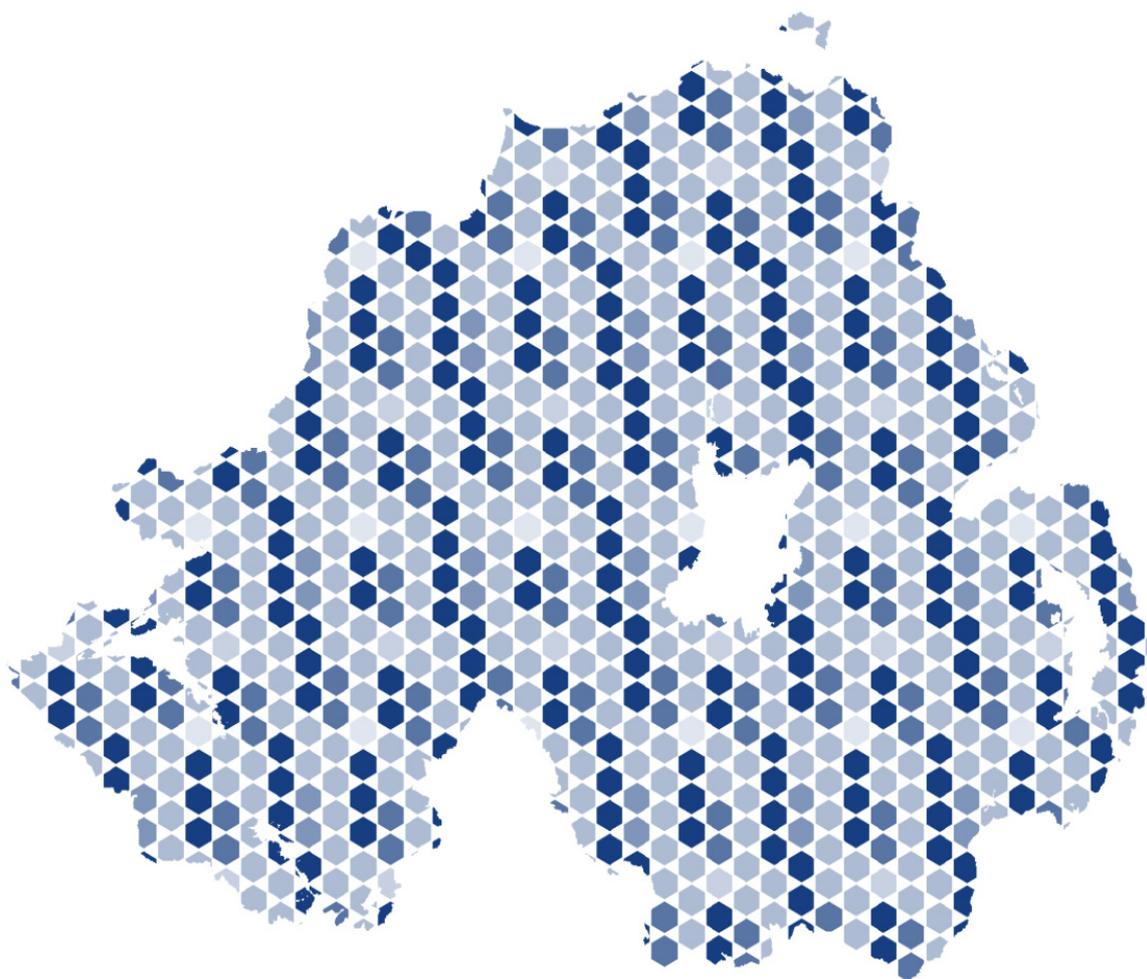


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Laurelhill Community College,
Lisburn, Co Antrim

Controlled, non-selective, co-educational 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



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

CACHE	Council for Awards in Child Care Education
CEIAG	Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
DE	Department of Education
EF	Entitlement Framework
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
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
IEP	Individual Education Plan
KS	Key stage
L	Level
NI	Northern Ireland
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
ST	Senior Teacher
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

1. CONTEXT

1.1 The enrolment in Laurelhill Community College has decreased steadily over the past five years, reflecting the demographic changes in the local catchment area. In contrast, the sixth form enrolment has increased significantly by almost 50% in the last year and is currently 135. The KS2 outcomes at Level 4 and above in English and in mathematics for the current intake of Year 8 are below the corresponding NI averages of approximately 80%. Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils on the SEN Code of Practice has fluctuated. While the overall school attendance has improved over the past two years, the 2010/11 attendance for year 10 and year 11 is below the NI average.

Laurelhill Community College, Lisburn	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Enrolment	908	876	867	829
FSM (Band 1) Percentage	13.33	14.61	13.61	16.64
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	19.49 (177)	21.46 (188)	27.68 (240)	21.23 (176)
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	18	17	14	17
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	6	6	*	8
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English				8.2%
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics				14.1%
% of Y8 pupils with L4 English				67.9%
% of Y8 pupils with L4 mathematics				58.2%

Source: Data as held by the school.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

2.1 In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision.

The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, leadership and management, and in self-evaluation for improvement, which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.1 The standards achieved by the pupils at the end of KS4 are inadequate.

The standards achieved by the pupils following post-16 programmes are satisfactory¹.

KEY FINDINGS

The pupils work independently and contribute well to the organisation of their own learning, when the teachers set realistically high expectations and monitor the pupils' work effectively.

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

The percentage of Year 12 pupils entered for GCSE and equivalents in at least five subjects has decreased over the past three years. As a result, a minority of Year 12 pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve at least five GCSE subjects and / or equivalents.

The percentage of the pupils achieving GCSE grades has decreased over the past three year and is well below the NI average for similar schools.

Comparisons based on FSM Band 1	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	88.00	90.00	85.80
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	50.00	41.00	44.32
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Below average	Well below average	Well below average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	38.00	33.00	29.55
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Below average	Below average	Well below average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	82.00	78.00	81.82

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

The GCE A Level results for pupils obtaining 3 or more grades at A* to C increased significantly in 2010-11 as a consequence of attainment in a vocational course which is the equivalent of three A Levels.

Comparisons based on FSM Band 1	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	27.50	82.00	86.00
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	20.00	36.36	44.00
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	82.50	93.94	92.00
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Well below average	Below average	Below average

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

4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1 The quality of provision for learning is satisfactory.

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the provision in English is satisfactory, in mathematics it is inadequate and in modern languages (where the number of pupils entered is low at a total of 44 over the past three years) **it is good.**

In the lessons observed, the pupils' learning experiences ranged from very good to inadequate; just over one-half of the lessons were satisfactory; two-fifths were good or better and a small number were inadequate.

There is insufficient coordination of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the curriculum to enable the monitoring and evaluation necessary to identify the most appropriate learning interventions early enough.

The pupils have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include community-based sport, enterprise and arts activities, which are aimed at their needs and interests. Appropriately, the school has identified the potential of extra-curricular music, drama, film and sport to support the development of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

The provision for SEN is satisfactory.

Pupils with significant needs make satisfactory progress and achieve a range of accreditations in line with their aspirations and abilities. Their needs are closely monitored and planning for their learning is informed by the generic IEPs and targets set by the SENCO.

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

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the pastoral care within the school is satisfactory. The pupils talked enthusiastically about the welcoming, friendly atmosphere in the school, the approachability of their teachers, and the availability of a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The staff have established and maintained successfully a very caring and supportive ethos. Well-established links with external agencies are used to good effect in addressing the emotional and learning needs of the pupils.

The pupils are aware of what to do if they have any worries about their safety/care and well being.

There is a lack of strategic leadership to identify the causes of underachievement and to address the needs of pupils through the provision of a well planned, cohesive system of care, guidance and support.

4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is satisfactory in KS3, KS4 and post-16

KEY FINDINGS

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all of the pupils at KS3.

At KS4 and post-16, the school offers an increasing range of applied and general qualifications. Collaborative links with the local area-based further education college and the neighbouring selective schools are at an early stage of development and much remains to be done to ensure that pupils are sufficiently well-informed to be able to select the most appropriate career progression pathway to meet their needs and aspirations.

The quality of the provision for CEIAG is satisfactory; the pupils make satisfactory use of a range of CEIAG resources to help inform their individual choices and develop their personal career planning. However, there is an over-reliance on the use of workbooks and a narrow range of learning and teaching strategies to deliver CEIAG, leading to insufficient opportunities for the pupils to develop their decision-making skills.

The arrangements for curriculum development and career planning within the school are not sufficiently proactive or outward-looking to ensure that the educational needs and career aspirations of the pupils are being met.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and the management are inadequate.

KEY FINDINGS

The school has had several changes in leadership and management within the past eight years. The impact of this unsettled period is reported by staff and governors to have led to strained working relationships.

The Principal, who has been in post for 21 months, has inherited a range of significant educational and pastoral issues; in a relatively short time he has accurately identified significant shortcomings in the school's achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and in leadership and management. The inspection confirms the significant areas of weakness identified.

The Principal has reorganised the senior leadership and management structure, appointed new members to the SLT, improved communication and some administrative routines and introduced the beginnings of a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation.

The Principal reports that he inherited very little information from the previous leadership; the SDP had not been updated for at least 18 months. An interim SDP contains a number of areas for development, covering a three year period, to attempt to comply with the School Development Plan Regulations (NI) 2005. However, the plan lacks sufficient prioritisation or any detailed evaluation of the priorities from any previous plan to enable the school to evaluate adequately any progress made or to set any benchmarks for improvement.

There is variation in the ability and the quality of the middle management, especially in how subject leaders and co-ordinators evaluate the effectiveness of their leadership of their area of responsibility and the impact of self-evaluation for improvement. The senior leadership of the school need to address urgently the unsatisfactory arrangements for the leadership and management of mathematics.

Leaders at all levels are not making effective use of the C2k management information system to collate, analyse and evaluate important information about the school's provision and standards achieved. The examination data analysis provided by the school at the time of the inspection, and for some time subsequently was unsatisfactory.

The board of governors has been recently reconstituted. The governors are well informed about the school's position and are involved actively and appropriately in decisions regarding the future strategic direction and development of the school.

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the relevant Department but the following areas need to be addressed:

- all governors on appointment panels need to receive training on the recruitment and vetting of staff;
- the Principal should report on all safeguarding activity at least annually to the Board of Governors; and
- the Record of Child Abuse Complaints made against members of staff needs to be considered annually by the Board of Governors.

6. CONCLUSION

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the strengths in the provision.

The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, leadership and management, and in self-evaluation for improvement, which need to be addressed urgently if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively.

6.1 The main areas for improvement are the need to:

- continue to stabilise the leadership and strengthen the management at all levels within the school to effect improvement;
- raise standards in public examinations, and especially in mathematics;
- make more effective use of data analysis to guide planning for improvement; and
- disseminate the most effective learning and teaching strategies to inform classroom practice.

6.2 The Education and Training Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, over a 12-18 month period.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Laurelhill Community College v. Date of Inspection: W/C 03/10/11
 ii. School Reference Number: 421-0201 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Controlled

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 8 Intake	181	149	158	142	125
Total enrolment	952	934	908	876	867

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	94	93	90.5	89.9	91	95.4	92.6	92	90

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 55.70 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.81
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 14.9

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	67	66	69	90	85	36	22	435
Enrolment: Girls	67	59	67	67	57	44	33	394
Enrolment: Total	134	125	136	157	142	80	55	829
PTR	14.751	15.718	15.449	15.059	14.294	15.641	13.004	

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

Year 13	43.3	NI Av Year 13	47.4
Year 14	29.1	NI Av Year 14	34.5

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	107		40	
Another School	5%	14.8%	0	2.4%
Employment	48%	5.2%	7	12.3%
Full-time Further Education	36%	47.5%	9	28%
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	16	42.5%
Full-time Training	7%	25.1%	4	5.1%
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	3%	3.6%	1	5.8%
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	2%	3.8%	3	3.9%

GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

HEADLINE STANDARDS FOR NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS

NB: For **non-selective schools**, the NI average for pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C in 2010 including English and Mathematics is 34.9%. The corresponding NI average for pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A* to C is 59%.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance for non-selective schools (not based on FSM category)

Comparisons based on NI averages for non selective schools	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	88.00	90.00	85.80
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	50.00	41.00	44.32
Comparison with the NI average for non-selective schools	Below average	Well below average	Well below average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	38.00	33.00	29.55
Comparison with the NI average for non-selective schools	Above average	Below average	Below average

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*-C**, compared with the corresponding Northern Ireland average.

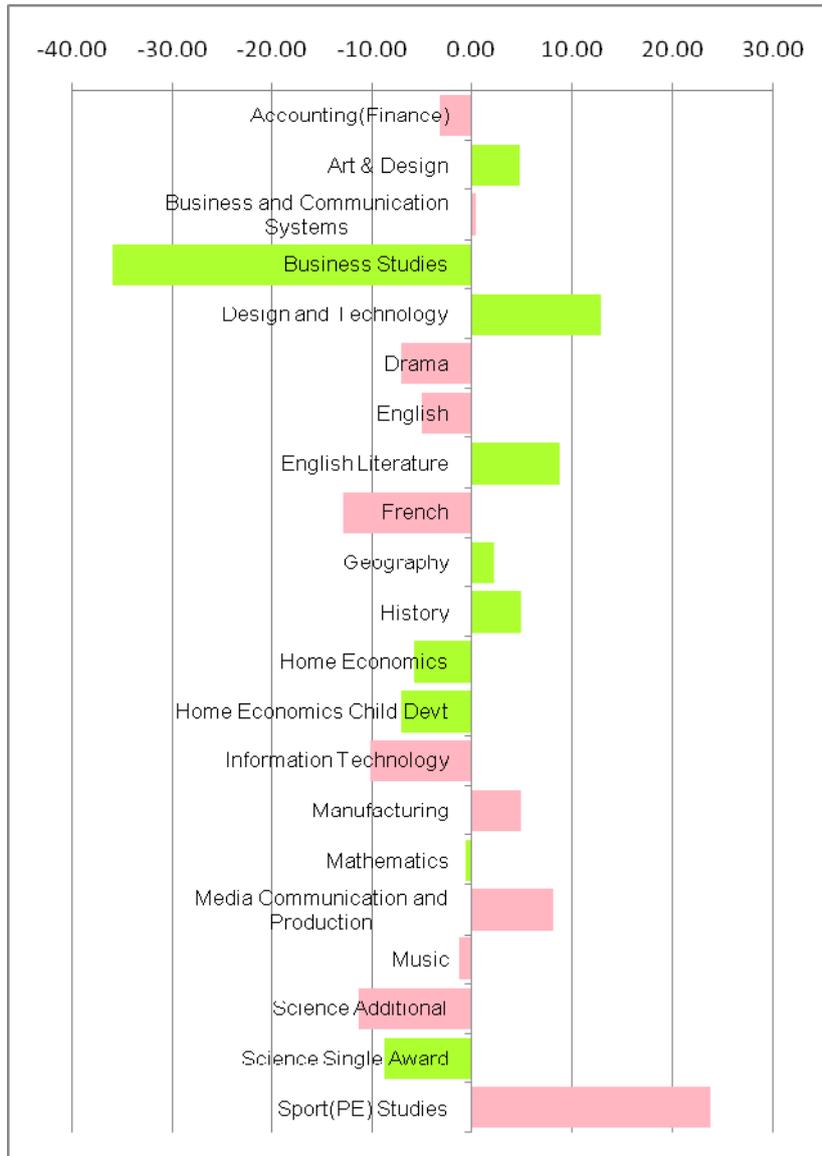


TABLE 3: GCE (A2) EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS

HEADLINE STANDARDS FOR NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS (*not based on FSM category*)

NB: The NI averages in 2010 for **non-selective schools** of pupils entered for A2 level or equivalent: who achieve:

3 or more grades A*-C = 42.7%

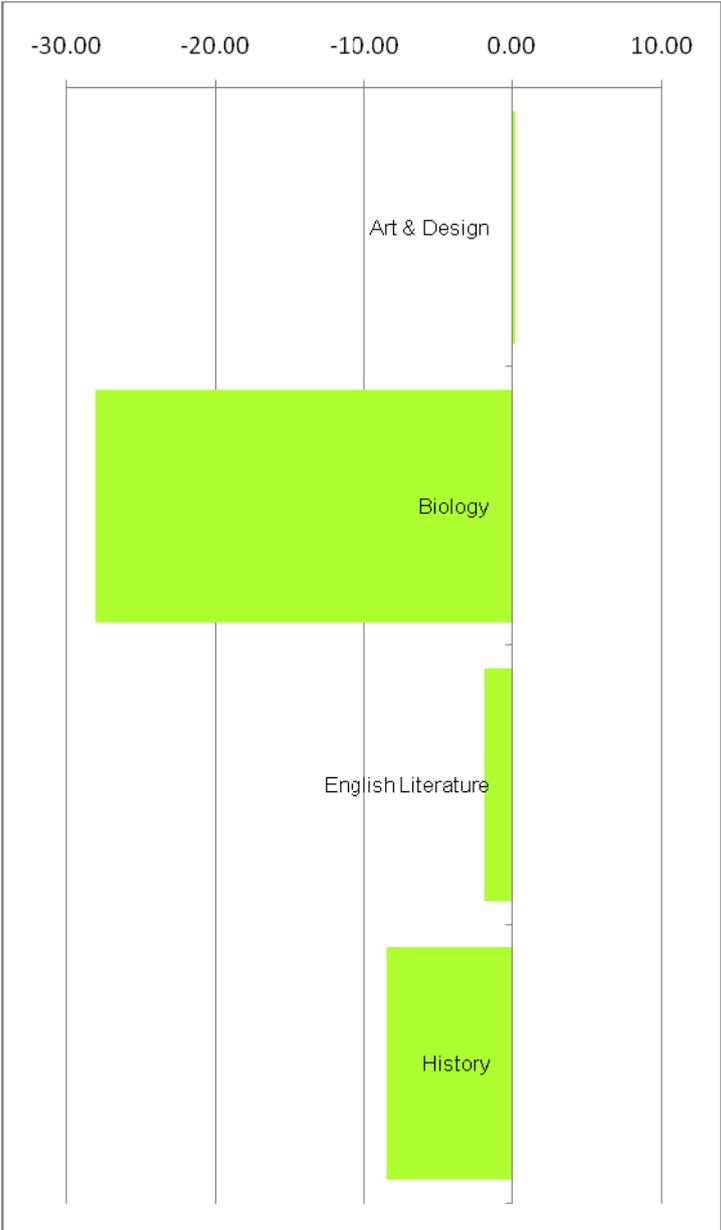
2 or more grades A*-E = 94.7%

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

Comparisons based on NI averages for non-selective schools	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	27.50	82.00	86.00
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	20.00	36.36	44.00
<i>Comparison with the NI average for non-selective schools</i>	<i>Well below average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	82.50	93.94	92.00
<i>Comparison with the NI average for non-selective schools</i>	<i>Well below average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Below average</i>

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*-E**, compared with the corresponding NI average.



Short courses

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 Years	%
Course title	RE Short Course GCSE	RE Short Course GCSE	RE Short Course GCSE		
Level (NQF)	2	2	2		
No entered	81	83	93	257	
No achieved (A-C)	42	65	77	184	71.6%
Classification awarded	GCSE RE Short Course	GCSE RE Short Course	GCSE RE Short Course		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 Years	%
Course title	Spanish GCSE Short Course				
Level (NQF)	2				
No entered	12			12	
No achieved (A-C)	5			5	41.6%
Classification awarded					

Other courses

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 Years	% A-C
Course title	First Certificate in Retail	-	-		
Level (NQF)	2				
No entered	23			23	100%
No achieved (A-C)	23			23	100%
Classification awarded	First Certificate in Retail				

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	DIDA Diploma in Digital Applications L1	DIDA Diploma in Digital Applications L1	DIDA Diploma in Digital Applications L1		
Level (NQF)	1	1	1		
No entered	22	17	22	61	
No achieved L1	5	4	11	20	32.8%
Classification awarded	Diploma in Digital Applications L1	Diploma in Digital Applications L1	Diploma in Digital Applications L1		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	DIDA Diploma in Digital Applications L2	DIDA Diploma in Digital Applications L2	DIDA Diploma in Digital Applications L2		
Level (NQF)	2	2	2		
No entered	22	17	22	61	
No achieved	11	13	17	30	49.2%
Classification awarded	Diploma in Digital Applications L2	Diploma in Digital Applications L2	Diploma in Digital Applications L2		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	Occupational Studies	Occupational Studies	Occupational Studies		
Level	1	1	1		
No entered	72	77	72	221	
No achieved	19	31	18	68	30.8%
Classification awarded	Occupational Studies L1	Occupational Studies L1	Occupational Studies L1		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	Occupational Studies	Occupational Studies	Occupational Studies		
Level	2	2	2		
No entered	72	77	72	221	
No achieved	52	33	48	133	60.2%
Classification awarded	Occupational Studies L2	Occupational Studies L2	Occupational Studies L2		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	BTEC Performing Arts				
Level (NQF)	3				
No entered	8			8	
No achieved					
D (=A)	8			8	100%
M (=C)	-				
P (=E)	-				
Classification awarded	BTEC (L3) National Award Performing Arts				

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	Applied Science (Medical Science)	Applied Science (Medical Science)			
Level (NQF)	3	3			
No entered	8	10		18	
No achieved					
Dist (=A)	2	1		3	16.7%
Merit (=C)	5	4		9	50.0%
Pass (=E)	-	4		4	89.0%
Classification awarded	Applied Science (Medical Science)	Applied Science (Medical Science)			

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	BTEC (L3) National Award Sport				
Level (NQF)	3				
No entered	11			11	
No achieved					
Dist (=A)	11			11	100%
Merit (=C)	-			0	
Pass (=E)	-			0	
Classification awarded	BTEC (L3) National Award Sport				

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	GCE Health & Social Care SA	GCE Health & Social Care SA	GCE Health & Social Care SA		
Level	A Level (voc)	A Level (voc)	A Level (voc)		
No entered	4	1	3	8	
No achieved					
(A-C)	3	0	3	6	75.0%
(A-E)	4	1	3	7	87.5%
Classification awarded	A Level in Health & Social Care (voc)	A Level in Health & Social Care (voc)	A Level in Health & Social Care (voc)		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	GCE Health & Social Care (Double Award)	GCE Health & Social Care (Double Award)	GCE Health & Social Care (Double Award)		
Level	A Level (Voc)	A Level (Voc)	A Level (Voc)		
No of entries	10	4	30	44	
No achieved					
A-C	6	4	18	28	63.6%
A-E	10	4	30	44	100%
Classification awarded	GCE Health & Social Care (Double Award)	GCE Health & Social Care (Double Award)	GCE Health & Social Care (Double Award)		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	GCE Business Studies (Single Award)	GCE Business Studies (Single Award)	GCE Business Studies (Single Award)		
Level	A Level	A Level	A Level		
No entered	15	6	1	22	
No achieved					
A-C	6	3	0	9	40.9%
A-E	14	6	1	21	95.5%
Classification awarded	GCE Business Studies (Single Award)	GCE Business Studies (Single Award)	GCE Business Studies (Single Award)		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	GCE Business Studies (Double Award)	GCE Business Studies (Double Award)	GCE Business Studies (Double Award)		
Level	A Level	A Level	A Level		
No of entries	14	9	12	68	
No achieved					
A-C	9	16	11	36	52.9%
A-E	12	26	20	58	85.3%
Classification awarded	GCE Business Studies (Double Award)	GCE Business Studies (Double Award)	GCE Business Studies (Double Award)		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	GCE Applied ICT	GCE Applied ICT	GCE Applied ICT		
Level	A Level	A Level	A Level		
No entered	17	17	16	50	
No achieved					
A-C	12	9	4	25	50.0%
A-E	16	16	14	46	92.0%
Classification awarded	GCE Applied ICT	GCE Applied ICT	GCE Applied ICT		

	2011	2010	2009	Total for 3 years	%
Course title	CACHE L3 Diploma in Child Care and Education				
Level	A Level				
No entered	8			8	
No achieved					
A-C	6			6	75%
A-E	8			8	100%
Classification awarded	CACHE L3 Diploma in Child Care and Education				

Vocational subjects Level 1				
80% to 100%	60% to 79.99%	40% to 59.99%	20% to 39.99%	0% to 19.99%
			DIDA	
			Occupational Studies	

Vocational subjects Level 2 A-C				
80% to 100%	60% to 79.99%	40% to 59.99%	20% to 39.99%	0% to 19.99%
First Certificate in Retail*	Occupational Studies	DIDA		

*results for one year

Vocational subjects Level 3 A-C				
80% to 100%	60% to 79.99%	40% to 59.99%	20% to 39.99%	0% to 19.99%
BTEC Sport*	Health and Social Care (SA)	Applied Science (Medical Science)**		
BTEC Performing Arts*	Health and Social Care (DA)	Business Studies (SA)		
	Applied ICT (Voc)	Business Studies (DA)		

*results for one year

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

The quality of provision in mathematics is inadequate.

The strengths of the provision include the:

- very good relationships between the teachers and the pupils in most of the lessons observed;
- very good support provided for individual pupils; and
- willingness and enthusiasm of the pupils to participate in learning and work collaboratively when given the opportunity.

The areas of improvement include the need:

- for the senior leadership of the school to address urgently the unsatisfactory arrangements for the leadership and management of mathematics;
- for the department to review the teaching and learning of mathematics to reflect the requirements of the NI curriculum; and
- to raise expectations across the ability range and improve the standards being achieved by the pupils.

The quality of the provision for English is satisfactory.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the collegial ethos fostered by the head of department and the very good working relationships evident in almost all of the classes observed;
- the quality of the teaching observed, the majority of which was good or better;
- the good standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English Literature;
- the extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities for the pupils to develop literacy skills; and
- the good support provided for those pupils who have additional needs in literacy.

The areas for improvement are the need to:

- improve the standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English; and
- make more effective use of assessment data in order to monitor and evaluate the pupils' progress, inform teaching and ensure that the needs of all of the pupils are met more effectively.

Modern Languages

The quality of the provision for modern languages is good.

The strengths of the provision include:

- the very good working relationships between the teachers and the pupils and the very inclusive approach to learning languages;
- the positive and enthusiastic response of most of the pupils, particularly at KS3, to learning languages;
- the well-planned and well-resourced activities and the effective reward systems which motivate the pupils, develop their independence and increase their active participation in and responsibility for their learning;
- the effective use of ICT to enhance the learning and teaching;
- the collegial approach within the department to promote languages and to develop further the learning experiences provided for the pupils, in order to meet their needs and interests; and
- the reflective leadership of the heads of department which is clearly focused on raising achievements and standards.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- improve the uptake of and the standards achieved by the pupils in modern languages.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Laurelhill Community College 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 modern languages, 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, on CEIAG 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;
- meetings with groups of pupils from years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	174	28	16	11
Teachers	61	53	87	6
Support Staff	*	*	100	*

Source: Returns from questionnaires to Inspection Services Branch at DE.

Almost all of the responses to the parental questionnaires were highly affirmative, indicating the strong support for almost all aspects of the work and life of the school. In particular, the parents highlighted the approachable and committed staff, the very strong sense of community and positive ethos within the school. A small number of the responses raised concerns which included a lack of consistency across the subjects in relation to homework and the need for further support for those pupils experiencing difficulty with aspects of their learning.

Most of the staff responded positively to questions about aspects of the work and life of the school. A minority of the responses indicated concerns about aspects of communication, and a lack of opportunity for professional discussion about identifying and achieving the school's priorities.

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