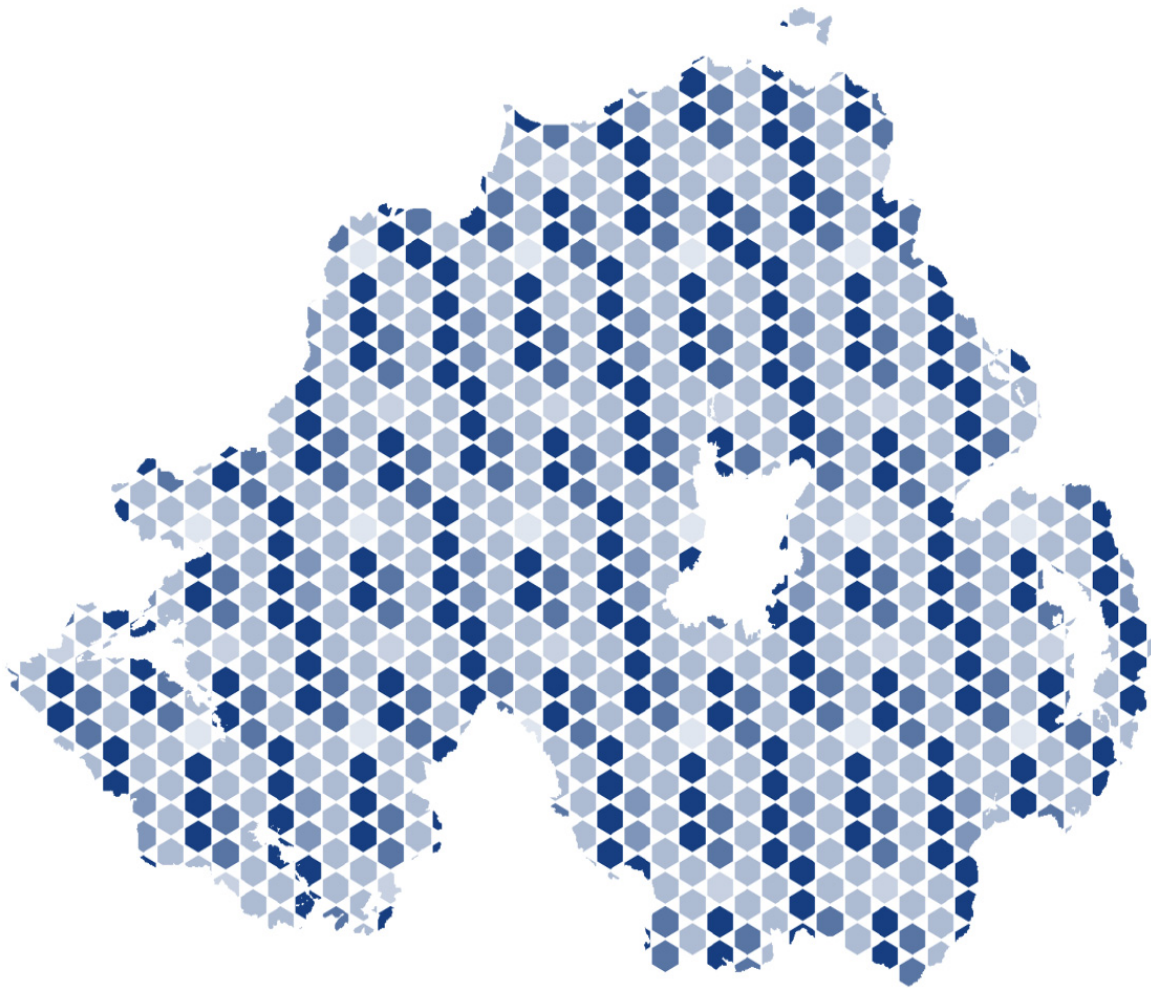


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Magherafelt High School Co Londonderry

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

Report of an Inspection
in February 2012

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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.

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
KS	Key Stage
MLP	Magherafelt Learning Partnership
NI	Northern Ireland
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMT	Senior Management Team

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Magherafelt High School is situated within the town of Magherafelt. The enrolment and the percentage of pupils with special needs rose significantly in 2009 after the closure of another post-primary school and since then have continued to show a slight increase. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased significantly. The school moved to a new building on the same site three months prior to the inspection. There are currently 80 pupils in the sixth form.

	2008	2009	2010	2011
Enrolment	485	579	586	592
FSM Percentage	14.2	19.9	20.3	25.1
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	13 (64)	16 (90)	16 (92)	17 (101)
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	20	38	39	36
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	*	5	5	6
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	*	*	6.25	*
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	18.37	12.00	13.54	9.28
% of Y8 pupils with L4 English	62.24	70.67	77.08	54.64
% of Y8 pupils with L4 mathematics	76.53	78.67	82.29	60.82

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 in this 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.

2.2 It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff continue to 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.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are good.

KEY FINDINGS

The behaviour of almost all of the pupils during the inspection was excellent; they are polite, courteous and demonstrate very respectful attitudes. They interact well with the teachers and their peers, are motivated and engage well in their learning. The pupils' personal development is enhanced through their engagement in the many very good extra-curricular activities.

Comparisons based on FSM Percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	97.6	94.7	82.6
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	53	57.9	50.5
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category	Below average	In line with the average	Well below average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	48.2	37.9	36.7
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category	Well above average	Above average	Above average

Over the past three years, the standards attained by the pupils at GCSE level have fluctuated. Importantly, the pupils' attainments in five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including GCSE English and mathematics, have remained above the average for similar schools, while the standards attained by the pupils in a majority of the individual subjects exceeded the NI average at GCSE level by 5% or more. Most of the pupils who require additional support with their learning make good progress and achieve well; a significant minority have achieved seven or more GCSEs in 2011, while the majority gained Jobskills and training places.

	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	33.3	48.3	45.5
Comparison with the NI average for non-selective schools	Below average	Well above average	Above average
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	95.8	93.1	100
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category	In line with the average	Below average	Well above average

The pupils' attainment at GCE A2 Level has improved over the last three years; almost half of the pupils now obtain three A2 levels at grades A*-C. The pupils' attainments in public examinations have benefited from the increased provision and uptake of applied and vocational courses which have been introduced to meet better the pupils' needs.

The school has identified appropriately the need to raise the standards the pupils attain in most of the individual subjects at A2 level; almost all of the subjects have been taken by a very small number of pupils over the past 3 years.

A majority of the Year 12 pupils leaving in 2010 progressed to further education while almost all of the Year 14 pupils progressed to further or higher education; these figures are significantly above the average for similar schools.

4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1 The quality of provision for learning is good.

KEY FINDINGS

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

The quality of the teaching across the school ranged from satisfactory to outstanding with most being good or very good. In the most effective practice the pupils benefited from: the effective questioning which promoted their thinking; lessons which were tailored to the needs of individual pupils; the high expectations of the teachers; and their effective use of plenary sessions, by which the teachers consolidated and assessed the pupils' learning.

The provision to support pupils who require additional support with their learning is good.

The provision for pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning has a number of strengths which include the high level of care provided to the pupils and particularly to the small minority with significant learning needs, however there is a lack of consistency in the approaches adopted. Nonetheless, many of the pupils achieve good standards at GCSE level.

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

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is good.

The ethos of the school is supportive to the needs of all the pupils and promotes their inclusion. The school demonstrates a strong commitment to the small minority of pupils with significant needs; this additional support enables them to remain in school and engage positively in learning. The school council discusses issues which are relevant to the pupils; however the council is not consulted sufficiently on important school policies. The personal development programme meets the needs of the pupils, and is supported by the appropriate use of the services of a range of external agencies. The provision is monitored and evaluated effectively and, through this process, the school has identified suitable areas for development including the management of the taught provision.

4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is good.

KEY FINDINGS

The school is developing appropriately its provision so that the curriculum offer is linked closely to the needs and interests of the pupils, while their learning and development is supported by a range of enrichment opportunities that complement the curriculum.

At KS3, the curriculum is suitably broad and balanced while at KS4 and post-16, the pupils have access to a good range of vocational and applied courses, including those offered through effective collaboration with the Magherafelt Learning Partnership. An increasing number of pupils are accessing these courses and consequently are able to select appropriate career pathways. The school continues to make progress towards the implementation of the EF.

The provision for CEIAG is good.

The pupils have a very good understanding of the world of work and of their education, training and employment opportunities. The school has recently developed the provision significantly and there is a good range of CEIAG activities at KS4. In the best practice these activities are integrated effectively into, and supported by, the pupils' learning in other

subjects and the very good work experience opportunities. A particular strength is the good quality of the arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the provision leading to identification of appropriate targets within the action plan.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The quality of the leadership and the management is good.

KEY FINDINGS

The Principal has a very good knowledge of the pupils and is highly committed to their welfare. He has led the school well through a period of considerable change including the integration of pupils after the closure of another school and the move to a new school building. The Principal is supported well by the Vice-principal, in particular during the recent school building work. The SMT provide good leadership and management of their whole school areas of responsibility.

The subject leaders and co-ordinators provide good leadership of their respective curriculum areas. The departmental action plans are closely linked to the SDP and identify appropriate areas for development in order to lead to improvement. The staff have begun to use assessment manager software effectively to track the progress of pupils; the school now needs to use this more consistently to identify under-achievement and actions for improvement.

There is limited consultation on the development of the SDP and variation in the quality of precise and measurable targets. The range and rigour of the action taken by leaders at all levels to monitor and evaluate the outcomes of their work to make improvements is also limited. The school has identified appropriately the need to review the role of leaders at all levels to develop a more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating. The recently-reviewed SDP is not yet compliant with the School Development Plans Regulations (NI) 2010.

The highly-committed governors are well-informed about the life and work of the school and demonstrate a good understanding of the strengths of the provision and the areas for development.

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The area which needs to be addressed is to ensure that all of the governors involved in appointments are trained appropriately.

The school has very good links with the wider community, in particular the through the work of the MLP.

6. CONCLUSION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this 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.

6.1 The main area for improvement is the need to:

- develop a more rigorous, coherent and strategic approach to monitoring and evaluating at all levels, in order to identify the actions needed to bring about improvement

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

STATISTICAL

INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Magherafelt High
 ii. School Reference Number: 321-0035
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Controlled
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 27/02/12
 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	82	98	75	96	97
Total enrolment	478	485	579	586	592

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	94.7	93	91.1	89.8	90	92.6	90.7	92	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 41.5 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.794
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 14.34

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	50	51	42	61	61	17	10	292
Enrolment: Girls	47	48	46	59	49	25	26	300
Enrolment: Total	97	99	88	120	110	42	36	592
PTR	15.94	13.96	15.42	13.75	13.51	14.98	13.16	

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

Year 13	43.7	NI Av Year 13	47.4
Year 14	37.8	NI Av Year 14	34.5

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	63		39	
Another School	5%	14.8	0%	2.4
Employment	10%	5.2	0%	12.3
Full-time Further Education	70%	47.5	41%	28
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	54%	42.5
Full-time Training	5%	25.1	0%	5.1
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	10%	3.6	5%	5.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	2%	3.8	0%	3.9

TABLE 1 outlines the school's GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

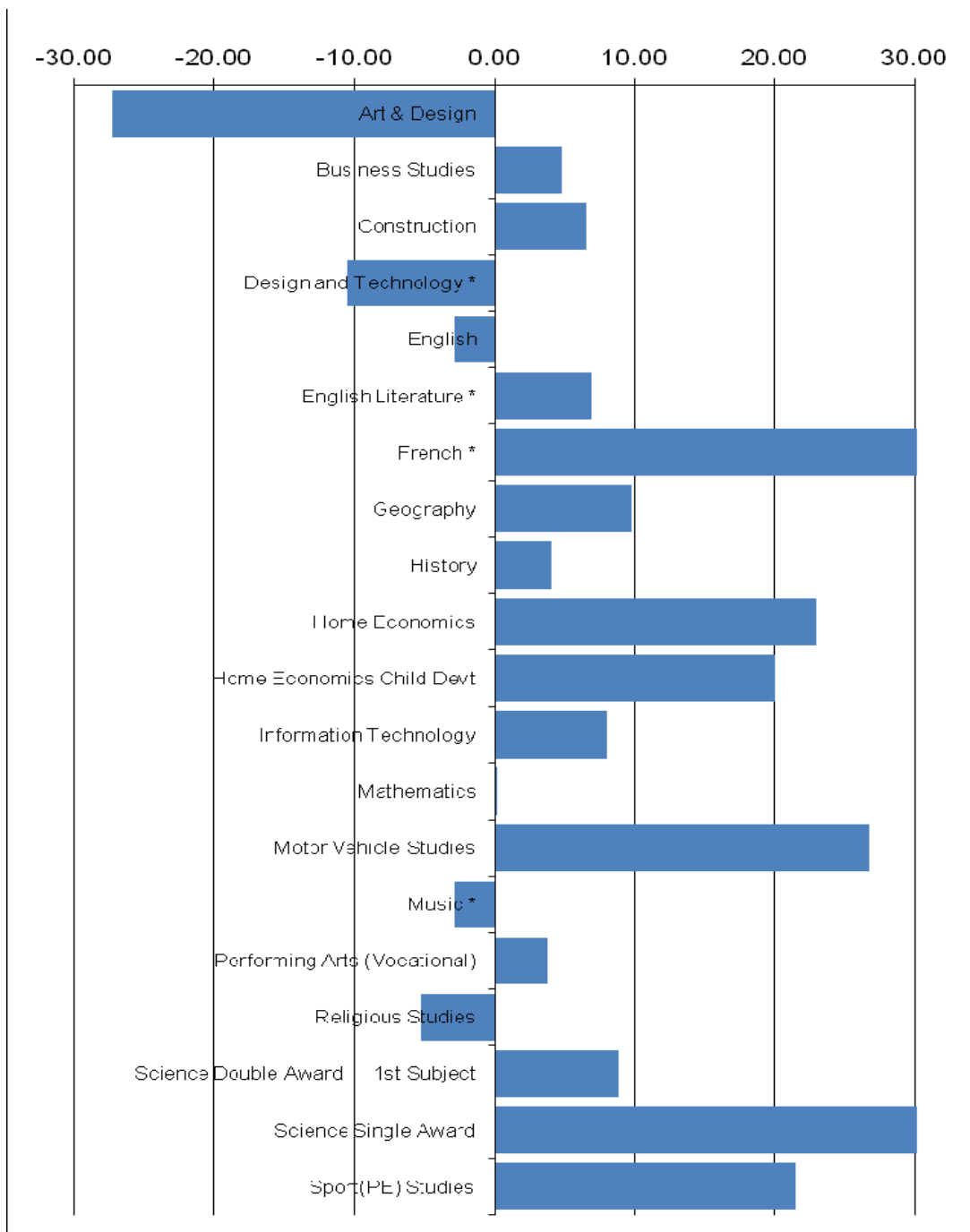
HEADLINE STANDARDS

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

	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalentents in at least 5 subjects	97.6	94.7	82.6
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	53	57.9	50.5
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Well below average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	48.2	37.9	36.7
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>

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: Design and Technology, English Literature, French and Music.

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

HEADLINE STANDARDS

A-level results A*-C

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

3 or more grades A*-C = 42.7%

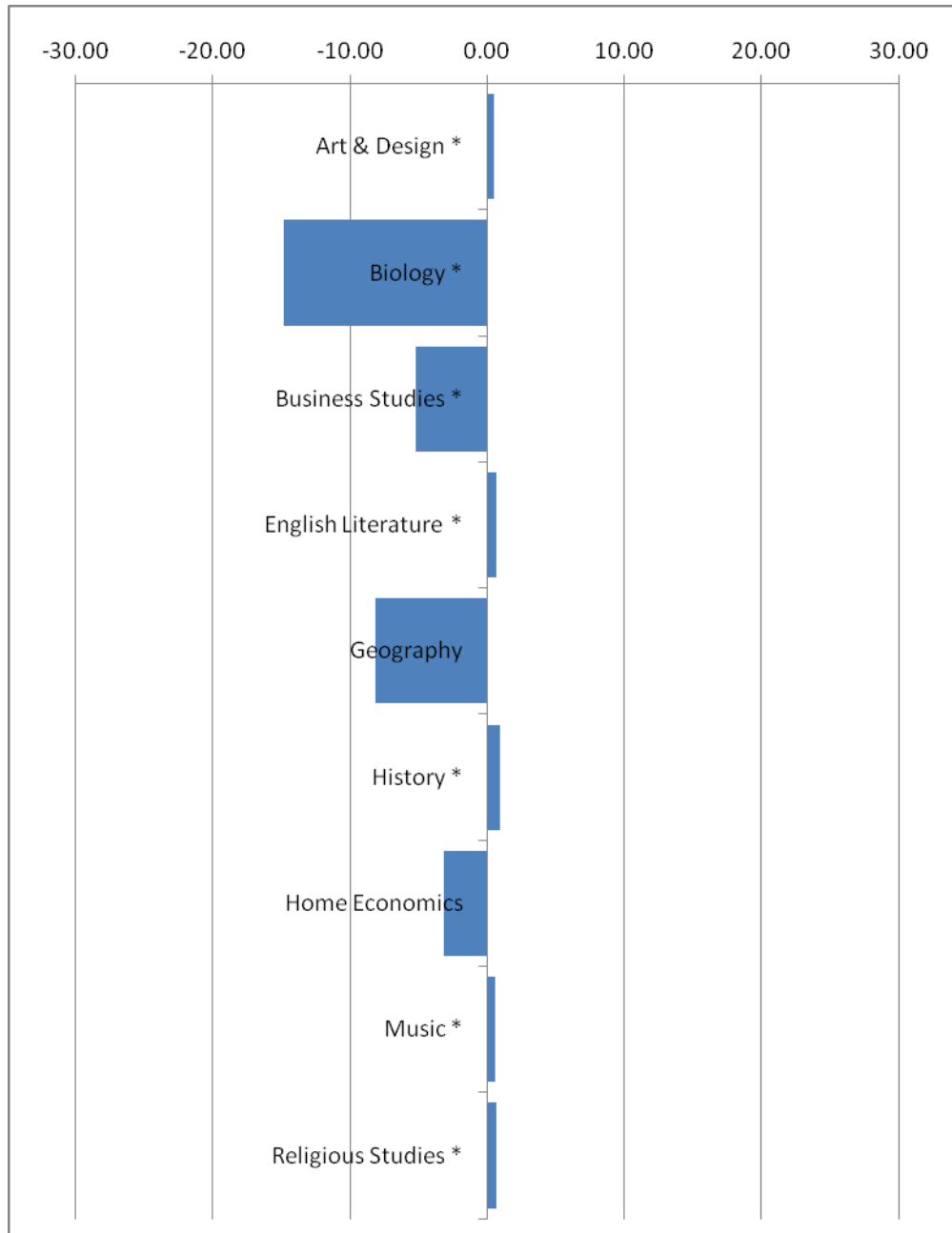
2 or more grades A*-E = 94.7%

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	33.3	48.3	45.5
<i>Comparison with the NI average for non-selective schools</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	95.8	93.1	100
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Well above 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 Northern Ireland average



*The following subjects had an entry of fewer than 20 pupils over three years to June 2011: Art and Design, Biology, Business Studies, English Literature, History, Music and Religious Studies.

OTHER RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

Applied and Vocational Courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

Occupational Studies	2009	2010	2011	Total entry over 3 years
	% Pass	% Pass	% Pass	
Double Award Level 2	53	86	50	34
Double Award Level 1	13	14	50	
Single Award Level 2	13			
Single Award Level 1	20			

Pupils awarded a level 2 achieve a double award occupational studies qualification equivalent to two GCSE in grades A to C.

OTHER RESULTS: Post-16

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

Subject	2009		2010		2011		Total entry over 3 years
	Merit	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	Merit	Distinction	
National Certificate in Sport		100%		100%	12.5%	87.5%	16
National Certificate in Engineering						100%	*

*Fewer than 5

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

The provision in **English** is **very good**.

The main strengths of the work include:

- the good examination outcomes achieved by the pupils, particularly in GCSE English;
- the good personal and social skills of the pupils and the high quality of the working relationships in all classes;
- the provision for reading, including the high quality provision in the school library;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, most of which was very good;
- the very good leadership provided by the head of department; and
- the use made of self-evaluation to inform future developments within the department.

The provision in **mathematics** is **good**.

The main strengths of the work include:

- the motivated pupils who enjoy their learning and work well in groups and pairs;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, most of which was good or very good;
- the effective questioning and the good range of teaching and learning strategies and activities used to engage the pupils actively in their learning;
- the hard-working teachers who support effectively the pupils in their learning;
- the good progress in developing effective schemes of work at KS3; and
- the commitment of the head of department and departmental team to development work.

The areas for improvement are:

- to continue to raise attainment in GCSE mathematics; and
- to extend the effective use of data, and develop monitoring and evaluation, to inform self-evaluation and the identification of actions to bring about improvement.

The provision in **science** is **good**.

The main strengths of the work include:

- the excellent working relationships between the teachers and the pupils in all of the lessons observed;
- the good standards attained by the pupils, particularly in Single Award science;
- the quality of the teaching which was good or very good in all of the lessons observed;
- the effective use of a wide range of active learning strategies to motivate and engage the pupils in their learning;
- the high quality of the teaching resources produced by the teachers to support the pupils' learning; and
- the effective, collegial leadership of the head of department and the commitment of all of the teachers to the review and improvement of classroom practice.

The area for improvement is:

- to develop a more rigorous approach to the monitoring and evaluating of the work of the department in order to improve further the standards attained by the pupils.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Magherafelt 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 science 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 CEIAG, 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	120	57	47.5	30
Teachers		40		9
Support Staff		15		*

The returns from the parental questionnaires were highly positive. The returns from teachers were positive in most respects; a minority of teachers commented on limitations in communication. The ETI reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the small number of areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

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