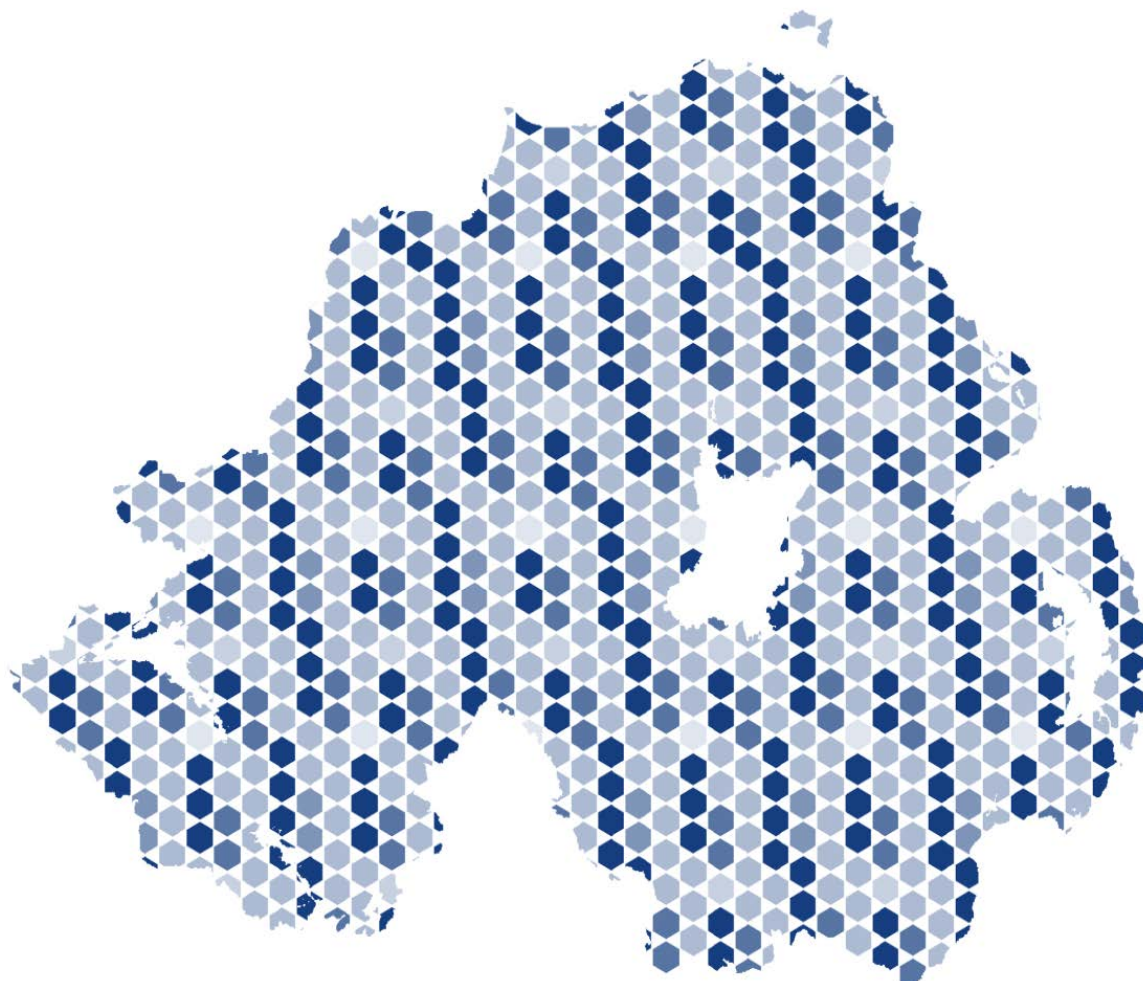


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Monkstown Community School,  
Co Antrim

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

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2012



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## 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	284	32	11	17
Teachers	43	21	49	6
Support Staff	18	10	56	6

## 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

Monkstown Community School is situated on Bridge Road in the village of Monkstown and serves the area of Newtownabbey. The enrolment has declined by 12% in the last four years; there are 31 pupils in the sixth form. The Learning Support Centre provides for the needs of 52 pupils, some of whom have a statement of educational need and have significant difficulties in their learning. In addition, 14 pupils are placed in alternative educational provision. The Principal has been in post for one year.

Monkstown Community School	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 8 Intake	147	136	94	95
Enrolment	718	710	651	633
% Attendance (NI Average)	87 (92.3)	87 (92.3)	89 (92.6)	N/A (---)
FSME Percentage	22	21	28	28
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	18 (130)	19 (134)	23 (142)	21 (139)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the Learning Support Centre	26	34	28	17
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in mainstream classes	9	10	8	7
No. of newcomers	15	15	17	12
<b>Intake</b>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	6	4	6	7
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	8	5	8	11
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	49	56	56	66
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	48	54	55	69

**Source:** data as held and verified by the school.

### 1.2 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Monkstown Community School 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 geography provision providing 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 child protection; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning, including those pupils who attend the Learning Support Centre, and their inclusion in all aspects of school life; the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance; and, the progress towards meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

### 1.3. OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

1.3.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is unsatisfactory; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the few strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management (including governance) which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of its pupils.

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.

#### 1.3.2 Summary of Key Findings

<b>Overall Performance Level</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Provision for Learning</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

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

## 2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### 2.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are inadequate<sup>1</sup>.

#### KEY FINDINGS

When given the opportunity, the pupils take responsibility for their own learning, engage actively in the lessons and, in some instances, participate well in group and paired work. In a majority of the lessons observed, however, there were insufficient opportunities provided by the teachers for the promotion of the pupils' thinking skills, and for independent and collaborative learning. The pupils' oral skills are underdeveloped as evidenced by the lack of coherence and progression in the learning of subject-specific language, the limited opportunities for the pupils to discuss and debate their learning, and the pupils' increasing reticence to answer questions in class as they progress through the school. There is significant variation in the teachers' expectations of what the pupils can do or achieve; in most of the lessons observed, the teachers' expectations are too low.

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<sup>1</sup> For additional performance data in public examinations, including in vocational subjects, see Appendix 1

**Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance:**

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	2010	2011	2012
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	82	79	84
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	31	32	44
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</b>	<b>Significantly below average</b>	<b>Significantly below average</b>	<b>Well below average</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	17	11	17
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</b>	<b>Significantly below average</b>	<b>Significantly below average</b>	<b>Significantly below average</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	73	74	76
Percentage of FSM entitled school leavers achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A*-C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	9	1	3

**Source:** Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks<sup>2</sup>

Over the past three years, most of the pupils have been entered for five or more General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) subjects. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE subjects at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics has been consistently, and significantly, below the average for similar schools. While there has been a slight improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE subjects at grades A\* to C, the standards achieved by the pupils remain unacceptably low. In addition, the standards achieved by the pupils who are entitled to free school meals are also very low. The performance of almost all of the individual subjects at grades A\* to C is below the corresponding three-year Northern Ireland average; almost one-half of the subjects are more than twenty percentage points below this average.

**Data on Year 14 (A2) performance:**

<b>GCE A Level or equivalent</b>	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	89	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	11	47	17
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	89	100	100

**Source:** Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks<sup>3</sup>.

At General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level, in two of the last three years, the percentage of pupils obtaining grades A\* to C in at least three subjects is unsatisfactory. The proportion of pupils who leave sixth form to enter further and higher education is below the Northern Ireland average<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

<sup>3</sup> DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

<sup>4</sup> For data on Staying-on rates and Leavers' destinations, see Appendix 1

The pupils enrolled in the Learning Support Centre make satisfactory progress in their learning of English and mathematics. However, when these pupils are integrated with their peers in the mainstream classes for the other areas of the curriculum, there is considerable variation in the progress they make, ranging from satisfactory to inadequate progress.

The majority of the pupils who have special educational needs in the mainstream classes make inadequate progress in their learning.

The school has identified the need to raise the pupils' levels of achievement overall. However, there is a lack of an agreed, whole-school strategic approach to address this objective. The key priorities for, and the specific actions needed to bring about, improvement have not yet been identified. There is an urgent need to raise the standards that the pupils achieve.

### **3. PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

#### **3.1 The quality of provision for learning is inadequate.**

##### **KEY FINDINGS**

**The quality of the provision in English and mathematics is inadequate; the quality of the provision in geography is satisfactory<sup>5</sup>.**

The teachers' planning, for a majority of the areas of the curriculum, is inadequate; the planning does not promote sufficient coherence and progression in the pupils' learning and is not tailored sufficiently to match the abilities and interests of all of the pupils.

The quality of the lessons observed ranged from very good to unsatisfactory; two-fifths of these lessons were good or very good, with most of these being good. The remaining lessons were in need of significant improvement, and over one-fifth of the lessons observed were inadequate. In the majority of the practice observed, the lessons were over-directed by the teacher and there were very limited opportunities for the pupils to engage in collaborative learning or to apply their knowledge in meaningful contexts. The work was not sufficiently challenging and the pace of the lesson was too slow; the learning was not matched closely enough to the needs, interests and ability of all of the pupils. In addition, the pupils were not given sufficient opportunity to demonstrate the extent of their learning. In these lessons, the pupils were passive, often becoming distracted from their learning and, on occasions, they were unsettled and engaged in low level, disruptive behaviour.

The strategies used by the teachers to assess the progress of the pupils' learning are ineffective and underdeveloped. In general, the pupils do not receive sufficient, meaningful written feedback to help them improve the standard of their work.

In order to improve the quality of the learning and teaching, the teachers need to raise their expectations of what the pupils can achieve, raise the level of challenge and implement more effective practices in classroom management, planning, teaching and assessment.

**The quality of provision for pupils in the Learning Support Centre is satisfactory.**

In the Learning Support Centre, the pupils feel safe, pay good attention to their teachers, concentrate on completing their work and are supported well by the two teachers and the classroom assistants. The integration of these pupils into the mainstream classes is not managed well at any level.

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<sup>5</sup> For detailed findings of the provision in English, mathematics and geography, see Appendix 2.



**The quality of provision for special educational needs for those pupils in the mainstream classes is inadequate.**

The quality of the provision for special educational needs is not consistently high enough to support the pupils to reach the standards of which they are capable. A significant minority of the teachers are unaware of the information provided in the individual education plans, and ineffective use is made of this information to tailor the teaching to meet the individual needs of the pupils. With appropriate support from the senior leadership team, the special educational needs co-ordinator needs to: monitor more closely the progress of the pupils in meeting their targets; evaluate the appropriateness of the targets set; and, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention strategies used by the teachers.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities for which there is good uptake by the pupils.

**3.2 The quality of the care, guidance and support of pupils is inadequate.**

**KEY FINDINGS**

The quality of the pastoral care observed during the inspection is inadequate. There is inconsistent implementation and application of the pastoral care policy by the staff. As a result, there is an urgent need for a more pupil-centred approach to pastoral care within the school. In a minority of the lessons observed, the teachers missed opportunities to provide encouragement and praise for the pupils' efforts in a timely and appropriate manner. Greater use could be made of pupil consultation to enhance the learning experiences for all pupils. The staff must work collectively and professionally to raise pupil expectations and to provide more frequent opportunities to celebrate achievement and to develop the pupils' confidence and self-esteem. In discussions with the pupils, all are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

The pupils are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles through the satisfactory attention given to healthy eating and physical activity; for example, the range of healthy cooking opportunities and physical activities provided by the staff.

The progress of the pupils in alternative education provision is not monitored closely enough. It is important that appropriate procedures are put in place to monitor the progress of these pupils and to support their reintegration into school life at the appropriate time.

**3.3 The curricular provision for the pupils at KS3 and at KS4 is satisfactory. The curricular provision for the pupils at sixth form is unsatisfactory.**

**KEY FINDINGS**

At key stage 3, the pupils have access to a programme that meets the requirements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. At key stage 4, the school, through its good links with the Newtownabbey Learning Partnership, has developed a satisfactory range of courses with the local college of Further Education. The links with other schools, however, are underdeveloped. While the school meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework at key stage 4 with regard to curriculum offer, the curriculum uptake lacks suitable breadth and balance; this has an adverse effect on maintaining an appropriate range and breadth of relevant pathways for the pupils. The introduction of new courses to the curriculum has not

been managed or monitored well; there is insufficient planning in place to guide and support this work. Also, the school's policy and practice on entering pupils for public examinations is not tailored closely enough to the needs and abilities of all of the pupils; senior leadership need to review this policy in order to match better the number, type and level of the courses on offer with the needs and aspirations of all of the pupils.

The sixth-form curriculum does not meet the academic and vocational needs of the pupils. The entry requirements for pupils to return to sixth-form study are too low; it is unsatisfactory that a majority of the pupils do not have the appropriate level of prior attainment to enable them to cope with the significant demands of GCE A level study. The school needs to review urgently the sixth-form entry policy. The sixth-form pupils who have not achieved a GCSE level qualification in English and mathematics are not provided with sufficient support and appropriate learning opportunities to help them achieve these important qualifications. The sixth-form pupils have inadequate opportunities to participate in enrichment activities to complement their personal and social development. In addition, they have limited access to high quality resources to support their learning.

#### **The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance is inadequate.**

There are shortcomings in the management and delivery of careers education, information, advice and guidance across the school. The planning and teaching of the careers programme is incoherent across all key stages, with insufficient planning to allow for progression in learning. Most of the pupils, as a consequence, have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the progression pathways open to them that reflect their abilities and career aspirations. The pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop their understanding of the world of work through the school's links with business and education agencies, and the planned work experience programme for year 11 and year 14 pupils. The planning of the taught careers programme in the sixth form is unsatisfactory and does not support the pupils to plan for relevant pathways to further education, higher education, training programmes or to direct employment.

### **4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **4.1 The quality of the leadership and the management is inadequate.**

##### **KEY FINDINGS**

The strategic leadership of the school is inadequate. The work of the senior leadership team does not address adequately the major challenges faced by the school. Key leadership roles at all levels lack clarity which has resulted in duplication of roles, deficiencies in the leadership of key aspects of curriculum and pastoral provision, insufficient action to effect improvement and poor levels of accountability to ensure that all members of leadership play a part in the strategic management of the school. The roles and responsibilities of leadership at all levels need to be reviewed, clarified and strengthened to focus more sharply on the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the pastoral and curricular provision and to ensure that actions taken lead to improvement. There are significant deficiencies in the management of the pastoral care of both the pupils and the staff. Co-ordinated, systematic links across the pastoral and curricular provision within the school need to be developed by the senior leadership team in order to meet more effectively the needs of all of the pupils and the staff.

There is variability in the quality of the leadership at middle management level, ranging from good to inadequate. It is important that the school disseminates the existing good practice in the leadership at this level in a more systematic manner to ensure that the expertise of staff is harnessed effectively to improve the quality of the education for the pupils.

The quality of the school development planning process is unsatisfactory. Key aspects of provision which require significant improvement are not identified in the school development plan. The school development plan does not comply with the requirements of the Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (NI) 2010. The necessary arrangements for the consultation with all teaching and support staff, pupils, parents and governors to identify appropriate priorities for development are not yet in place. At all levels, there is variation in the quality of the action plans to support development work; many of the actions identified in the plans are incapable of bringing about the desired improvements. The use of time for staff development is not planned well and the programme is not linked closely enough to the needs of the school.

The governors are involved in certain aspects of the work of the school. However, they are unable to challenge effectively the work of the school as they are not informed fully about important aspects of the work and life of the school; these include the standards at post-16; staff deployment; the use of time for staff development; and, the processes for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, and the resulting outcomes. They also need to develop their role further in relation to the creation and the subsequent review of the school development plan, setting and overseeing the whole-school agenda for school improvement. The sustainability of the sixth form needs to be reviewed urgently by the employing authority, governors and the staff.

The school has begun to collate data on pupil performance; however, the use of assessment data to inform planning, learning and teaching is underdeveloped. There is scope for a more robust analysis, interpretation, and sharing, of the available data that will inform better the process of school improvement through effective target-setting. In addition, the teachers need to use the available data to plan and implement learning programmes which are tailored better to meet the needs of all of the pupils.

The Education and Training Inspectorate reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the very few areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires.

On the basis of all of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the arrangements overall for safeguarding are unsatisfactory. The school has addressed a number of the compliance issues raised at the time of the partial inspection in April 2012 which was incomplete due to action short of strike by a majority of the teaching staff; arrangements for safeguarding pupils in the school are now compliant and reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. However, Inspectors noted and reported to the school a number of serious safeguarding concerns relating to the inconsistent implementation and application by staff of the professional Code of Conduct<sup>6</sup> for working with the pupils. Consequently, there is an urgent need to review the arrangements for safeguarding young people in the school. In particular, it is important that the school leaders communicate clearly with all staff appropriately high expectations as to how staff are to interact with the pupils in an ethos of mutual respect and care. The school leaders then need to ensure that these standards are upheld by all staff and permeate all aspects of school life. Inspectors will return to the school to re-evaluate the school's arrangements for safeguarding within six weeks of the inspection.

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<sup>6</sup> A Code of Conduct for Employees within the Education Sector. Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection, Department of Education 1999/ 10.

Monkstown Community School is failing to provide an acceptable standard of education, due primarily to shortcomings in the leadership and management of the school. In order to assist the governors to address the issues raised in this report, the Education and Training Inspectorate recommends that the Department of Education exercise its power under Article 14 of the Education (NI) Order, 1998, to appoint additional voting members, with appropriate experience and expertise, to the governing body.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

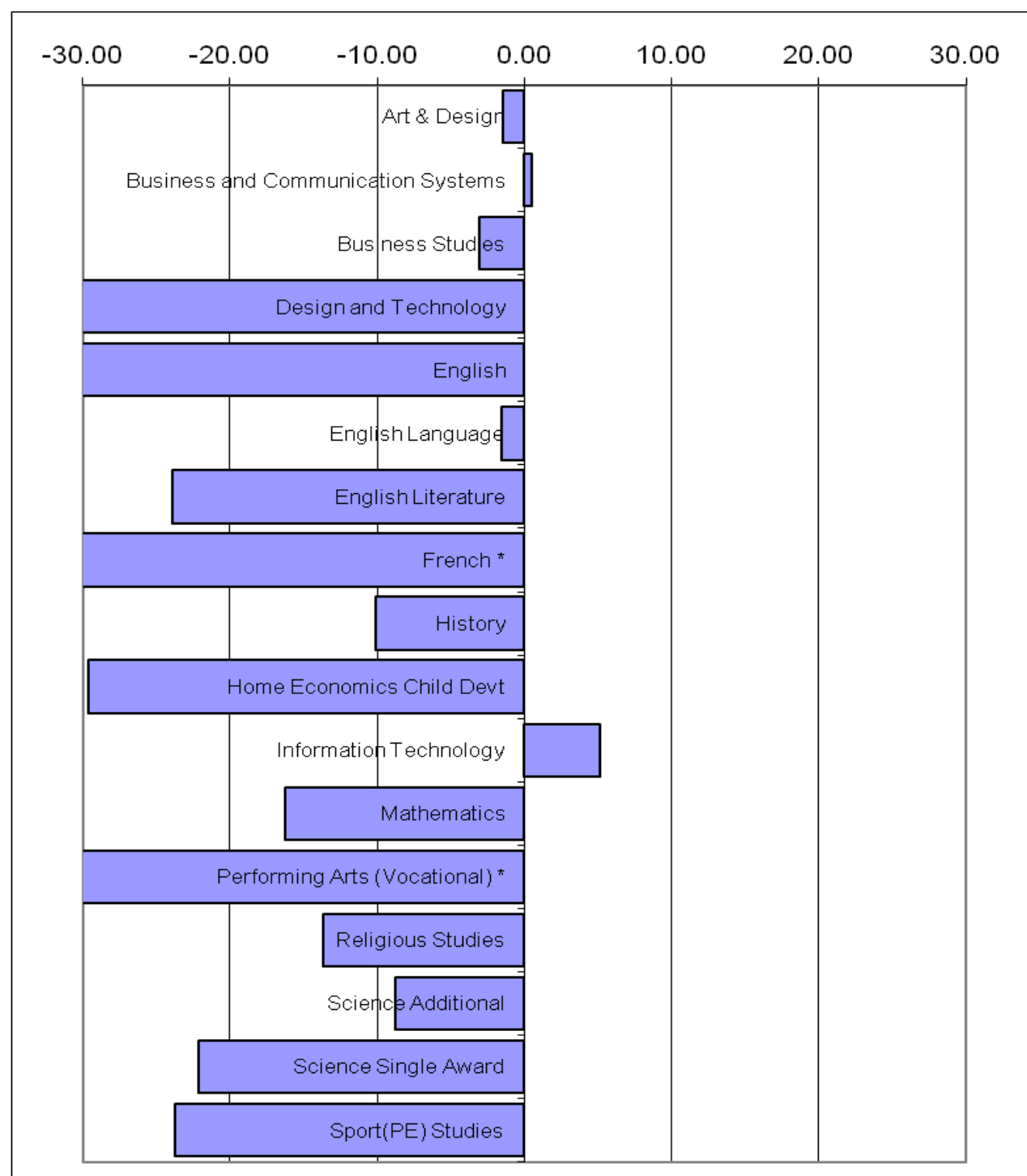
5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided in this school is unsatisfactory; the areas for improvement significantly outweigh the few strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified major areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching, and leadership and management (including governance) which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of its pupils.

5.2 The main areas for improvement include the need for:

- teachers to raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and to improve the inadequate quality of the pastoral and curricular experiences of the pupils;
- the inadequate standards achieved by the pupils, particularly the levels of attainment in public examinations, to be improved;
- school leaders to implement effective processes for self-evaluation and school development planning leading to the identification of appropriate priorities and the associated actions necessary to effect improvement ; and
- the roles and responsibilities of leadership and management at all levels, including the role of the governors, to be reviewed, clarified and strengthened so as to ensure that rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of provision is undertaken and that the actions taken lead to improvement.

## 1.1 GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS:

Comparison of individual subject performance with the three-year NI average at grades A\* to C from 2009/10 – 2011/12



\* fewer than 30 entries over the past three years

## 1.2 OTHER RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years. (All Level 2, unless otherwise stated)

Level 2	2010	2011	2012	Total entry over 3 years
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C	
<i>Hospitality and Catering</i>	50	50	-	22
<i>Information Technology (Vocational)</i>	-	68	100	54

## 1.3 OTHER RESULTS: POST-16

Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years. (All Level 3, unless otherwise stated)

Level 3	2010		2011		2012		Total entry over 3 years
	% A* - C	% A*-E	% A* - C	% A* - E	% A* - C	% A*-E	
<i>Applied Science</i>	-	-	0	100	0	100	*
<i>Business (Vocational)</i>	78	89	56	100	30	100	35
<i>Information Technology(Vocational)</i>	89	100	75	100	91	100	36

## 1.4 Staying On Rate 2010/2011 (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	9.6	NI Av. Year 13	47.85
Year 14	8.6	NI Av. Year 14	36.5

## 1.5 Leavers Destinations 2010/2011

	Year 12	Percentage ^	NI %	Yr 13/14	Percentage ^	NI%
TOTAL	129			21		
Another School	19	15%	15.8	*	5%	2.5
Employment	6	5%	4.4	6	29%	11.7
Full-time Further Education	78	60%	45	*	19%	31.1
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	29%	38.5
Full-time Training	13	10%	28	*	10%	6.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0	0%	3.5	0	0%	6.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	13	10%	3.3	*	10%	3.1

\* = fewer than 5

^ = total may not add up to 100% due to rounding of numbers

**SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS: ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND GEOGRAPHY**

**English**

The quality of the provision for English is inadequate.

The strengths of the work include:

- the good teaching in a significant minority of the lessons observed, in particular the effective questioning;
- in most of the classes observed, the good level of behaviour and, when given the opportunity, the oral responses of the pupils; and
- the good start to the review and revision of schemes of work.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- raise the expectations for, and the standards in attainment for pupils; in particular those who are underachieving, in GCSE English;
- review planning and self-evaluation to focus sharply on learning in order to improve standards; and
- adopt a more strategic, collegial approach, led by the head of English, to bring about improvement in learning, teaching and in outcomes in public examinations.

**Mathematics**

The quality of the provision for mathematics is inadequate.

The strengths of the work include:

- the pupils who, when given the opportunity and provided with a suitable level of challenge, learn well in groups and pairs;
- the good working relationships between the pupils and their teachers in most of the lessons observed; and
- the activities used by the teachers, in a majority of the lessons, to engage the pupils actively in their learning.

The areas for improvement include the need for:

- teachers to raise their expectations of what the pupils can achieve and improve the inadequate standards in mathematics in public examinations;
- teachers to provide greater progression in learning and match more closely the planning to the needs, interests and ability of the pupils; and

- the department to develop meaningful self-evaluation in order to identify and implement appropriate actions to effect improvement in the quality of the provision and raise standards.

## **Geography**

The quality of the provision for geography at key stage 3 is satisfactory.

The strengths of the work include:

- the good working relationships between the pupils and teachers in the geography lessons observed;
- the good quality planning for key stage 3 developed by the recently appointed head of department, which provides opportunities for the pupils to explore a broader range of suitable and relevant geographical topics;
- the effective use of ICT to support the pupils' learning;
- the commitment of the departmental team to review and improve the provision for geography; and
- the effective leadership of the head of department, including the good start made to monitoring and tracking the pupils' progress in geography.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the overall quality of the learning and teaching, particularly the use of assessment for learning strategies; and
- develop more fully the processes for self-evaluation to inform the specific actions needed to improve further the standards achieved by the pupils.



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