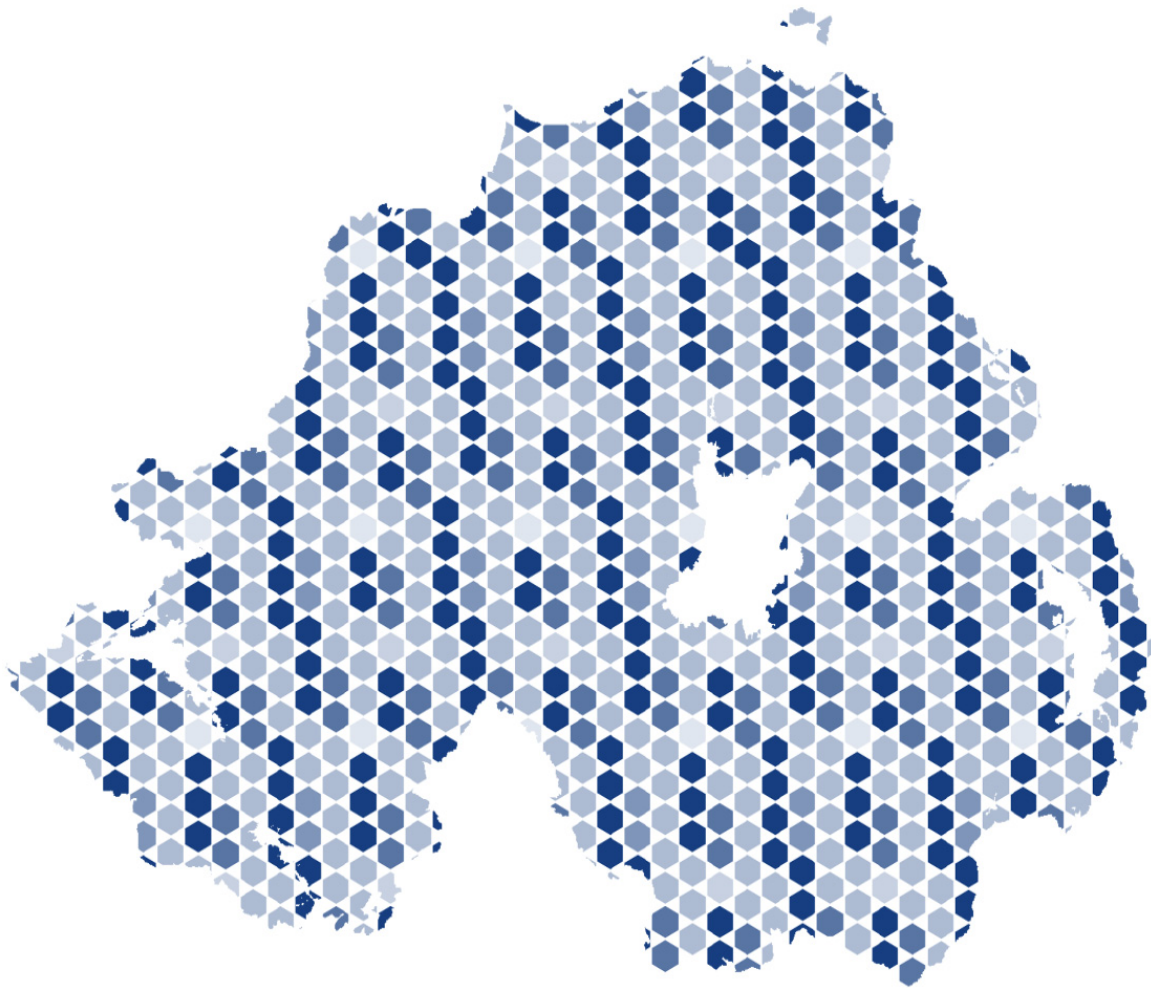


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Sacred Heart College,
Omagh

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

Report of an Inspection
in November 2011



CONTENTS

Section	Page
1. CONTEXT	1
2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION	1
3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS	1
4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING	2
5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	4
6. CONCLUSION	4
APPENDICES	
APPENDICES 1 and 2	Statistical Information
APPENDIX 3	Summary of Main Findings from the areas under focus: English, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology
APPENDIX 4	Scope and Method of Inspection

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 the Department of Education.

CEIAG	Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
DE	Department of Education
EF	Entitlement Framework
EOTAS	Educated other than at School
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FSM	Free School Meals
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GCE A	General Certificate of Education Advanced Levels
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KS	Key stage
NI	Northern Ireland
OLC	Omagh Learning Community
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
SMT	Senior Management Team
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

1. CONTEXT

1.1 Sacred Heart College maintains its enrolment well, within a trend of falling post-primary pupil numbers in the wider area. The current enrolment includes a significant number of pupils who require additional support with their learning, including newcomer pupils. There is a sustainable sixth form, which currently has 198 pupils.

Sacred Heart College	2009	2010	2011
Enrolment	975	975	955
FSM (Band 3) Percentage	30	32	33
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	16 (154)	15 (151)	17 (162)
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	36	32	33
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	35	40	42
Intake			
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	3.45	3.70	2.14
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	8.97	13.33	7.14
% of Y8 pupils with L4 English	37.24	60.74	66.43
% of Y8 pupils with L4 mathematics	39.31	53.33	69.29

Source: Data held by the school.

2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

2.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the 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. ETI will monitor the school's progress on the area for improvement.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

3.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are good¹.

KEY FINDINGS

Most of the pupils demonstrate an excellent disposition to learning and during the inspection their behaviour was exemplary. They develop very good personal and social skills, including self-confidence and resilience, and take great pride in their work and in their school.

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalent in at least 5 subjects	84	83	87.34
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	56	60.10	65
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Above average	Above Average	Above average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	41.33	39.50	32.50
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Above average	Above Average	Above average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	80.67	77.84	83.54

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

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

The pupils attain GCSE outcomes that compare very favourably with similar schools in NI for five GCSEs at grade A*-C. When compared against the NI average for similar schools, over the past three years, two-thirds of the subjects are at or above the average, with nearly half of the subjects surpassing the respective averages.

In the past three years, while there has been a year on year increase in the percentage of pupils achieving any five GCSEs at grades C or above, the percentage achieving five GCSE grades C or above, when English and mathematics are taken into account, has declined. It is therefore appropriate that the school has identified a few aspects of the English and mathematics provision² that require improvement and has prioritised these within the recently reviewed school development plan.

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	90.9	83.3	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	56	46	49
Comparison with the NI average for all non-selective schools	Well above average	Above average	Above average
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	97	97	98
Comparison with the NI average for all non-selective schools	Above average	Above average	Above average

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

The outcomes for the pupils entered for examinations at A level or equivalent are good; over the past three years the percentage of pupils attaining three grades at A*- C and 2 or more grades at A*-E, has been consistently above the NI average for similar schools. The pupils achieve well in a broadening range of vocational qualifications. Consequently, their success provides appropriate progression routes to further study and work.

4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

4.1 The quality of provision for learning is very good.

KEY FINDINGS

The provision in English is good, in ICT it is very good and in mathematics it is satisfactory³

Just over four-fifths of lessons observed were good or better. Around one-third of lessons were very good and a small number were outstanding. In the very good and outstanding lessons the pupils' responses and their thinking skills were extended through skilful questioning and their learning progressed as a result of the teachers' ability to use, with continuity, an appropriate variety of good teaching strategies, including the use of ICT, across a series of lessons. In around a fifth of the lessons, while still satisfactory, the teachers failed to match the work appropriately to the pupils' abilities and interests and directed the pupils' thinking excessively.

² See Appendix 3

³ See Appendix 3

The quality of provision for SEN is very good.

A significant number of pupils require additional support with aspects of literacy and numeracy; others require help with their social skills and need support to be included fully in the life of the school. The school has systematic processes in place for the early identification and tracking of the needs of these pupils and the SENCO has an excellent working knowledge of the challenges facing each of those who require additional support.

In light of this information, most of the teachers make appropriate adjustments and provide additional care and support to address identified gaps in learning, however the effectiveness of the support provided in class is not entirely consistent across the school.

The majority of the pupils make good progress and achieve well in their learning. Pupils who are on the SEN register come off the register when their needs have been addressed successfully. The school can demonstrate the pupils' improvement and their successes at GCSE and at 'A' level through effective pupil tracking.

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

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the pastoral care provision is outstanding. The pupils are very well cared for as a result of the holistic approach to their academic, social and emotional development and the excellent working relationships between the pupils and all the staff.

The pupils are well aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

Very good attention is given to addressing the wide range of sensitive and complex issues facing the pupils through a taught personal development programme which underpins their confidence and sense of worth.

The pupils develop many important leadership and inter-personal skills by being involved in school assemblies, the school council and the peer mentoring programme. They give significant amounts of time and money to local and global charitable causes.

4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is very good

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum across all of the key stages with an especially broad uptake of subjects in KS4. The school is actively developing its own post-16 provision; it continues to be committed to the OLC with currently around 16% of the sixth form benefiting from the additional curricular choices

The pupils benefit from an appropriate range of well-planned CEIAG activities, and demonstrate an informed knowledge of career routes available to them. The very good provision benefits from the contribution of a number of external agencies, as well as from employers from the local and wider area, who promote awareness of careers in STEM.

The recently appointed co-ordinator is well-informed on current career opportunities and pathways. She has a clear vision for the future development of the provision and has set realistic development targets.

5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 The leadership and the management are good.

KEY FINDINGS

The Principal's leadership is very good. He provides clear strategic direction, based on a very good knowledge of the needs of the school and he inspires confidence and respect among the school community. The two Vice-principals and senior management team all have clear roles and responsibilities which they carry out extremely well in support of the Principal.

The quality of the middle management is good. The subject leaders and co-ordinators have begun to implement effective strategies to improve the quality of learning and teaching, such as the introduction of more consistent planning and the gathering of pupil performance data. There are inconsistencies in how this data is used to inform improvements in classroom practice.

The recently reviewed SDP (which meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (NI) 2010) identifies appropriately, through systematic and open consultation with the school community, appropriate priorities to address the needs of all of the pupils. A well-considered system of monitoring, to ascertain what value is being added to the pupil's experience as a result of their education, is a clear strength.

The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school and work very effectively with the Principal to ensure that the school is well managed.

The school has very good, comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education (DE).

Given the findings of the inspection, the school meets the needs and expectations of the school community very effectively.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the 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.

6.2 The area for improvement is the need to:

- ensure that the wide range of quantitative and qualitative data available is used more consistently and effectively to inform improvements in teaching, learning and in the pupils' outcomes.

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

STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Sacred Heart College
 ii. School Reference Number: 223-0298
 iii. Age Range: 11-18
 iv. Status: Catholic Maintained
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 14/11/11
 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	165	145	135	140	138
Total enrolment	968	975	975	955	920

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	91.5	92	90.4	88.2	89.1	86.4	88.7	90	91

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

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	74	77	48	67	86	39	39	430
Enrolment: Girls	64	62	83	79	82	70	50	490
Enrolment: Total	138	139	131	146	168	109	89	920
PTR	15.992	16.225	17.458	15.67	15.44	14.001	12.165	

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

Year 13	63.1	NI Av Year 13	47.4
Year 14	52.7	NI Av Year 14	34.5

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	77		88	
Another School	10%	14.8	6%	2.4
Employment	2.4%	5.2	13%	12.3
Full-time Further Education	32.7%	47.5	28%	28
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	43%	42.5
Full-time Training	4.8%	25.1	1%	5.1
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.6	2%	5.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.8	7%	3.9

TABLE 1 OUTLINES THE SCHOOL'S GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

HEADLINE STANDARDS

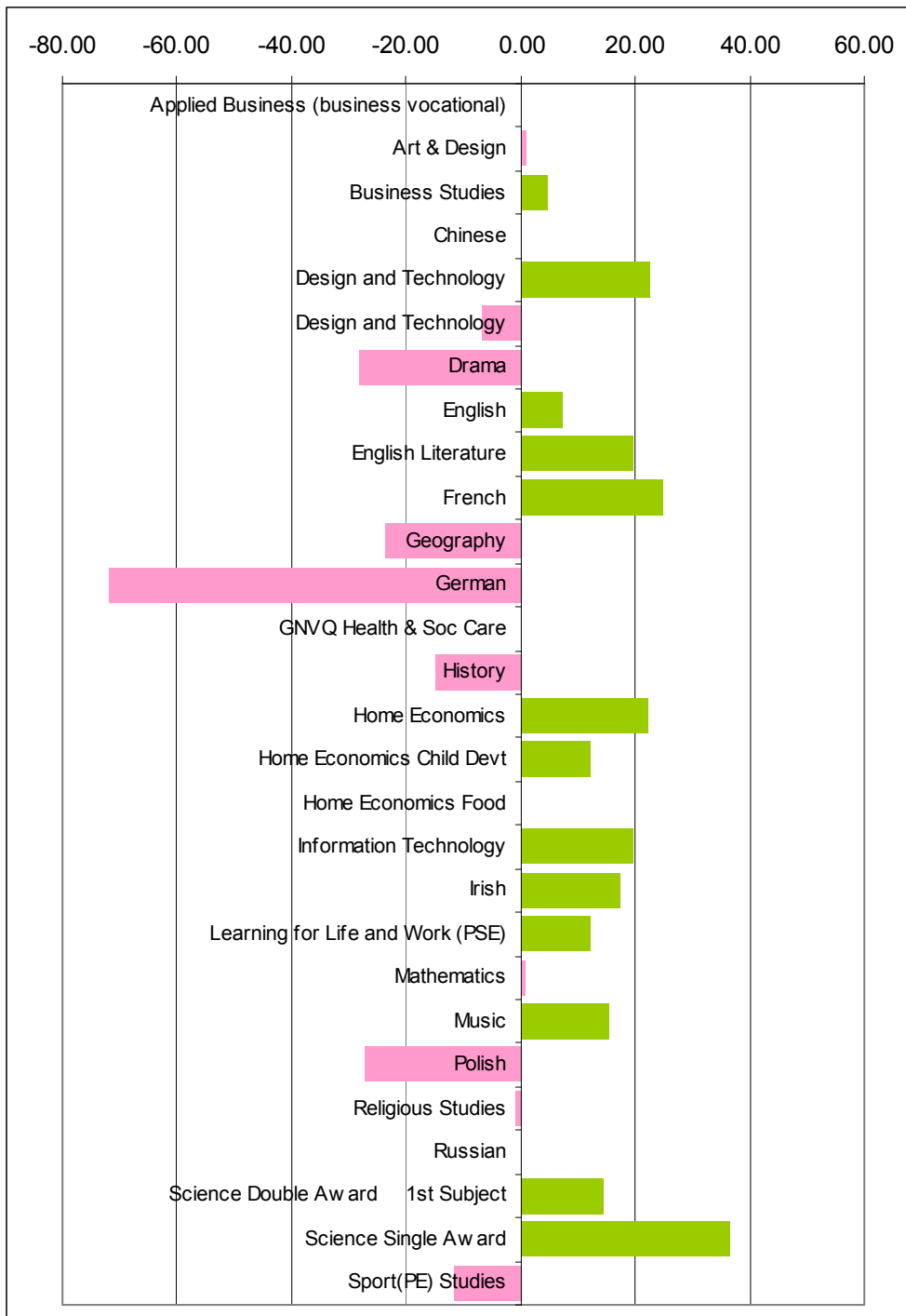
NB: The NI average for all non-selective schools of pupils obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics in 2010 is 34.9%

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	84	83	87.34
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	56	60.10	65
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Above average	Above Average	Above average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	41.33	39.50	32.50
Comparison with the NI average for similar schools	Above average	Above Average	Above average
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	80.67	77.84	83.54

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: Chinese, Drama, German, GNVQ Health and Social Science, Home Economics, Polish and Russian.

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

HEADLINE STANDARDS

NB: The NI averages in 2010 for all 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%

Comparisons based on FSM percentage	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	90.9	83.3	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	56	46	49
Comparison with the NI average for all non-selective schools	Well above average	Above average	Above average
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	97	97	98
Comparison with the NI average for all non-selective schools	Above average	Above average	Above average

OTHER RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4

Applied and Vocational Courses taken in the last three years.

Subject	2009		2010		2011		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Occupational Studies	37.5	100	42.5	100	26.9	100	90
Applied Business SA					77.1	91.4	35

OTHER RESULTS: POST-16

Applied and Vocational Courses taken in the last three years.

(All courses Level 3, unless otherwise stated)

Subject	2009		2010		2011		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Applied Health & Social Care SA	25	100	60	100	0	100	10
Applied Health & Social Care DA	75	100	64.7	100	69.6	95.7	93
Applied Business Studies SA	50	83.3	27.3	81.8	100	100	22
Applied Business Studies DA			90.9	100	62.1	96.6	51
Applied ICT SA	87.5	100	35.3	94.1	81.3	100	57
Applied ICT DA	81.8	100	43.6	92.3	77.8	100	97
Applied Science DA	27.3	90.9	80.8	100			48
BTEC Sport	75	100	100	100	78.6	100	34
BTEC Construction (DA)	97.2	100	86.4	100	92	100	108
BTEC TV & Film					100	100	1
BTEC Games Dev					83.3	100	6
BTEC Agriculture					100	100	2

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS

English

The provision in English is good

The main strengths include:

- the excellent working relationships at every level;
- the dedication of the Head of English and all of the teaching staff in the department;
- the good standards achieved in public examinations at GCSE level;
- the good or better quality of the teaching in a majority of the lessons observed; and
- the effective involvement of the school library and library staff in the development of whole school literacy.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- develop further the departmental planning to show more coherence and progression within and across the key stages; and
- ensure that the provision is monitored and evaluated more closely in order to inform further improvements in learning, teaching and pupil outcomes, especially in light of a recent fall in GCSE outcomes.

Mathematics

The provision in mathematics is satisfactory

The main strengths include:

- the effective working relationships between the pupils and the teachers;
- the high levels of individual support provided for the pupils in the lessons observed;
- the hard-working and committed teachers;
- the good or better quality of teaching in a majority of the lessons observed; and
- the range of activities being used to promote mathematics.

The areas for improvement include the need to:

- improve the attainment and standards achieved in mathematics;
- improve the overall quality of the teaching; and
- self-evaluate more rigorously in order to inform better the action planning and bring about improvement.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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

The main strengths are the:

- very good levels of achievement by the pupils in specialist examinations in ICT at GCSE and GCE Advanced level;
- very good leadership of examination and cross-curricular ICT;
- good or better quality of teaching and learning both for and with ICT, including the support for pupils, in all of the lessons observed;
- good or better standards of work for and with ICT demonstrated by most of the pupils in the lessons observed;
- good range of provision in examination and cross curricular ICT which is planned to meet the diverse needs of all of the pupils; and
- effective use of ICT by a number of staff, across the range of subject areas inspected, to support teaching and learning.

The main area for improvement is the:

- need to develop an effective on-line learning environment to support teaching and learning and provide better opportunities, for staff and students across the school, to access and use on-line learning resources.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Sacred Heart College focused on achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and on leadership and management across the school as a whole. The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in these three aspects of post-primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the Inspectorate's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>

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 ICT, providing detailed oral feedback to the teachers in these areas. Detailed findings are reported in Appendix 3. In total, 97 lessons were inspected across the school.

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 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	191	43	23	21
Teachers	60	49	82	12
Support Staff	23	11	48	9

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

The returns from questionnaires sent to the teachers, support staff and the parents/guardians were positive in most respects. A small number of teachers reported some concerns in aspects of communication and management. The ETI reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the findings from the questionnaires and, where appropriate, these have been commented on within the report.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation for Drama falls short of that as recommended in the DE building handbook.

Due to the unconnected nature of the school buildings, the pupils have to walk considerable distances outdoors when changing classes. This is a particular concern during inclement weather.

There are a significant number of access points to the school buildings which presents challenges to the school in terms of managing access.

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