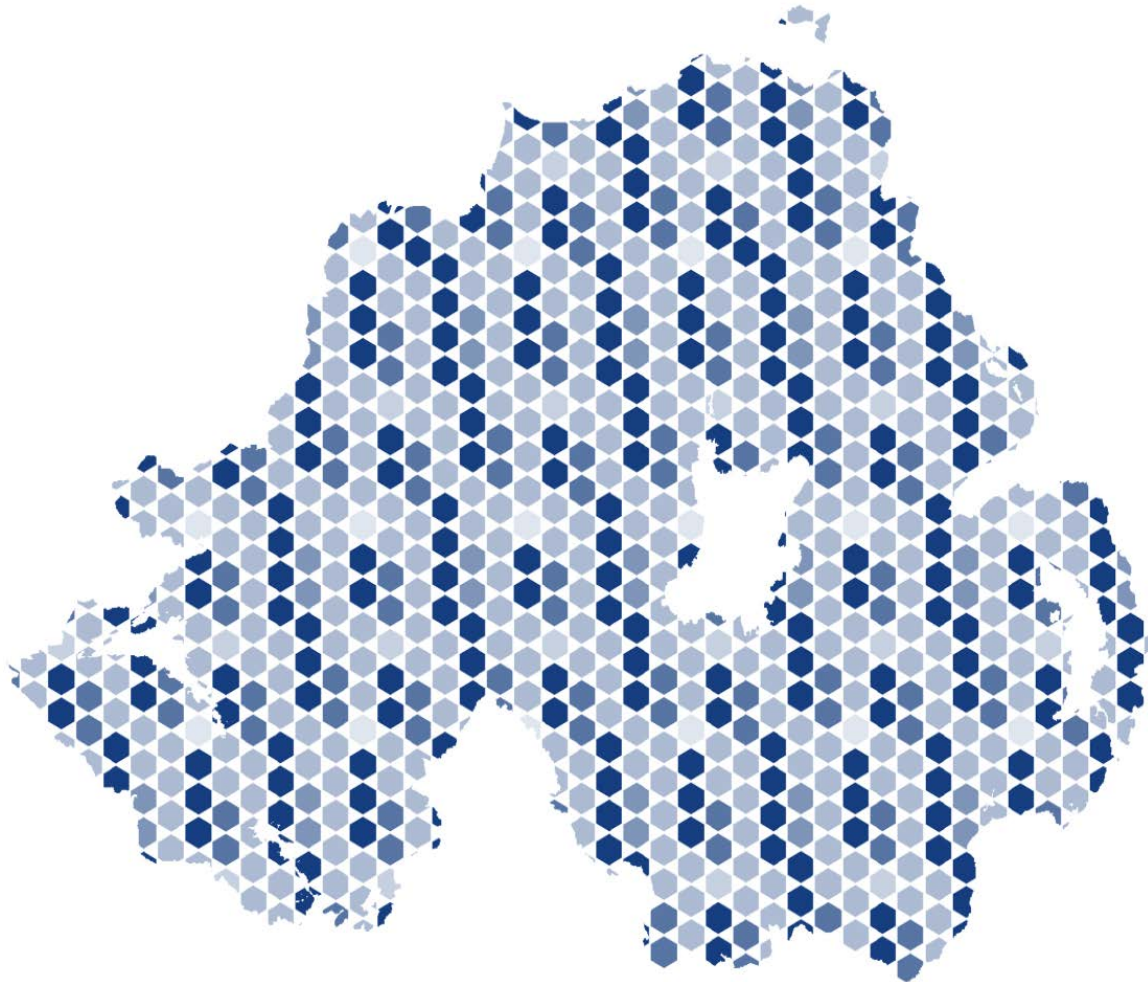


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Lismore Comprehensive  
School, Craigavon

Comprehensive , Co-Educational , 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection in  
March 2016

*eti*

The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
*Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 (ETI) use the following performance levels when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

## Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

## Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	4
7. Leadership and management	6
8. Overall effectiveness	7

**Appendix** on trends in examination performance and other statistical data

## **1. Inspection method and evidence base**

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 ETI 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 observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation, data and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Three percent of parents (26) responded to the questionnaires. Nearly all of them expressed high levels of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular, the parents commented positively on the strongly child-focused pastoral care and the hard working, motivated staff. Forty-seven percent of the teaching staff (36) and twenty-three percent (3) of the support staff responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of these responses were positive about the many aspects of school life. In particular, the staff commented on the community spirit in the school, the very good working relationships amongst the staff and the energetic and dynamic leadership of the school. The small number of issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the governors and the principal.

## **2. Focus of inspection**

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is, through an effective linking of internal and external approaches, to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on modern languages in this inspection.

## **3. Context**

Lismore is a comprehensive, co-educational school, situated in an area of significant social need in Craigavon, County Armagh. The school caters for the full range of academic ability for pupils aged 11-19. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals has risen recently to just over 40%. The number of pupils identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning has remained steady at around 17% of the school enrolment. The school plays a leading role in the Craigavon Area Learning Community and benefits from collaborative learning and teaching arrangements with partner schools and the further education college. The school's ethos "caring and learning together" pervades school life.

Lismore Comprehensive School	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Year 8 Intake	202	167	208	189
Enrolment	1175	1168	1157	1162
% Attendance NI Average	91.7% 91.3%	92.2% 92.0%	93.0% N/A	N/A N/A
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	27.5	30.16	40.9	41.4
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	14.6% (172)	16.8% (196)	17.2% (199)	17.4% (202)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	56	46	50	51
No. of newcomers	43	49	54	51
<i>Intake<sup>2</sup>:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	17.82	3.59	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	20.79	4.19	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	75.74	68.26	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	80.20	72.46	#	#

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

N/A not available

# Data unavailable due to industrial action in some primary schools

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Good

#### 5. Achievement and standards

- The pupils are very welcoming, courteous and respectful. Almost all of them engage well with the learning process, interact confidently with their peers and make good progress in their learning. They take pride in their achievements and present their work to a good standard. The pupils have an extensive range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, including through the student leadership team and an accredited mentoring programme. Throughout their time in the school, the pupils benefit from a broad range of activities beyond the classroom which enriches their educational and social experiences.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals.

<sup>2</sup> From 2013, KS2 standards in English and mathematics are reported as Levels of Progression in Communication and Using Mathematics and cannot be compared directly with KS2 data from previous years

- There is variation in the pupils' attainment in public examinations and they are an important area for improvement. In two out of the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE examinations or equivalent at grades A\* to C is below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for non-selective schools in the same free school meal band. When English and mathematics are included, the percentage of pupils attaining at grades A\* to C at GCSE or equivalent, in two of the past three years, is in line with or above the NI average for similar schools. The standards attained by the pupils in vocational subjects are consistently good. Overall, the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations at the end of key stage (KS) 4 are improving.
- At GCE A level, at grades A\* to C, the school is below the NI average for non-selective schools, in two out of the past three years at grades A\* to E the school is in line with the NI average over the last three years and nearly all of the pupils achieve two A level passes at grades A\* to E.
- Over the past three years, the attainment by pupils entitled to free school meals of five or more GCSE or equivalent passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is below the NI average.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable.
- The proportion of pupils progressing to higher education courses is in line with the NI average. The proportion of pupils progressing to courses provided by the further education sector is above the average for similar schools. Over the past three years, a majority of the year 12 pupils progressed to post-16 provision in the school and most of them progressed from year 13 to year 14.
- Overall, the standards attained by the pupils in English are good. Over the past three years, the standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English language are very good and consistently above the corresponding NI average at grades A\* to C and significantly above the NI average, at grades A\* to B. Over the same period, the standards attained by the small numbers of pupils entered for GCSE English literature are well below the corresponding NI average at grades A\* to C. The standards attained by pupils entered for GCE A level English literature have fluctuated, from in line with to below the NI average.
- The standards attained by the pupils in mathematics are below the NI average for non-selective schools in GCSE mathematics at grades A\* to C in two out of the past three years; there was, however, a notable improvement in the GCSE outcomes attained by the pupils in 2015. The standards attained by the small numbers of pupils who take GCE A level mathematics have followed a downward trend in recent years and this need to be kept under review. Most of the pupils are motivated and engage actively in their learning in mathematics; the presentation of their work is of a high quality.
- The percentage of pupils who achieve at grades A\* to C in GCSE French is below the corresponding NI average, although outcomes improved in 2015. The standards in Irish show an improving trend and rose to above the NI average in 2015.

- The school has appropriately identified, as a key priority, the need to address the variation in the pupil's achievements in public examinations and to improve the standards they attain. There are appropriate actions and strategies in place to address this important area for improvement.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Most (78%) of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective (good or better) in promoting and progressing the pupils' learning; just under one-third (32%) of them were very effective (very good or better). The more effective lessons are characterised by: positive, purposeful relationships between teachers and pupils; high but realistic expectations and work matched well to the ability of the pupils; skilful behaviour management; pupils challenged to reflect on and improve their work; and good confirmation of learning through effective questioning and assessment, which informs future planning.
- The less effective practice (important areas for improvement or below), in just over one-fifth (22%) of the lessons observed, is characterised by: insufficient planning to match the work to the needs and abilities of all of the pupils; over-direction by the teacher leading to a slow pace in the pupils' learning; and limited effective feedback to the pupils on how to improve their work.
- The provision for learning in English is good. Nearly all (92%) of the lessons observed were effective, with a significant minority (42%) being highly effective (very good or better). In these lessons: pupils have meaningful, purposeful and challenging opportunities to apply and develop further their talking, listening, reading and writing skills through paired and group work and effective, skilful questioning enables all pupils to develop and extend their oral and written responses, as well as their thinking. There is an on-going review of the provision for English literature at both GCSE and A Level, focused appropriately on extending uptake and improving the standards achieved.
- Overall, the pupils' skills in oral and written communication are being developed well within the provision for English. The pupils, however, would benefit from opportunities across the entirety of the curriculum to further develop and apply their understanding of effective talking and listening when speaking for a range of purposes and to a variety of audiences. The school has identified the need to better support pupils' acquisition of subject specific vocabulary and develop further, across the subjects, more opportunities for extended writing.
- The provision for learning in mathematics is good. Most (77%) of the learning and teaching observed in mathematics was effective, with just under two-fifths of it being highly effective (very good). In these lessons, the planning for learning is effective as characterised by an appropriate lesson structure with engaging starter activities, reviews of previous learning and the intended learning being made explicit to the pupils. In addition, the pupils are given regular and relevant opportunities to apply and extend their mathematical understanding. In a minority (23%) of the lessons observed, there were missed opportunities for the pupils to discuss and consolidate their mathematical learning.

- The pupils benefit from opportunities to apply their numeracy skills during fun days, mathematics week and an extra-curricular mathematics club. While many subject-contextualised opportunities for the pupils to apply and further develop their numeracy skills have been identified, the promotion and development of the pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum is inconsistent. In order to raise standards further, the school has recognised the need for a more consistent whole-school approach to numeracy, which is monitored and evaluated more robustly.
- The provision for learning in modern languages is good. Most (75%) of the lessons observed were effective in progressing the pupils' learning. In these lessons, the teachers built successfully upon the pupils' prior learning, providing appropriate support and challenge. The pupils engaged readily in pairs and small groups to complete well-planned, differentiated activities which also developed their wider skills, including independence and thinking skills. In a minority (25%) of the lessons observed, there were too few opportunities to further develop the pupils' oral responses in the target language.
- The provision for care and support is highly effective and a key strength of the work of the school. The school's ethos is characterised by high levels of individual support, inclusion and a clear commitment to the welfare of pupils and staff. The strong sense of community throughout the school promotes successfully a culture of mutual respect. The recently developed whole-school behaviour for learning policy is underpinned by a shared understanding of how pupils learn. Appropriately, it aims to ensure that all of them engage purposefully in their learning, achieve to the best of their ability and contribute more fully to the life and work of the school. The school liaises closely with a wide range of external agencies to support the pupils' social and emotional well-being.
- The provision for pupils who require additional support with their learning is given a high priority in the school. Effective communication with feeder primary schools, along with the school's internal assessment and support procedures, ensures that the needs of the pupils are promptly identified and planned for. The pupils are integrated well into all areas of school life and their holistic development, progress and well-being are promoted effectively by the highly committed and competent team of learning support teachers and assistants. The school engages well with parents and is developing appropriately the contribution of the pupils to setting and reviewing their own targets for learning. Well-conceived, capacity-building professional development opportunities are provided for staff to successfully meet the needs of all the pupils who require additional support.
- The ongoing strategic review and expansion of the curriculum offer is underpinned by robust consultation. It is informed by a detailed knowledge of the pupils' interests and capabilities and takes account of up-to-date labour market information. The evolving 'pathways for success' programme is pupil-centred and flexible, with tailored pathways for individual pupils and relevant twilight courses to address their needs, interests and career aspirations. While the curriculum has been recently broadened, the range of vocational courses on offer at KS 4 and post-16 is too narrow. Appropriately, the school has identified the need to review the impact of the curriculum on the learning experiences and outcomes for all pupils, including the impact of small numbers



of pupils in many of the post-16 classes. The school works collaboratively to good effect with several partners within the area learning community, including the local further education college, and is meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.

- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is an important area for improvement. The pupils' knowledge and skills are enhanced through a career's fair and an interview skills training day. In addition, good links have been established with a range of employers and the year 13 pupils, and some of the year 11 pupils, benefit from targeted work placement opportunities. Across the key stages, however, the pupils are not sufficiently informed to make knowledgeable career choices; the taught careers programme is not sufficiently meeting the pupils' needs at the key transition points. The planning for curriculum and CEIAG development are not well enough aligned.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- Following the appointment of a new principal, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has been restructured and extended significantly over the past school year. The SLT has a shared vision for school improvement and they provide effective whole-school strategic leadership. There are clear and open channels of communication between staff, pupils, parents and governors. A high quality school development plan, with a clear focus on meeting the academic and pastoral needs of all of the pupils, guides well the improvement work in the school. The members of the SLT work diligently and collegially to bring about improvements in their areas of responsibility.
- The more effective use of data, at all levels, is a central aspect of the school's work to improve the standards. The use of data by the key staff in the school is increasingly strategic, as characterised by: more consistent and regular approaches to assessment and recording across the subjects; more collaborative working by the pastoral and academic middle leaders to identify and support low and underperforming pupils; and better use of a broader range of data to measure value added.
- The development of the capacity of the middle leaders is a whole-school priority. Most have benefited from appropriate development opportunities, are encouraged to seek and observe effective practice outside of the school and they are subject to greater levels of accountability. As a result, the action planning for improvement process is more strategic, aligned well to the priorities in the school development plan and underpinned by increasingly effective self-evaluation, including the use of qualitative and quantitative data. More needs to be done by the middle leaders to develop systematic target-setting across the school, monitor the impact of actions to improve standards and the effectiveness of learning and teaching in their areas of responsibility.
- The governors have a very good range of complementary skills and carry out their roles conscientiously. They understand well the challenges and opportunities facing the school. It will be important for the governors to continue to support and work with the senior leadership team to further develop strategies to reduce the current school deficit. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection there can be confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.

- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe in school and that their concerns are dealt with promptly. They are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.

There are areas for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address. The areas are to:

- improve the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations; and
- develop further the capacity of the middle leaders to monitor the impact of actions to improve standards and the quality of the pupils' learning experiences.

## Examination performance and other statistical data

### GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS<sup>3</sup> and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Lismore Comprehensive School achieving five or more GCSE's (A\* to C and A\* to E) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category<sup>4</sup>.

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	90.29	82.64	95.325
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	57.71	64.25	65.5
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>61.2</i>	<i>74.1</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	41.71	30.92	42.11
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>35.6</i>	<i>43.5</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	88.57	88.41	94.74
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	26.92	26.67	24.59

<sup>3</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

<sup>4</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

<sup>5</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

### Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2012-13 to 2014-15

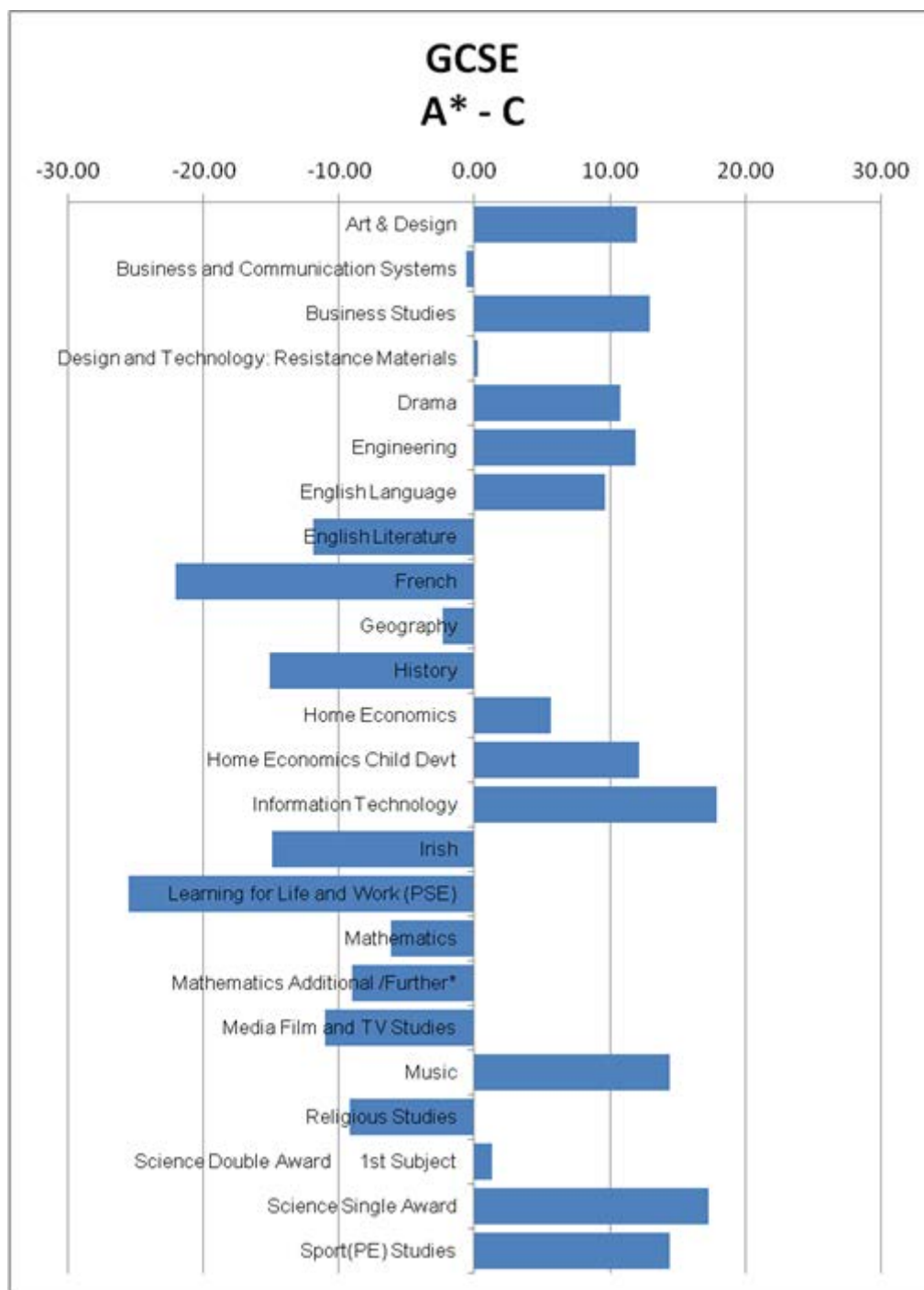
Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the tables below shows the percentage of year 12 pupils in Lismore Comprehensive School achieving at grades A\* to C and A\* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining boards for the subjects in these tables to facilitate comparison.

GCSE Subject	2013		2014		2015		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Occupational Studies	64.2	97.5	71.3	98.9	64.1	93.4	153

Level 2	2013	2014	2015	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE)	100	100	100	38

**Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A\* to C from 2012-13 to 2014-15**

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject at grades A\* to C, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in non-selective schools in Northern Ireland. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, comparisons should be treated with caution.



\*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

### GCE A level examination results at grades A\* to C from 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Lismore Comprehensive School achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to C, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to E.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2013	2014	2015
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	93.7	90	88
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	45.57	25.56	38.71
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	98.73	86.67	97.85

### Other examination results: Post-16

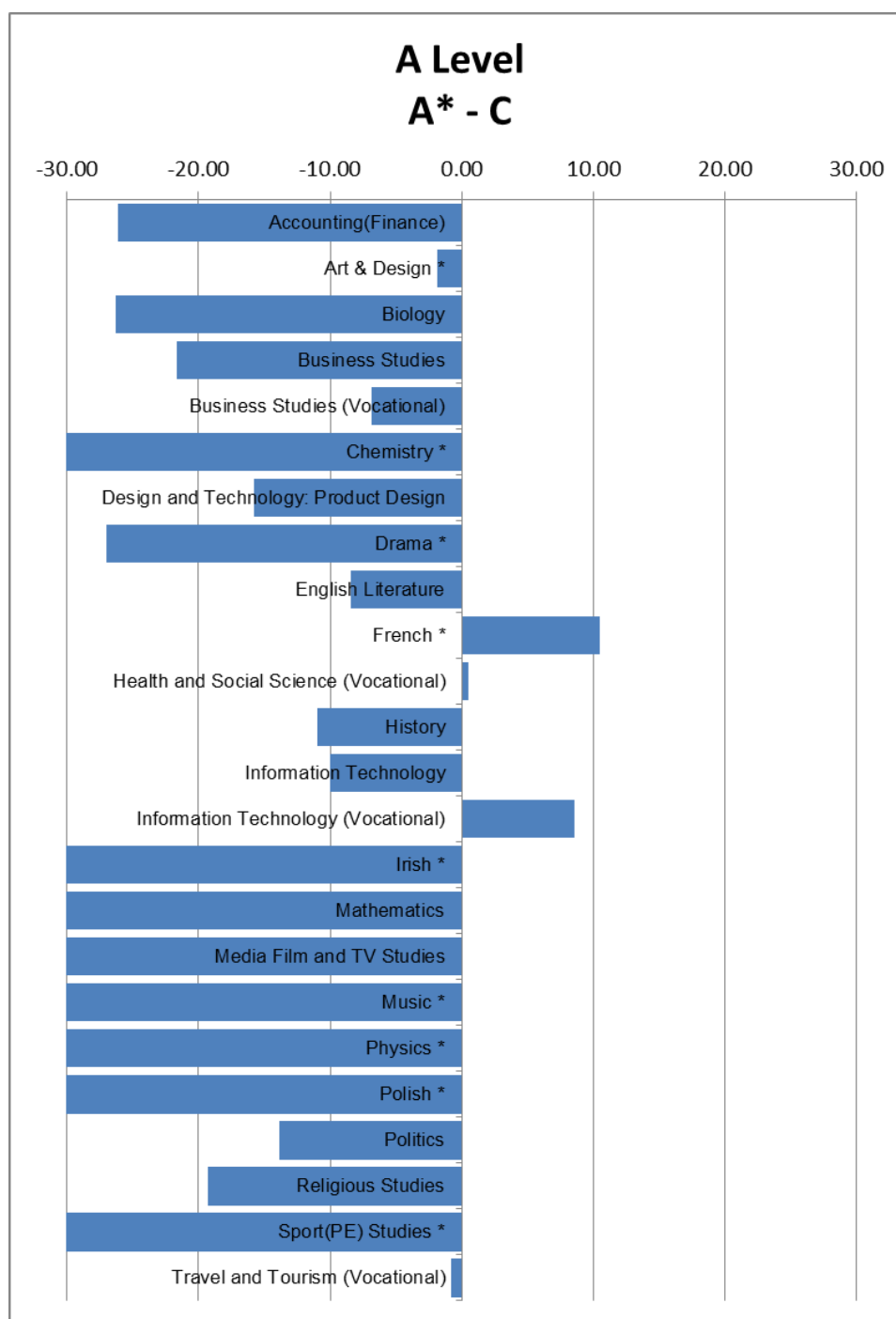
Other level 3 courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

Level 3	2013	2014	2015	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
BTEC Sport		100	100	19

## Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A\* to C from 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the bar chart below shows the average over three years of the percentage of pupils achieving at GCE A level at grades A\* to C in individual subjects in Lismore Comprehensive School compared with the three-year NI average. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above the NI average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, comparisons between subjects should be treated with caution.

### Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A\* to C



\*indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

### Staying on rate

Based on data held in SIMS by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at Lismore Comprehensive School, from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools from school census returns to the Department of Education for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	52.9	54.3
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	79.5	80.7

### Leavers' destinations

Based on data held by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from Lismore School who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	School	NI	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	212	13187			
Employment	3.8%	8.8%			
Further Education	49.1%	46.0%	21	80	3
Higher Education	21.7%	21.2%	0	0	46
Work-based Learning (Training)	16.5%	16.9%			
Unemployed	6.6%	3.6%			
Unknown	0.0%	3.6%			



© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: [www.etini.gov.uk](http://www.etini.gov.uk)