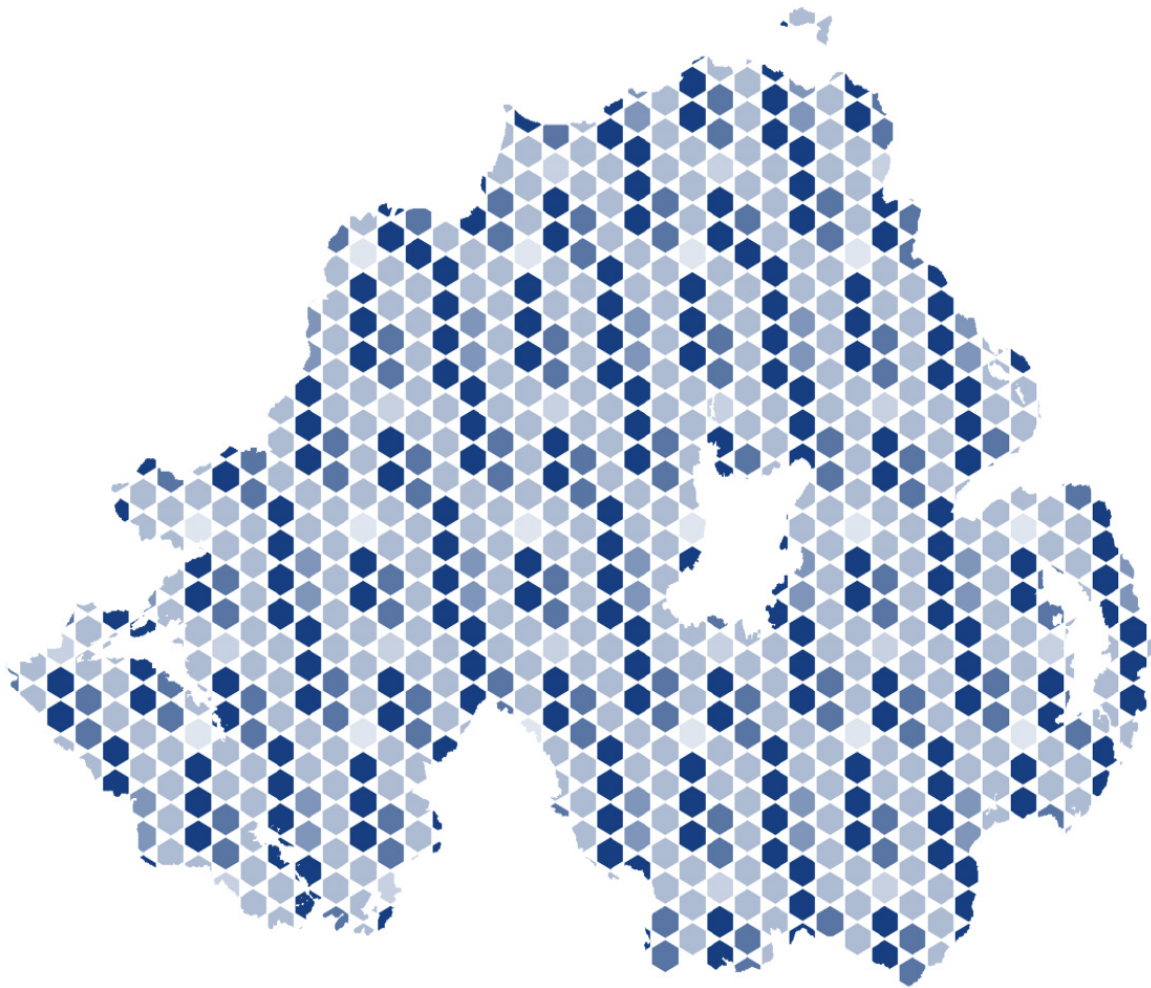


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## Newtownhamilton High School

Controlled, non-selective, co-educational 11-16 school

Report of an Inspection  
in May 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, whether they are selective or non-selective, as defined by DE.

BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CEIAG	Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
DE	Department of Education
EF	Entitlement Framework
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IWB	Interactive White Board
KS	Key stage
LLW	Learning for Life and Work
NI	Northern Ireland
NIC	Northern Ireland Curriculum
NMLC	Newry and Mourne Learning Community
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SRC	Southern Regional College

## 1. CONTEXT

1.1 Almost all of the pupils attending Newtownhamilton High come from the surrounding rural areas within a ten mile radius. The DE school admissions enrolment for the school is set at 175. Over the last five years the enrolment of the school has fluctuated and now stands at 167. At the end of year 12, most of the pupils continue their full-time education at a selective school or at the Southern Regional College. Approximately 5% of the pupils are entitled to FSM and 27% of the pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs, 16 of whom have a specific statement. Over the past four years, the percentage of pupils in the year 8 cohort achieving KS2 outcomes at level 4 and above in both English and mathematics has increased significantly and, in 2011, reached well above the corresponding NI average. The school places a strong emphasis on pupil attendance, which is well above the NI average.

Newtownhamilton High School	2008	2009	2010	2011
Enrolment	177	186	182	167
FSM Percentage	8.47	5.91	7.69	5.36
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	16.95 (30)	26.88 (50)	25.82 (47)	26.79 (45)
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	11	14	17	16
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	0	0	*	*
<b>Intake</b>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	5.41	12.20	21.43	17.86
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	18.92	34.15	21.43	35.71
% of Y8 pupils with L4+ English	70.27	80.49	75.00	89.29
% of Y8 pupils with L4+ mathematics	78.38	85.37	78.57	89.29

**Source:** Data held by the school. \*= fewer than 5

## 2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

**2.1 In most of the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is very good.**

2.2 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, in order to assess the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

## 3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

**3.1 Overall the standards achieved by the pupils are very good.**

### KEY FINDINGS

The pupils are well motivated and, when provided with stimulating activities, they remain on task and work well in pairs and small groups. Most of the pupils in each year group are responsive and confident in their learning and are making very good progress across the curriculum.

<b>Comparisons based on FSME Percentage</b>	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	97.2
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	88.0	88.0	83.0
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</b>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Well above average</b>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	63.6	50	61.1
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</b>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Well above average</b>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	97	90.6	94.4

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

The results in public examinations at KS4 are outstanding.

The percentages of pupils obtaining grades A\* to C in any five or more GCSE subjects, and in five or more subjects, when English and mathematics are included, are significantly above the NI three-year average for similar schools.

Over the past three years, almost 85% of the subjects at GCSE grades A\*-C were five or more percentage points above the NI average. In mathematics 63.37% of the year group gained a GCSE grade C or better, and in English 74.25% of the year group attained similar grades. Results in both subjects are almost twenty percentage points above the NI average.

Over the past three years, almost 85% of the subjects at grades A\*-B at GCSE were five or more percentage points above the NI average; both mathematics and English at grades A\*-B were 15 or more percentage points above the NI average.

The pupils with a wide range of special and additional educational needs make very good progress in meeting the targets outlined within their IEPs.

#### **4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

##### **4.1 The quality of provision for learning is very good.**

The provision in science is good; in English and in French it is very good.

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from outstanding to satisfactory; almost all of the lessons were good or better and one-half were very good or better.

The teachers have worked very hard in recent years to develop the planning and resources for learning and teaching to reflect the NIC; the quality of the schemes of work for KS3 and KS4 is very good.

In the most effective practice the pupils benefited from well-paced and challenging lessons; a suitable range of teaching, and assessment for learning strategies; the effective use of the IWB to access high quality web-based video clips; well-planned and structured group and paired work activities; and good opportunities to develop their thinking and communication skills.

A small number of lessons lacked pace and challenge; as a result, a minority of the pupils did not remain focused for the duration of the lesson.

The teachers have identified appropriately the need to develop further the strategies for making more effective use of questioning to assess the pupils' knowledge and understanding and to develop their communication skills.

The quality of provision for SEN is very good.

Most of the pupils who require additional support with their learning make good progress and attain standards in line with their ability. The SENCO provides very good information and advice to assist colleagues in developing strategies to support pupils who have additional needs in mainstream classes. She identifies the pupils' needs early and provides effective individual support for the pupils who have literacy and numeracy difficulties. The IEPs are clear and the classroom assistants provide well-focused practical support in class and in withdrawal sessions.

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

The pupils have very good working relationships with their teachers; those in years 8, 10 and 11 who were interviewed, spoke enthusiastically about and value highly the additional support which they receive during and after school from the teaching and support staff. The pupils enjoy and benefit from a very good range of social and academic extra-curricular activities, including the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Programme and national sporting and educational competitions in which they have enjoyed significant success. During the inspection, the pupils demonstrated very good behaviour in almost all of the lessons observed.

Positive behaviours are promoted throughout the school and there is a very good celebration of the pupils' achievements.

The school has recognised the need to provide more opportunities for the pupils to contribute to decision-making within the school and is putting in place the arrangements for a school council.

#### **4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils at KS3 and at KS4 is very good.**

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum at KS3 and KS4. Over the past three years the number of subjects on offer at KS4 has steadily increased, and currently there are 23 subjects delivered in year 11 and 24 subjects in year 12. The curriculum is appropriate for the ability and career aspirations of the pupils and is meeting the requirements of the EF.

The school is collaborating well at KS4 with the local regional college. Useful curricular links have also been established with a local school through the Shared Education Programme.

The provision for CEIAG is very good.

In both key stages, the pupils benefit from a very good range of visits, enterprise activities, training in interview skills, guest speakers, and work experience to develop their employability skills and enable them to make informed decisions about future career pathways. The coordinator has reviewed and improved the access to careers information for

the pupils. There is effective progression planned for in the provision for CEIAG at KS3, where careers education is delivered through the LLW programme; and at KS4 through a taught careers programme.

## **5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.1 The leadership and the management are very good**

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

The Principal provides very effective leadership; he sets high expectations for all staff and pupils within the school. He has worked successfully to overcome the significant challenges associated with leading and managing a small post-primary school, to meet the requirements of the EF and to ensure that the pupils attain high standards in public examinations. The Principal is supported ably by the hard-work and commitment of the recently appointed Vice-principal who leads and manages successfully important curricular and pastoral aspects of the school's provision.

The school has reviewed recently its school development planning process to include appropriate consultation with key stakeholders including parents, teachers and governors. The school development plan is clear and coherent and meets the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010.

The quality of the self-evaluation conducted by senior leadership and the co-ordinators is very good; rigorous and systematic evaluations are based on first-hand evidence. Almost all of the teachers have responsibility for co-ordinating a pastoral or curricular area of the school's provision and undertake this work to a high standard.

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

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

## **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils, and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Newtownhamilton High v. Date of Inspection: W/C 14/05/12  
 ii. School Reference Number: 521-0025 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection  
 iii. Age Range: 11-16  
 iv. Status: Controlled

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 8 Intake	31	37	41	28	28
Total enrolment	177	177	186	182	168

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	96.6	95.7	93.6	93.3	95.4	95	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 16.2
- iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.807
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 10.37
- Number of Teachers involved in Area of Study: (Focused only) 6

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	15	15	27	18	11	86
Enrolment: Girls	13	14	18	20	17	82
Enrolment: Total	28	29	45	38	28	168
PTR	10.163	10.526	10.889	11.399	8.686	

1.5 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	34	
Another School	24%	14.8
Employment	6%	5.2
Full-time Further Education	68%	47.5
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A
Full-time Training	3%	25.1
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.8



## APPENDIX 2

### TABLE 1 outlines the school's GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

#### GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

#### HEADLINE STANDARDS

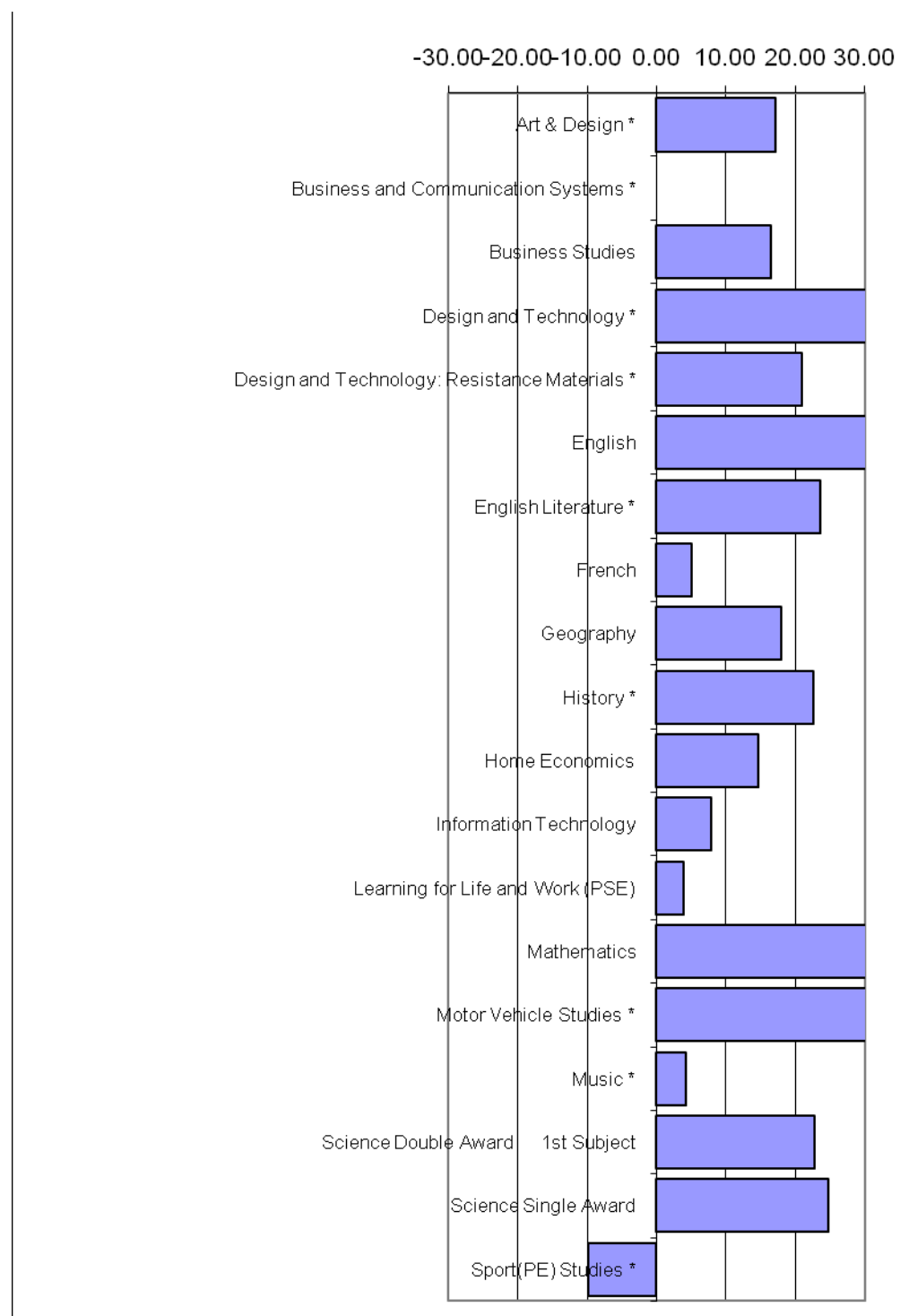
**NB:** The NI average for all non-selective schools of pupils obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics in 2011 is 36.4%

#### Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

<b>Comparisons based on FSME Percentage</b>	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	97.2
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	88.0	88.0	83.0
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	63.6	50	61.1
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	97	90.6	94.4

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

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



\* The following subjects had an entry of fewer than 30 pupils over three years to June 2011: art and design, design and technology, English literature, history, motor vehicle studies, music and sport (PE) studies.

## OTHER RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

### Applied and Vocational Courses taken in the last three years

<b>2011</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number entered</b>	<b>Number achieved at L2</b>
Occupational studies	20	19
Essential Skills: Communication	7	4
Essential Skills: Application of Number	7	4

<b>2010</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number entered</b>	<b>Number achieved at L2</b>
Occupational studies	19	15
Essential Skills: Communication	10	6
Essential Skills: Application of Number	14	10

<b>2009</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Number entered</b>	<b>Number achieved at L2</b>
Occupational studies	15	10

## **SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS**

### **English**

The provision in English is very good.

The strengths of the provision are:

- the outstanding standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English and English literature;
- the quality of the teaching observed, all of which was good or very good;
- the detailed, comprehensive planning and schemes of work across the key stages;
- the effective analysis and use of data to track the pupils' progress, identify under-achievement and provide appropriate support;
- the range of effective strategies and innovative approaches to support those pupils identified as having additional needs in literacy; and
- the very good leadership of the head of department.

### **French**

The provision in French is very good.

The strengths of the provision are:

- the supportive learning environment and excellent relationships based on mutual respect;
- the positive response of the pupils who engage enthusiastically with the wide range of activities and resources provided for them;
- the uptake of languages at KS4 and the very good standards achieved by the pupils at GCSE;
- the well-planned teaching strategies which develop the pupils' thinking skills and personal capabilities;
- the effective use of ICT to support and enhance the pupils' learning; and
- the reflective leadership of the coordinator which is focused on improving further the learning experiences provided for, and the standards achieved by, the pupils.

## **Science**

The provision in science is good.

The strengths of the science provision are:

- the very good relationships between pupils and teachers in just over half of the lessons observed;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection which ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; in just over half of the lessons it was good or better;
- the range of teaching strategies provided for the pupils, particularly the opportunities provided for them to engage in practical work and to use ICT;
- the quality of the self-evaluation conducted by the teachers prior to the inspection; and
- the outstanding results achieved by the pupils in external examinations.

The area for improvement is:

- to address the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

## SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Newtownhamilton 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>

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, French 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 safeguarding; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life and on progress towards the EF.

The arrangements for the inspection included:

- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire to the inspection;
- meetings with representatives from the governors; and
- meetings with groups of pupils from years 8, 10 and 11

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	157	61	39	28
Teachers	18	15	83	9
Support Staff	12	12	100	*

**Source:** Returns from questionnaires to Inspection Services Branch at DE. \* = fewer than 5

The returns from questionnaires sent to the parents/guardians, teachers and support staff were positive in most respects. A small number of parents raised concerns about aspects of the school's provision including teaching and learning and the issue of staff welfare was raised by several teachers. The ETI reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the findings from the questionnaires.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- A health and safety risk assessment of the access to the school buildings and school grounds is required.

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