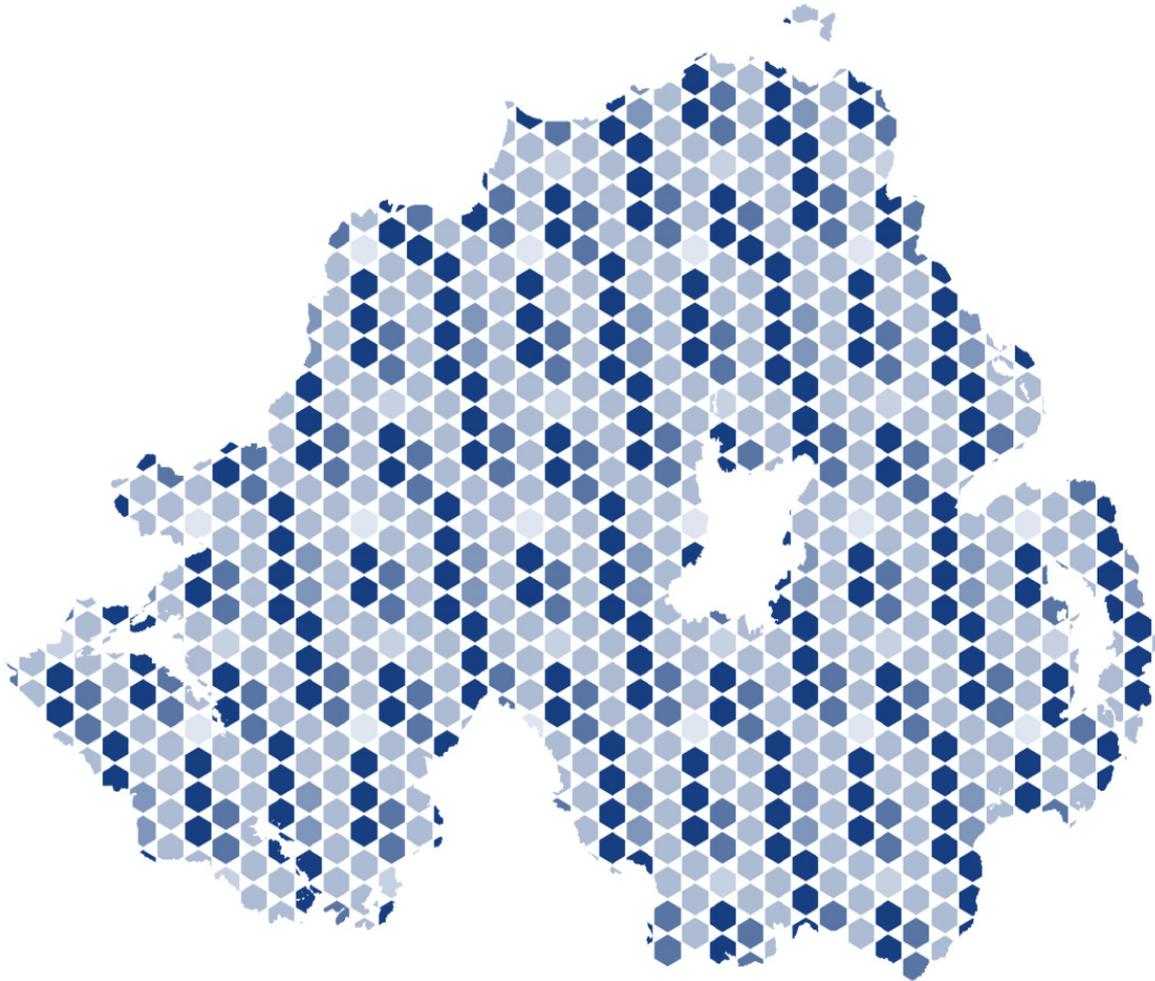


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Orangefield High School,
Belfast

Report of an Inspection
in April 2011



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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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Orangefield High School is a controlled, non-selective, co-educational school situated in east Belfast, just off the Castlereagh Road. Most of the pupils come from inner east Belfast. There has been a decline in the enrolment over the past ten years, but this has stabilised over the past three years and currently stands at 297. Approximately 51% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and 58% of the pupils have been identified by the school as having special educational needs, 12 of whom have a statement of educational need. Just over 11% (41) are newcomer pupils, most of whom do not have English as their first language. In addition, the school has a specialised unit for a small number of pupils with a hearing impairment (HIU); these pupils follow most aspects of the curriculum in the mainstream school. The school is in the third year of the Achieving Belfast programme which aims to address the under-achievement of pupils in the Belfast area.

1.2 FOCUS OF THE INSPECTION¹

The inspection focused on the:

- pupils' achievements and standards;
- quality of learning and teaching;
- curriculum provision across a wide range of subjects with a particular focus in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT); and
- quality of the leadership and management at all levels across the school.

The inspection also focused on the views of the pupils, parents/guardians, teachers, support staff and Board of Governors (governors); 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; progress towards the Entitlement Framework; the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG); and the provision for ICT across the curriculum.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is inadequate.

2.1 The main strengths of the school include:

- the motivation and engagement of the pupils when they are provided with stimulating and challenging learning opportunities;
- the recent improvement in the achievements of the pupils in a few subjects, for example, the improving standards at key stage (KS) 4 in mathematics and ICT;

¹ The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in post-primary schools 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 quality of the provision for the pupils attending the unit for the hearing-impaired; and
- the commitment of the Principal to the welfare and well-being of the pupils and staff.

2.2 The main areas for improvement are the need:

- for a strategic and rigorous approach to the leadership of the improvement process across the school in order to engage and motivate the pupils in all aspects of their work and improve the outcomes they achieve;
- to address the inadequacies of the KS4 and post-16 curriculum in order to meet more effectively the individual needs and aspirations of the pupils; and
- to improve the inadequate standards attained by the pupils in almost all aspects of their work, and in particular, the standards they achieve in external examinations.

A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

3. THE VIEWS OF PUPILS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL

The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents/guardians, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings with representatives from the governors and groups of pupils from years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14.²

Most of the responses from the parents/guardians were affirmative, indicating strong support for the work and life of the school. In particular, they highlighted the hard working and helpful teachers and the good opportunities provided by the school for the pupils to participate in educational visits and residential trips. A small number who responded raised concerns about the quality of the communication between the home and the school, matters concerning discipline, and the inadequate range of subject choices on offer to meet the needs of their child. Most of the teachers and support staff responded positively. In particular, they mentioned the strong sense of collegiality among the staff, the hard work undertaken in the interests of the pupils, and their willingness to take up additional responsibilities to support the work of the school. A small number of the staff raised concerns about inconsistencies in how pupil indiscipline is dealt with, the limited opportunities provided for the pupils to be involved in decision making, the poor state of the accommodation and the lack of physical resources to support effective learning and teaching.

The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school and, in particular, were very supportive of the teachers and their hard work in the interests of the pupils. In addition, they commented favourably on the good support provided for children with special educational needs, and the school's developing capacity in its use of performance data to track the pupils' progress. The governors expressed concern about the ability of teachers in single teacher departments to access professional development opportunities, the difficulties experienced through staff absences and the lack of appropriate substitute cover.

² The number of questionnaires issued and returned, and the number containing written comments are shown in Appendix 2.

In the discussions held with the pupils, they said that they felt safe and secure in school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their safety or well-being. They talked positively about the subjects they enjoy, the work of most of the staff in supporting them with their learning and the extra-curricular activities available to them. The pupils expressed concerns about the quality of the accommodation and the limited subject choices at KS 4 and post-16.

The Education and Training Inspectorate has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions, and, where appropriate, they are commented on in the report.

4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

The levels of attainment in public examinations are inadequate.

Over the last three years, the results achieved by the pupils in public examinations have been poor. There has been some progress in the number of pupils attaining five or more General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examinations at grades A*-G over this period, and a slight improvement in the number of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, when both English and mathematics are included, remains below 10%; it is unsatisfactory that less than 10% of pupils achieve this important benchmark by the end of KS4. An analysis of the performance data for the current year 12 conducted by the senior leadership team (SLT) has identified a number of pupils who have the potential to do well. Additional mentoring support has been provided for these pupils. The SLT reports early indications that the standards achieved by this group may show an improvement on previous years, particularly in mathematics which has demonstrated an upward trend in recent years; it will be important that this progress in mathematics is maintained, and in addition, that similar support is provided for the pupils in all of their subjects, in order to ensure broader improvement in examination performance at GCSE level.

The number of pupils entered for examinations at (General Certificate of Education) GCE Advanced (A) level is low with only applied science having a significant uptake. Over a three year period, approximately three quarters of the pupils entered for this subject achieved two grades at A*-E.

More detail of the results achieved in public examinations can be found in Appendices 3 and 4.

4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.2.1 QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of the learning and teaching in just under one-half of the lessons observed was good and, in a few, very good. Two-fifths of the lessons were satisfactory and the remaining one tenth of the lessons observed were inadequate.

In the more effective practice, the relationships between the pupils and their teachers were good, the teachers ensured that the pupils were settled and prepared for learning, expectations were appropriately high and the pupils understood what was expected of them through a clear exposition and agreement of the learning intentions. In these lessons, the learning was contextualised and made relevant to the pupils' experiences; the work was

matched appropriately to their ability level, there was appropriate pace and level of challenge, and the teachers used a variety of effective teaching and classroom management strategies to engage all of the pupils. The pupils in these lessons were well-behaved, motivated and engaged in the learning process.

The recently appointed special educational needs co-ordinator has developed a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. The provision for SEN is characterised by well organised lessons, very good working relationships and the high expectations set for the pupils. In only a small number of lessons did the teachers use individual education plans effectively to inform the planning and teaching for the pupils who have additional learning needs and implemented appropriate strategies to support these pupils; this good practice needs to be more widespread.

The less effective practice was characterised by an over-reliance on low-level tasks which were not matched sufficiently to the pupils' abilities, and by too few opportunities being provided for the pupils to participate actively in their learning, including insufficient opportunity to use ICT to enrich their learning. In these lessons, the expectations of what the pupils could achieve were too low and they were unduly passive for prolonged periods. As a result they were easily distracted, often becoming detached from their learning and, on occasions, unsettled. In addition, in these lessons the pupils with special educational needs were insufficiently challenged by their teachers, who did not plan effectively for their individual needs and as a result the pupils were not engaged in their learning.

In order to improve the quality of learning and teaching, the teachers need to raise their expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and match more closely the learning and teaching strategies to the abilities and interests of all of the pupils, including those who have special educational or additional learning needs.

4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

The curricular provision for the pupils at KS4 is inadequate; the provision for the pupils at post-16 level is unsatisfactory. The small size of the school and the low levels of collaboration at KS4 prevent it from providing a sufficiently broad and balanced curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils including those with special educational needs. The SLT needs to review and evaluate the range of accreditation opportunities for all of the pupils.

A very narrow range of courses is provided for the pupils at post-16 level. Whilst the school has collaborated, to a limited extent, with the neighbouring grammar school and with the local college of further and higher education, the curriculum offered to the pupils at this level is too narrow; too many of the pupils are following inappropriate courses or subject combinations. The entry requirements for pupils into year 13 are very low; there is evidence to show that pupils are following Advanced Supplementary (AS) levels courses with low levels of prior achievement at GCSE level, including GCSE grades below A*-C in English and mathematics. Consequently, these pupils struggle with the demands and rigour of A level work, in particular the controlled assessments and examinations. There is a need for the SLT to review, as a matter of urgency, this entry policy.

There are very good arrangements in place to monitor the educational progress of the few pupils who are placed in alternative education provision offsite. Senior staff visit these pupils on a regular basis and keep records of their visits. The SLT needs to develop further the systems for identifying, at an early stage, those pupils who are at risk of disengaging from learning and dropping out of school and, in particular, to develop the strategies to promote the inclusion of these pupils and ensure their retention in school.

4.2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The provision for the pastoral care of the pupils within the school is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator of pastoral care has worked conscientiously to develop her role and is committed to improving the provision for the pupils. She works effectively with her pastoral team and with a range of external agencies, other professionals and the parents/guardians to support vulnerable pupils. A comprehensive induction process ensures that the transition of the pupils from their primary schools is effective. The pupils' experiences in the school are enhanced by the extra-curricular activities available, including those provided through Extended Schools funding. Additional classes have recently been provided in the evenings to support the pupils in year 12 classes for examinations. The school has worked hard to develop a system to promote positive behaviour and has recognised that this needs to be reviewed, particularly to improve its effectiveness with the older pupils. A start has been made to enable the pupils to contribute to decision-making about aspects of school life which directly affect them, through the introduction of a School Council. More opportunities need to be provided for the pupils to develop their personal and social skills in order to improve both their achievements and their life chances. The teachers have worked hard to improve the attendance of the pupils. In spite of this, however, the attendance rate of the pupils is poor, remaining significantly below the average for similar schools.

A significant number of newcomer pupils has enrolled in the school in recent years. The school ensures that they are welcomed and included; they are provided with satisfactory pastoral support

4.2.4 SAFEGUARDING

There are satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school needs, however, to:

- improve the arrangements for consulting and communicating with the parents about, child protection and pastoral care policies; and
- ensure that information on child protection procedures is made readily available to all the non-teaching staff.

4.2.5 HEARING IMPAIRED UNIT (HIU)

The quality of provision for those pupils when they are within, or are supported in their learning by the HIU is very good.

The HIU provides support for five pupils with hearing impairments who are taught by a committed and conscientious teacher who has a clear understanding of the needs of each pupil and works hard to ensure that their academic, social and emotional needs are being met. The pupils are integrated into mainstream classes for most subjects, but attend the unit for English and for withdrawal classes which are planned effectively to reinforce their learning and understanding of the topics covered in the mainstream classes. There are three classroom assistants who are effective in supporting the pupils in mainstream classes. The pupils benefit from educational trips with hearing impaired pupils from other schools, and the mainstream teachers are familiar with, and use effectively, assistive technology to support the teaching. The pupils are given good opportunities to participate in work experience and the HIU teacher plans effectively with external agencies to assist pupils in choosing career pathways.

4.2.6 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The provision for CEIAG is inadequate.

The pupils receive a minimal experience which lacks coherence and does not cater for their individual needs. There is a lack of continuity in the provision across the school; the SLT needs to ensure a more consistent and coherent approach to the delivery of CEIAG, taking account of all the contributory aspects of the curriculum.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 Overall, the leadership and management of the school is inadequate; the quality of leadership, at senior and middle management levels, needs to improve.

The Principal, who has been in post for seven years, is conscientious and demonstrates a strong commitment to the pastoral care and welfare of the pupils. Over this period, she has overseen the implementation of key educational initiatives and has worked hard to create a more positive climate for learning. In collaboration with the governors, she has reduced successfully a significant budget deficit.

Currently, there is no strategic leadership of the curriculum; the Principal, supported by the governors, need to review the roles and leadership responsibilities of all members of the SLT in light of the current needs of the school. In turn, the SLT, particularly the Vice-principal, needs to take more responsibility, in support of the Principal, for the delivery of key aspects of school improvement. This includes the implementation of appropriate procedures for developing, monitoring and evaluating the curricular provision to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets the progression needs and aspirations of all of the pupils.

The Principal has begun a review of the school development plan (SDP) and has engaged in consultations with staff and governors. The plan covers a limited period of only one year and sets out a range of priorities for school improvement. The associated action plans vary in detail; those that have been developed in consultation with the Achieving Belfast support team from the Belfast Education and Library Board identify appropriately the need to raise the standards achieved by the pupils in mathematics and literacy and make more effective use of a range of data to identify targets for improvement. The teaching strategies to address these areas are, however, unclear. In order to comply with the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland), the Principal, governors and SLT need to develop a more strategic and longer term approach to development planning with a clearer focus on raising achievement which takes account of the regulations. It will also be important in this work that the views of the parents and the pupils are sought and incorporated when preparing the SDP.

While the SLT has made good use of a range of assessment and other data to identify areas for improvement, the teachers in charge of subjects, or who hold other middle management roles, need to make more effective use of the data and other forms of evidence, in the development of the processes of monitoring and evaluating the quality of learning and teaching in the areas for which they hold responsibility. It will be important, as many of the middle managers have responsibility for more than one area of the work of the school, that these processes are manageable and not overly bureaucratic.

In general, the quality of the accommodation is unsatisfactory and not supportive of effective learning and teaching.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In almost all of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is inadequate; the areas for improvement outweigh the strengths in the provision. The inspection has identified significant areas for improvement in leadership and management, standards and learning and teaching, which need to be addressed urgently if the school is to meet effectively the needs of all of the pupils.

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.

6.3 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 sixth form provision, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The quality of the provision in the English department is inadequate.

The strengths of the work include:

- the positive working relationships which exist in many of the classes;
- the good start made using data to help identify and target pupils who are underachieving;
- the quality of the units of work compiled by the English teachers; and,
- the good quality of teaching in under half of the lessons observed.

The areas for improvement include the urgent need to:

- improve the inadequate standards in public examinations; and
- adopt a more strategic and rigorous approach to bring about improvement in teaching, learning and outcomes.

Mathematics

The quality of provision in mathematics is satisfactory.

The strengths of the mathematics provision are:

- the improving performance of the pupils in GCSE mathematics;
- the start made to introducing a variety of learning activities that will provide opportunities for the pupils to become more engaged in their mathematical learning;
- the start made to self-evaluation incorporating the views of pupils;
- the effective use of performance data; and
- the enthusiasm and commitment of the head of department.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- continue the improving trend in standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE mathematics;

- improve the quality of teaching and learning through, for example, using more effective questioning strategies; and
- develop further monitoring and evaluation in order to effect sustained improvement.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The quality of the provision in examination ICT is satisfactory. The quality of the provision for cross-curricular and KS3 ICT is inadequate.

The strengths of the ICT provision include:

- the good commitment of resources to ICT, including timetabled time at KS3;
- the good levels of encouragement and positive support, including outside of class time, provided for the pupils;
- the good quality of the teaching and learning in a majority of the lessons;
- the improving match of the level 2 examination ICT programmes on offer to the pupils' needs and abilities; and
- the improving levels of achievement at KS4 and in post-16 level 2 ICT programmes.

The areas for improvement include the need:

- to provide more opportunities, across a much broader range of subjects and at a much higher level of challenge, for the pupils to apply and extend their cross-curricular ICT skills;
- for more effective strategic development and monitoring by senior management of the curriculum, including ICT as a cross-curricular skill, to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets the progression needs and aspirations of the pupils; and
- to improve further the standards of the pupils' achievements in public examinations, particularly in the AS-level Applied ICT.

QUESTIONNAIRE DATA

	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	150	28	18.66 %	11
Teachers	21	10	47.61%	4
Support Staff	12	8	66.66%	4

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Orangefield High School v. Date of Inspection: W/C 04/04/11
 ii. School Reference Number: 121-0266 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	48	35	40	36	32
Total enrolment	302	299	292	297	292

1.3 Attendance

Year 2009/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2009/10	NI Average 2008/09
% Attendance	89.5	85.3	78.5	79.1	80.2	90.3	0	83	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 19.6 iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.781
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 14.896

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	14	20	33	32	26	15	8	148
Enrolment: Girls	18	18	27	15	39	16	11	144
Enrolment: Total	32	38	60	47	65	31	19	292
PTR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

- 1.5 Staying On Rate (2008/09) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	69.7	NI Av Year 13	44.3
Year 14	0.0	NI Av Year 14	30.6

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2008/09	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	37		17	
Another School	5%	12.8	0%	2.2
Employment	38%	5.7	35%	11.6
Full-time Further Education	24%	46.6	0%	27.6
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	18%	45.5
Full-time Training	5%	27.5	6%	5.2
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	27%	3.8	41%	4.5
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.5	0%	3.3

1.7 NAME OF SCHOOL: Orangefield High School, Belfast

SCHOOL YEAR: 2010/2011

GCSE	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE and Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	68.89	71.32	63
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	10.87	7.84	13.51
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	10.87	5.88	8.1
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	47.23	66.67	48.65
GCE A2 Level or equivalent	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	0	0	20
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	30.77	100	40

EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table showing the GCSE subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2010, in comparison with the respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

Table 1

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
GCSE A*-C		French			Additional Science Art and Design English English Literature Geography Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Music Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies
GCSE A*-E		Music	English Literature French Religious Studies		Additional Science Art and Design English Geography Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies

NOTE: GCE A* grade applies from 2010.

Table showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1.

Table 2

	100% - 96%	95% - 86%	85% - 76%	75% - 66%	65% - 0%
GCSE A*-C			Art and Design English Literature Information Technology Music	Additional Science Home Economics Child Development	English French Geography Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies
GCSE A*-E	English Literature	Additional Science Art and Design English French Home Economics Child Development Information Technology Learning for Life and Work (PSE) Music Religious Studies Single Award Science Sport (PE) Studies	Geography Mathematics Motor Vehicle Studies		

NOTE: GCE A* grade applies from 2010.

HEALTH AND SAFETY AND/OR ACCOMMODATION

- The accommodation is of poor quality and falls short of modern standards.

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