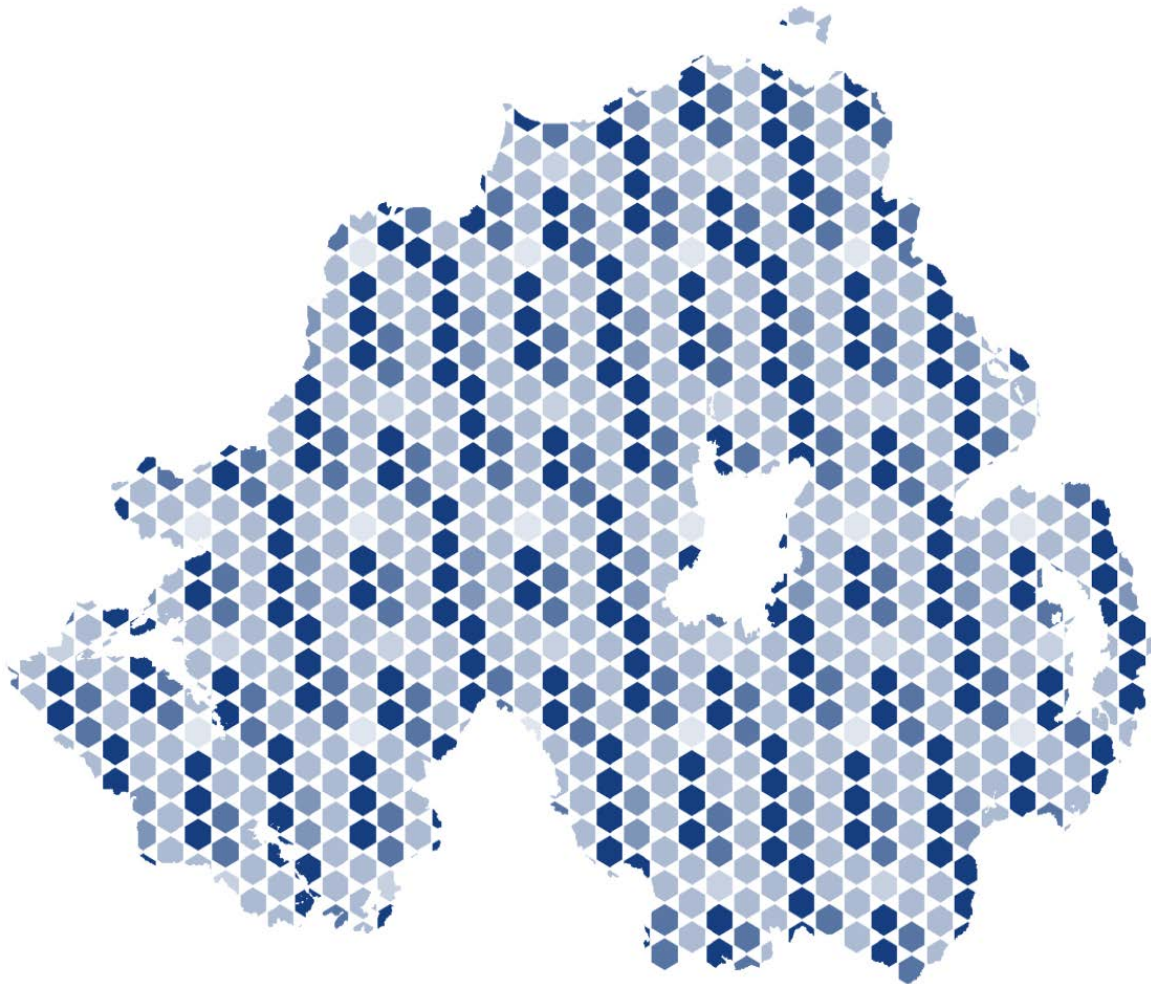


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Glastry College, Ballyhalbert

Controlled, co-educational, 11.18, non-selective school

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013



CONTENTS

Section		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION Including the overall finding of the inspection	1
2.	ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	2
3.	PROVISION FOR LEARNING	3
4.	LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
5.	CONCLUSION	7
 APPENDICES		
	APPENDIX 1 PERFORMANCE & STATISTICAL DATA	
	APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS: English, mathematics and modern languages	
	APPENDIX 3 ACCOMMODATION AND/OR HEALTH AND SAFETY	

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, 10,12, 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	128	40	31	22
Teachers	45	25	55	8
Support Staff	17	9	52	*

* 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:

Performance Level	Descriptor
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

Glastry College draws its pupils from a wide area of the Ards peninsula including Bangor, Donaghadee, Newtownards and Portaferry. The enrolment and the percentage of pupils requiring additional support with their learning have remained stable over the last four years although the intake dropped slightly in 2012. At the same time, the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased by half. The sixth form has grown steadily to just under 100 over the past five years. The school's attendance figures are above the NI average.

Glastry	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 8 Intake	114	117	112	98
Enrolment	657	660	640	648
% Attendance (NI Average)	92 (91)	93 (91)	93 (91)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage	12	13	15	18
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	22(145)	22(143)	18(118)	21(134)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs	23	23	19	21
No. of newcomers	3	6	*	1
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	3	9	11	8
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	11	13	21	12
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	74	59	68	68
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	75	71	71	78

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

1.2 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Glastry College 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 science 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 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 the Entitlement Framework.

1.3 OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Satisfactory
Provision for Learning	Good
Leadership and Management	Good

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are satisfactory.

KEY FINDINGS

There are very good relationships between the teachers, pupils, parents, staff and members of the wider community. The outworking of the school's mission statement to 'respect every child and provide for them as individuals' is evident throughout the school.

The pupils demonstrate a positive disposition to learning and develop good social skills.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects	2010	2011	2012
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	99	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	59	46	54
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Below average</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	39	37	37
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	85	95	90
Percentage of FSM entitled school leavers achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A*-C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	7	21	28

Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks¹

The standards that the pupils attain in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations are overall satisfactory. The pupils make good progress from KS2 to KS3 and to GCSE in many of the main subjects taken; however, progress is not consistent in every subject. In KS4, all pupils are entered for GCSE examinations and none leave without a GCSE qualification. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more subjects at grades A*-C has fluctuated over the past three years and is below the average for similar non-selective schools. When English and mathematics are included, the proportion has remained in line

¹ DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

with the NI average over the corresponding period. Progress and attainment in English and science are very good; in mathematics progress and achievement are less than they should be. In addition the pupils achieve very well in vocational qualifications. The attainment in GCSE examinations of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased by four times from a low base over the past three years and is above the NI average.

The range of examination courses and careers pathways is appropriate for pupils who require additional support with their learning; the majority achieve well in external examinations in relation to their ability.

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

GCE A Level or equivalent	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	97	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	15	25	26
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	91	100	93

Over the last three years, there has been a gradual increase in pupils achieving three GCE A levels at grades A*-C at (GCE) Advanced (A) level. While the attainment in three subjects at grades A*-C is well below average for all schools, the pupils achieve well in two; nearly all the pupils are achieving A*-E and almost a half of the pupils achieve A*-C in two A levels. In addition, the pupils achieve very well in post-16 vocational qualifications which provide an appropriate progression pathway for many pupils.

The sixth form pupils make informed choices regarding their career goals and pathways; almost all of the year 14 pupils' progress to further and higher education.

3. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 The quality of the provision for learning is good.

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the provision in English and science is very good and in mathematics it is satisfactory².

The teaching and learning observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory, a majority was good or better. In the most effective practice, in a third of the lessons seen, which were very good or outstanding, the pupils were enabled to be independent in their learning, given opportunities to think, reflect, and demonstrate the extent of their learning and engage in high quality discussion with their teachers and peers. The lessons had a very good pace, and the tasks set were realistic, challenging and achievable. The teachers have high expectations of what the pupils' can achieve and a wide range of effective teaching strategies are used which result in the pupils achieving very good outcomes.

² For detailed findings of the provision in English, mathematics and science see Appendix 2.

In a third of the lessons seen the teaching while satisfactory, had important areas for improvement. The range of abilities within the classes was not addressed sufficiently and the level of the pupils' engagement in learning was too low. On these occasions, there was often a lack of pace and challenge, and sometimes, an over reliance on worksheets that occupied rather than challenged the pupils. In addition, there were missed opportunities for the pupils to work collaboratively and insufficient focus on the intended learning.

The school has invested in Information and Communication Technology(ICT) and places a priority on developing the use of ICT to develop the pupils' ICT skills and to enhance learning. The school has recently attracted a relevant national award. In some instances ICT is being used well to enhance the pupils' learning, but such practice is not common-place. While provision is generally satisfactory,there is a need to review the pupils' access to and use of ICT resources to improve their skills and learning experiences.

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

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of pastoral care is very good.

A particular feature of the school is its strong sense of community and the very good working relationships between the pupils and staff. The pupils are very welcoming to visitors, confident and courteous; their behaviour both in and out of class is very good.

The pupils are very well cared for and supported, personally, emotionally and educationally, throughout their school life. There is an effective positive behaviour policy which incorporates a well-conceived reward system about which the pupils spoke very positively. As the pupils progress through the school, they benefit from the wide-range of opportunities available to them to accept responsibility and develop important leadership skills by being involved in the school council, and in, the effective peer-mentoring programme and by undertaking prefect duties. The school is committed strongly to supporting pupils who are at risk of marginalisation and has in place effective strategies to ensure their inclusion and retention in school.

The vice-principal, with responsibility for pastoral care, provides effective leadership and is well supported by a strong pastoral team who are highly committed to the care and welfare of all pupils.

The very good collaborative working relationship between the pastoral and curriculum vice-principals ensures that there is an integrated understanding of the relationships between care, guidance, support, effective teaching, learning and attainment. The pastoral provision supports effectively the raising of standards and achievements for all of the pupils.

The pupils appreciate the extra-curricular arrangements and enjoy being able to take part in sports and other cultural activities, some of which promote a cross-community dimension. They also indicated that they feel safe and secure in the school and know what to do if they have any concerns regarding their work, safety or well being. Access to a confidential counselling service, although over-subscribed, is appreciated by the pupils.

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

The quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.

The provision for the pupils with special education needs (SEN) is given a high priority by the senior leadership team (SLT) and the school development plan outlines a clear and appropriate direction for the review and development of this important area. The pupils who require additional support with their learning develop their confidence and social skills in a caring, learning environment. They are supported effectively by the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in the small class groupings for English and mathematics and by a team of classroom assistants in the other subject areas.

At present, the targets and strategies within the individual education plans (IEP's) are unclear and do not inform sufficiently across the school the teachers' planning and classroom practice. The SENCO needs to collaborate with all of the subject teachers to revise the IEP's, monitor regularly and review rigorously the progress of pupils on the SEN register. The SENCO has recently written a good SEN policy that needs to be implemented fully.

The quality of the provision for careers education and guidance is good.

All of the pupils in the school benefit from a coherent, well-conceived, taught careers programme, supplemented effectively by careers input from across the curriculum ,especially so in science,technology,engineering and mathematics. The pupils develop their self-awareness and the skills and qualities which support their progression to further study and/or employment. More needs to be done, to enhance their decision-making skills, by examining gender stereotypes in careers and a wider range of career pathways, including employer-led apprenticeships and higher education courses provided by the further education colleges. The pupils in both years 12 and 13 participate in a well-planned work experience programme that develops their knowledge and understanding of the world of work and enhances their employability skills. In addition the pupils have good access to, and benefit from, independent careers advice through an effective partnership agreement with the Department for Learning and Employment Careers Service.

The CEIAG provision is managed and led effectively; the evaluation of the quality of provision includes the appropriate use of feedback from pupils.

3.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is good

KEY FINDINGS

The principal and the SLT show a strong commitment to the Entitlement Framework through the school's very good links and effective collaboration with local post-primary schools in the North Down and Ards Learning Community, and the local College of Further Education, the South East Regional College (SERC).

The school provides the pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum which is relevant to their needs and is appropriate for their ability levels and career aspirations. There is effective collaboration with the SERC for groups of pupils in years 11 and 12 who are undertaking courses in occupational studies. In collaboration with other schools in the local area community, the school also provides a sufficiently broad range of applied and vocational subjects in the sixth form. The curriculum is further enhanced with the provision of Edexcel national awards in engineering and in sports, by the SERC.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The overall quality of leadership and management is good.

KEY FINDINGS

The Principal provides very good leadership; he is highly effective and adopts a pragmatic approach to leading the school, which is sensitive and responsive to the needs of the pupils and staff. His clear strategic direction for the school and commitment to the pastoral and academic needs of the pupils have gained him the respect of the governors, teachers, parents, pupils and the wider community. The SLT consisting of the Principal and two vice-principals provide effective leadership and have a clear, pupil-centred vision for the work and development of the school. The Principal is reviewing the leadership and management structure to create an additional tier of senior managers to support the SLT and to develop further the leadership capacity of middle managers. Based on inspection evidence, ETI endorse this appropriate commitment to distributed leadership.

There is some variation in the quality of leadership and management across the middle management tier. Most of the middle managers are enthusiastic about their role and have implemented effective strategies to improve the quality of learning, teaching and the outcomes achieved by the pupils in public examinations. However in a significant minority of departments, there is variation in the implementation of these strategies, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and the standards achieved across the school. In these departments there is also a need for a greater commitment to the school improvement plan.

There is a comprehensive School Development Plan (SDP) that meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations NI (2010). The SDP priorities are informed appropriately by self-evaluation, the appropriate analysis of performance data, and the very good consultation with staff, pupils, parents and governors. School development planning and self-evaluation leading to improvement is strength in the school. It is focused sharply on the explicit goal of continuing 'to close the gap' in relation to educational attainment, especially in the subjects where there is under-performance in public examinations.

Based on the evidence available at the time of inspection the governors are very well-informed about important aspects of the life and work of the school including knowledge of whole-school performance in public examinations and the effectiveness of leadership and management within the school. They are effective in holding leaders to account.

The ETI reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the many very positive responses and the few minor areas of concerns emerging from the questionnaires and where appropriate these have been commented on in the report.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

The available accommodation is used well to support learning and teaching despite the concerns expressed by the teachers, pupils and parents about its age and quality.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 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.

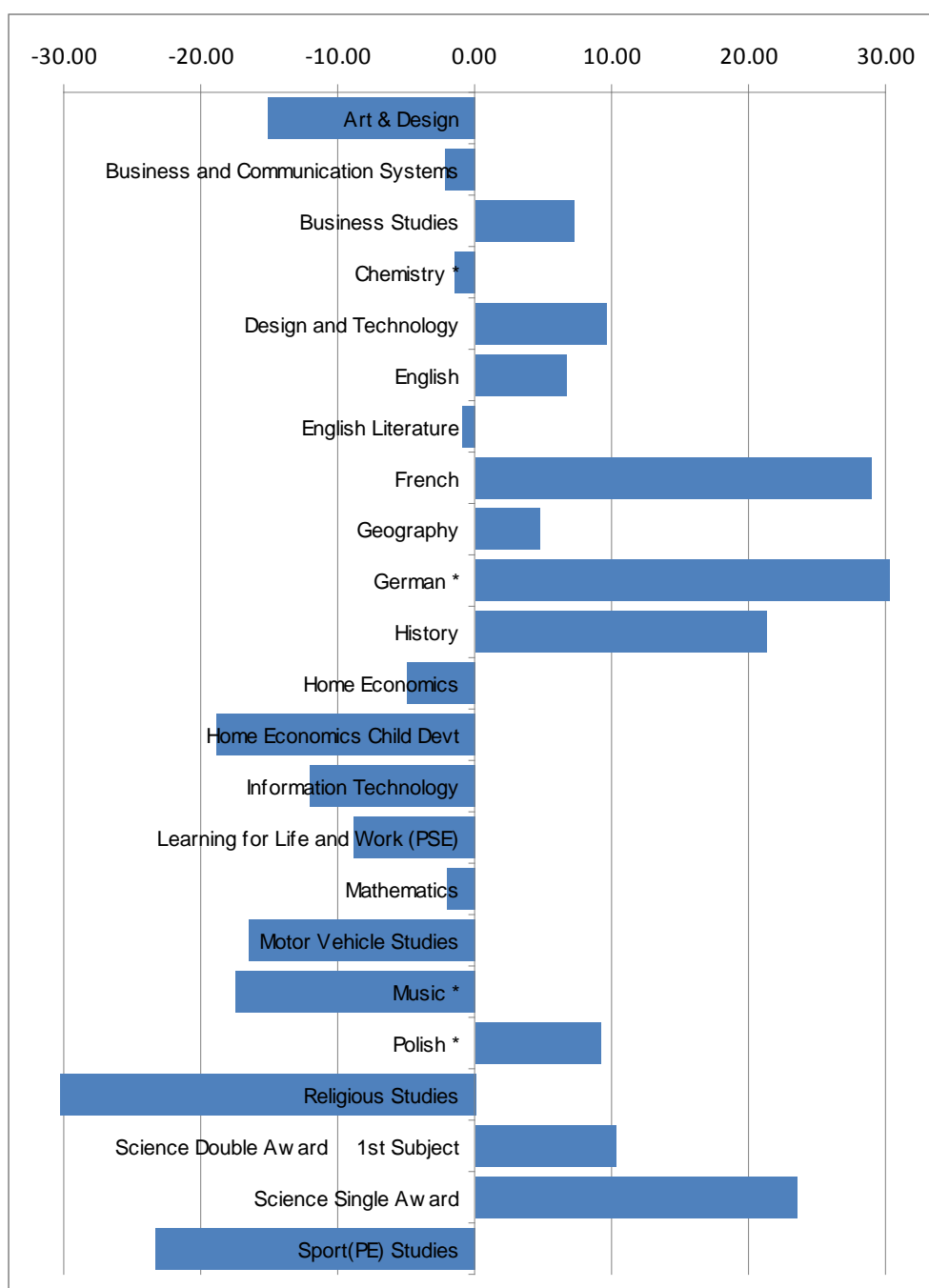
The main area for improvement, which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address, is the need to:

- continue with its action to distribute leadership responsibilities, developing further the effectiveness of middle management, so as to progress the schools' goal of 'closing the gap' in order to improve further and consistently the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations.

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

1.1 GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

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



* total number of entries fewer than 30

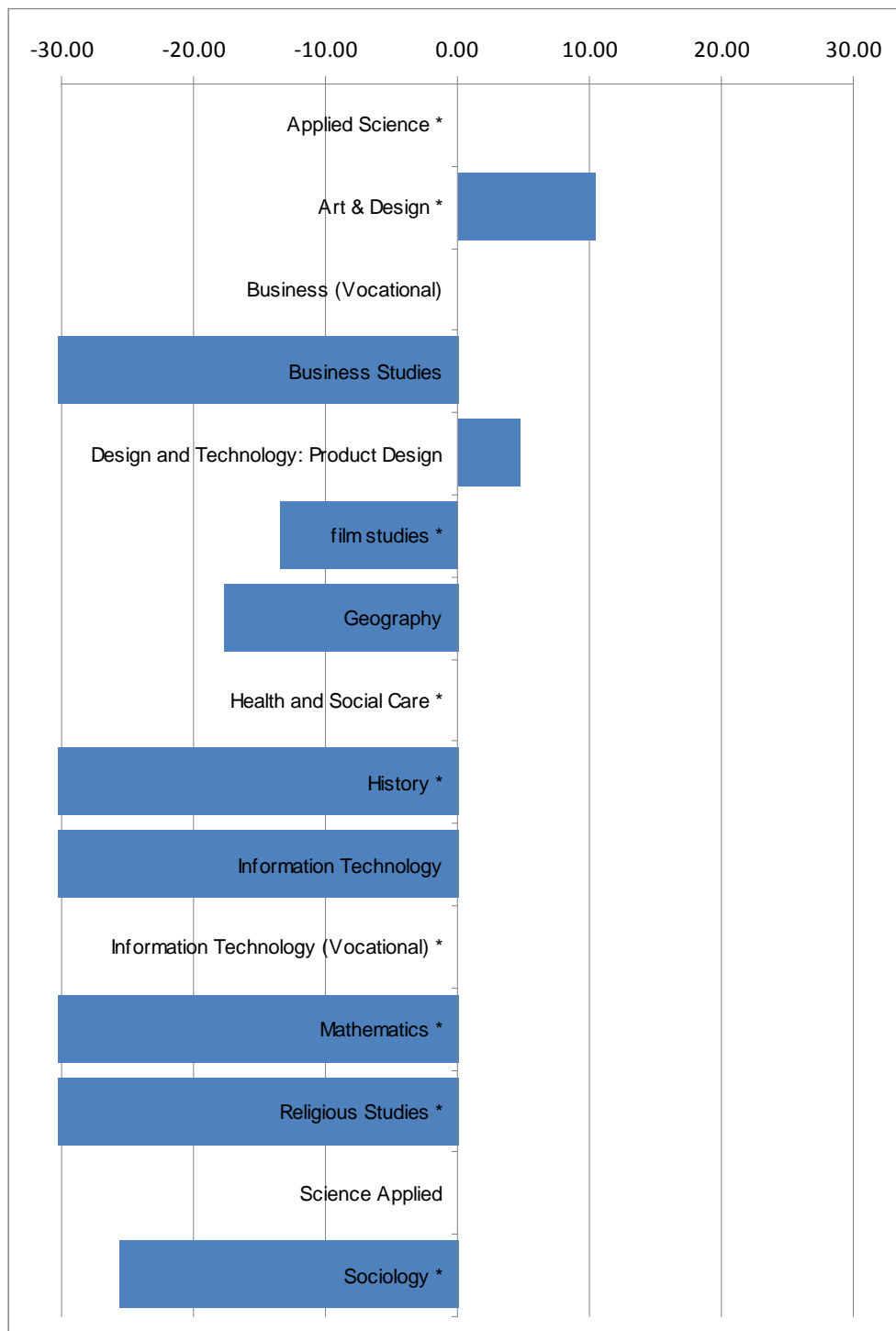
OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

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

Subject	2010		2011		2012		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Occupational Studies	43	100	72	100	75	75	66

1.2 GCE RESULTS

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



* total number of entries fewer than 20

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST 16

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

Subject	2010		2011		2012		Total Entry over 3 Years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
BTec Sports Studies	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	21
BTec Engineering	---	---	100%	100%	100%	100%	7

LEAVERS DESTINATIONS

	Year 12	NI %	Yr 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	79		56	
Another School	15%	15.8	4%	2.5
Employment	6%	4.4	16%	11.7
Full-time Further Education	78%	45	52%	31.1
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	29%	38.5
Full-time Training	0%	28	0%	6.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.5	0%	6.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.3	0%	3.1

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS: ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

The provision for English is very good.

The main strengths are the:

- collegiality and teamwork within the department effectively led by the recently appointed Head of English;
- very good standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE English;
- quality of the teaching observed, with almost one half of the lessons seen being very good; and
- high expectations of the teachers leading to pupils who were motivated and engaged in most of the lessons observed.

Mathematics

The provision for mathematics is satisfactory.

The main strengths are the:

- good working relationships in almost all of the lessons observed;
- pupils' ability to work well collaboratively, when given the opportunity;
- good support provided for individual pupils during the lessons observed; and
- use being made of assessment data to set baselines of the pupils' mathematical ability, to track their progress through Key Stages 3 and 4 and to identify underachievement.

The areas for improvement include the need for the:

- teachers to raise their expectations of what the pupils can achieve and improve the satisfactory outcomes at GCSE;
- teachers to take collective responsibility for improving the learning and teaching, the majority of which was evaluated as satisfactory during the inspection; and
- head of department to lead and monitor closely the required improvements in learning and teaching.

Science

The provision for science is very good

The main strengths are the:

- positive working relationships, and the willingness of the pupils to respond enthusiastically and apply their scientific knowledge when given the opportunities;
- good or very good quality of the teaching in most of the lessons observed, which incorporated a wide range of effective learning strategies and resources to engage the pupils actively and collaboratively in learning;
- very good standards attained by the pupils taking science at KS4;
- effective analysis of the available qualitative and quantitative data to track the pupils' progress and to inform learning and teaching; and
- commitment of the head of department and the departmental team to review and improve classroom practice.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- continue to increase the percentage of pupils taking Double Award science

ACCOMODATION AND/OR HEALTH AND SAFETY

- The boys and girls toilet facilities are inadequate.
- Moisture is penetrating the roof of assembly hall, gymnasium and laboratory 5 in the science and technology block.
- There are no cloakroom facilities for KS3 and KS4 pupils.

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