given the opportunities;

- the good or very good quality of the teaching in all of the lessons observed, which incorporated a wide range of effective learning strategies and resources to engage the pupils actively and collaboratively in their learning;
- the very good standards attained by the pupils taking Double Award Science;
- the significant improvement over the past three years in the standards attained by the pupils taking Single Award Science which are currently well above the NI average;
- the effective analysis of qualitative and quantitative data to track the pupils' progress and to inform learning and teaching; and
- the commitment of the head of department and the departmental team to review and improve classroom practice.

The area for improvement is to:

- continue to increase the percentage of pupils taking Double Award Science.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of De la Salle 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 history, mathematics and science, providing detailed oral feedback to the teachers in these areas. Detailed findings are reported in Annex 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, CEIAG and on progress towards the EF.

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	119	35	29.40	17
Teachers	25	22	88	6
Support Staff	20	14	70	*

Source: returns from questionnaires to Inspection Services Branch at DE * Fewer than 5

The returns from the questionnaires sent to the parents, the teachers and the support staff were positive in almost all respects; in particular the parents appreciate the leadership of the Principal, the very good working relationships between the staff and the pupils and the support for those pupils who have additional needs in their learning. The ETI reported to the Principal and the representatives of the governors these findings and the few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires. Where appropriate, these areas have been commented on within the report.

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2012

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk

