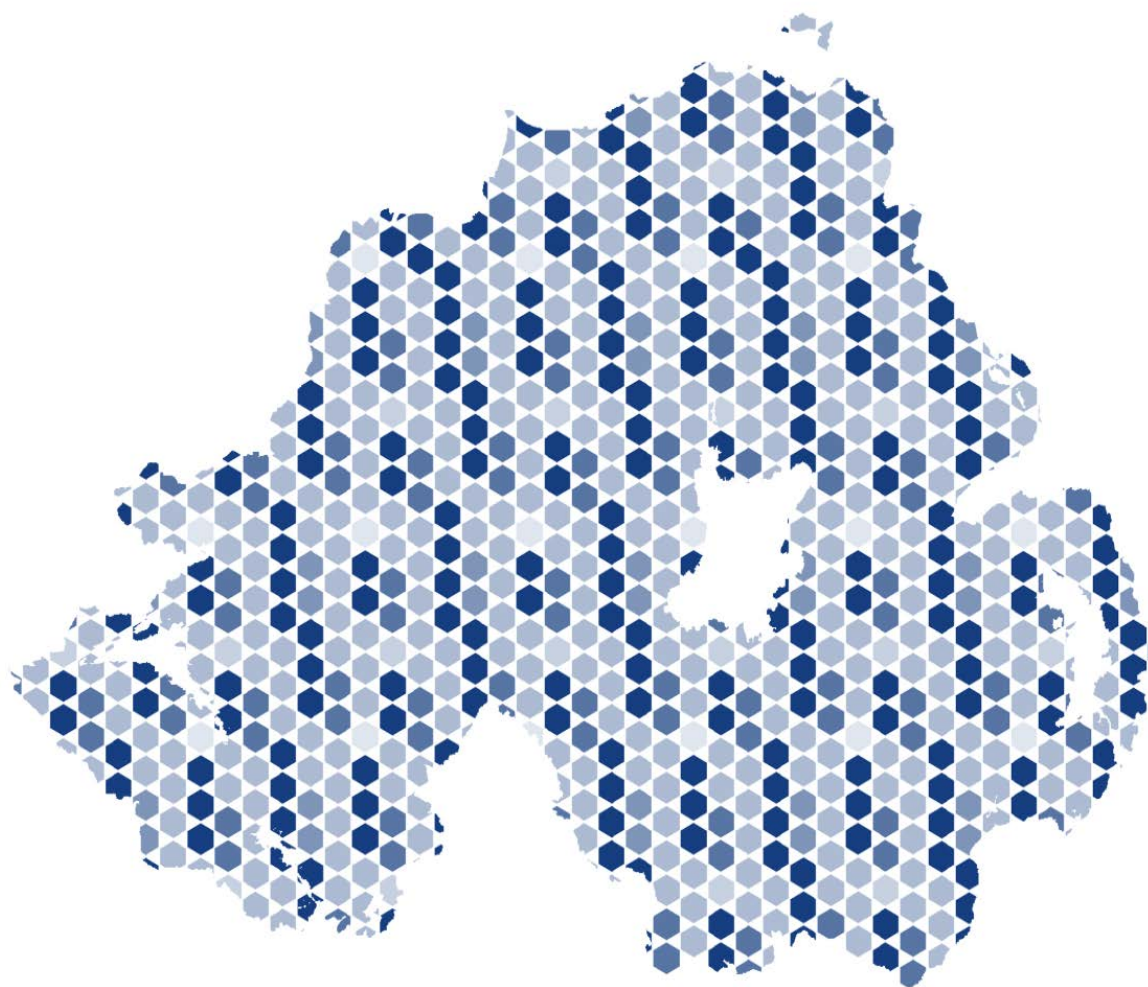


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Michael's College,
Enniskillen, County Fermanagh

All boys voluntary grammar, 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection in
December 2016



The Education and Training Inspectorate
Promoting Improvement

Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
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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 the 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.

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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.eti.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.

Eight percent of parents (48) responded to the questionnaires. A majority of them expressed satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular, the parents commented on the effective support provided for pupils on the special education needs register and the range of activities available to the pupils beyond the classroom. Sixty-six percent of the teaching staff (30) and twenty-three percent (13) of the support staff responded to the questionnaires. Most of these responses were positive on a number of aspects of school life. In particular, the staff commented on the positive relationships between the staff and the pupils and the fine reputation the school has in providing assistance to Third World countries. Both the staff and the parents welcomed the appointment of the new principal and expressed confidence in his leadership and ability to move the school forward. A number of concerns were raised in the questionnaires and these 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 inspection is, through 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 information and communication technology (ICT) in this inspection

3. Context

St Michael's College is a Catholic voluntary grammar school for boys situated in Enniskillen. The school caters for boys from all parts of County Fermanagh and some neighbouring parts of County Tyrone. The school operates under the trusteeship of the Diocese of Clogher. A new Principal was appointed to the school in September 2016.

The level of enrolment to the school has fluctuated slightly over the last four years. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased over the same period and currently stands at just over 17%.

St Michael's is an active partner in the Fermanagh Learning Community and has effective community links and connections with local businesses. The school motto 'Orare, Studere, Agere' (to pray, to study, to act) underpins the life and work of the school.

St Michael's College, Enniskillen	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Year 8 Intake	101	104	104	98
Enrolment	710	714	721	692
% Attendance (NI Average)	92.8% (95.8%)	94.8% (95.6%)	95.0% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	9.0	14.1	16.5	17.3%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	11.5 % (82)	13.0 % (93)	12.1% (87)	12.8% (89)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	17	20	23	18
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
No. of newcomers	*	0	0	0

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Important areas for improvement

5. Achievements and standards

- In two out of the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A* to C has been well below the average for selective schools. In 2016, there was an improvement to 76% which is now in line with the average for selective schools.
- Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has been in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average for selective schools in the same free school meals band.
- While a majority of the subjects at GCSE grades A* to B are in line with or above the corresponding three-year average for similar schools, it is a concern that over one-third of them are below the corresponding subject average and require improvement. Overall, there is too much variation in the standards attained by the pupils at GCSE level.

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

* fewer than 5

- The standards attained by the pupils in ICT have important areas for improvement. In two out of the last three years, the percentage of pupils achieving at grades A* to B in ICT is below the NI three-year average for similar schools. The standards attained by the pupils at GCE A level at grades A* to C have remained below the NI average for similar schools in the last three years; the standards attained by the small number of pupils in GCE A level applied ICT, which was offered until 2015-16 are significantly below the NI average for similar schools.
- The standards attained by the pupils in English are good. Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils achieving at grades A* to B in GCSE English language is in line with the NI three-year average for similar schools. All of the pupils are entered for GCSE English literature; these pupils are attaining just below the corresponding NI three-year average at grades A* to B. The very low numbers entered for GCE A Level English literature are achieving well above the NI three-year average at grades A* to C.
- The standards attained by the pupils in mathematics are very good. Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils achieving at grades A* to B in mathematics is above the NI three-year average for similar schools. In GCSE further mathematics, at grades A* to B, the pupils are attaining in line with the corresponding NI three-year average. The standards attained by the pupils at GCE A level mathematics at grades A* to C are above the NI average for similar schools over the same period.
- The school has applied appropriately the ineligibility criteria as set out by the Department of Education; consequently, only a very small number of pupils have been withdrawn from public examinations data over the last three years.
- The number of pupils who leave the school at the end of year 12 is in line with the NI average. The retention rate between years 13 and 14 is lower than the NI average. The proportion of year 14 pupils progressing to courses in higher education is below the NI average and those progressing to further education is above 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 pupils are courteous, well-behaved and welcoming. They show respect for the needs of others and generally engage well in their learning. The educational tradition and ethos of the school promotes pupil actions to support the less-privileged locally and globally. Many of the senior pupils benefit from taking on roles and responsibilities which develop their leadership and social skills.

6. Provision for learning

The quality and impact of the planning, teaching and assessment to progress the pupils' learning require improvement. Three-quarters of the lessons observed were good or better in promoting the pupils' learning. These lessons were characterised by: planned opportunities for the pupils to build on and consolidate prior learning; open-ended questioning to extend their understanding; good opportunities for the pupils to explain their learning; and appropriate cognisance

taken of the pupils' interests to inform the context of the learning. One-quarter of the lessons observed had important areas for improvement. In these lessons there was: insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the pupils; a lack of appropriate pace and challenge; over-direction by the teacher leading to passive learning and engagement; and the work was not set in meaningful enough contexts.

- Significant recent work has been undertaken by the school to develop the use of performance data to measure and track more effectively the progress made by the pupils. There is, however, too much variability in the extent and effectiveness of the use of this data by teachers and, in particular, how it informs the planning for learning. While the pupils' work is mostly marked regularly by the teachers, there is inconsistency in the quality and impact of the marking, particularly in relation to the feedback provided for pupils to inform them of how to improve further their work. There are some examples of effective practice in marking for improvement in the school, which needs to be disseminated to address this variation.
- The provision for learning in mathematics and ICT is good. The provision for learning in English has important areas for improvement.
- The cross-curricular development of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the school is underdeveloped. There is a lack of consistency in the planned opportunities for the pupils to develop and apply these skills. The school has identified appropriately this as a priority area for improvement and development.
- The good arrangements for the care and support of the pupils are underpinned by a number of comprehensive and well-integrated policies designed to meet the needs of the pupils and support their learning. The agreed and important focus of care and support is to ensure each pupil: feels a sense of worth and dignity; experiences success and achievement; assumes a sense of responsibility towards himself and others; and develops to good effect his self-esteem. The implementation of the policies, however, is not sufficiently consistent across the school. All of the staff, working in a more cohesive and collegial way, need to ensure the effectiveness of the pastoral provision is optimised through more consistent implementation of these agreed policies. The teachers need to demonstrate more clearly how their agreed policies and strategies support effectively the pupils in their learning and enhance their progress and personal development. The highly effective work done on improving attendance is an important and effective example of the staff working together to achieve an agreed goal.
- The adept analysis and effective use of data is a particular strength of the provision for pupils identified as requiring additional support with aspects of their learning. The needs of these pupils are identified at an early stage, including through effective links with the primary schools. The learning support team provide detailed information to subject teachers on the pupils' strengths and identify strategies to progress their learning. In the most effective practice teachers adapt their planning to meet the needs of individual pupils; the learning support team now need to monitor and evaluate the impact of the support arrangements on the quality of the pupils' learning, the progress they make and the standards they achieve across the school. To support this work, the subject teachers need to focus more sharply on how specifically they can support the progress of the pupils who have been identified as requiring additional help with their learning. A particular strength of the provision is the work of the classroom assistants who support very effectively the development of the pupils' skills.

- While there is a generally broad curriculum offer across the key stages, the curriculum requires review and further development to ensure it meets better the needs and interests of all of the pupils. Recent and ongoing curriculum development, including collaboration with the local further education college, has led to an increased range of subjects being offered at key stage (KS) 4 and post-16, which is now aligned better to the aspirations and abilities of the pupils. Further development of the curriculum, particularly at post-16, is required to ensure a better range of curriculum pathways and progression opportunities for the pupils, and to meet fully the entitlement framework.
- The pupils benefit from well-planned careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) provision. The taught careers programme across the school provides the pupils with good opportunities to research suitable progression pathways matched to their personal attributes and capabilities. The school has established and developed key strategic links with local employers to enhance the work experience opportunities provided for pupils at post-16; the pupils in KS 4, particularly those targeting vocational education or training, would benefit from similar work-related learning opportunities. Although CEIAG is given a high priority in the school, there is a need to review more rigorously the extent and quality of the provision across the school, to ensure the pupils are informed fully of the career pathways available and that there is a consistent, whole-school approach to supporting them in their career planning process. The school is developing well its science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) provision.

7. Leadership and management

- The strategic leadership of the school is an important area for improvement. While it is appropriate that the leadership and management structure within the school is currently under review, this review now needs to be given immediate attention by the governors. A more effective leadership structure is needed with clear roles and whole-school responsibilities allocated to senior staff, including rigorous accountability, to support the much needed school development and improvement work.
- Until recently, the school had lost its focus on ongoing school improvement; this impacted negatively on many aspects of its work, including the standards attained by the pupils. Following the appointment of an acting-principal, now the permanent principal, the school improvement process has become a high priority focus for staff at all levels. The new school development plan (SDP), devised through extensive consultation with all key stakeholders, identifies appropriate priorities along with clear action plans to bring about improvement in the learning experiences for, and the outcomes achieved by, the pupils.
- The arrangements, at all levels, for the monitoring, evaluation and review of improvement work are underdeveloped across the school and require improvement. In order to ensure that the impact of the necessary improvements can be measured and evaluated, work needs to be undertaken to build the capacity of staff at all levels to monitor and evaluate their areas of responsibility, particularly in the key aspects of curriculum planning and review, and teaching and assessment to promote the pupils' learning. It will be appropriate for the governors and senior leaders to review the SDP in light of the inspection findings.

- There is evidence of effective middle leadership in the school. The capacity of the middle leaders, however, has not been developed sufficiently resulting in too much variation in the impact and effectiveness of their leadership across the school. Consequently, there are inconsistencies in the quality of the learning, teaching and the outcomes achieved by the pupils. To address these inconsistencies, the capacity of the middle leaders needs to be developed further and the effective leadership strategies, which do exist, need to be shared and disseminated across the school.
- 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. Since the appointment of the new principal they are much better, and more accurately, informed about the work of the school, including the variable standards attained by the pupils. It will be important for the governors to: continue to support and challenge appropriately leadership at all levels to ensure a better consistency in the quality of the learning experiences for all pupils; and continue to 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 needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, which include the need to:

- improve the standards attained by the pupils at GCE A Level;
- improve the quality of the learning and teaching to meet more effectively the needs of all of the pupils, and to ensure better consistency in the quality of their learning experiences; and
- build further leadership capacity, at all levels, to monitor the quality of the learning and the standards achieved.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12-18 months.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS² and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Michael's College achieving seven or more GCSE's (A* to C) and equivalent subjects, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category³.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	99
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	89.36	96.08	90.29
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	93.1	94.1	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	89.36	95.1	90.29
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	92.2	91.0	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	93.62	98.04	96.12
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)	77.8	92.3	94.1

Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Michael's College achieving at grades A* to C 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.

Level 2	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total entry over 3 years
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C	
BTEC Applied Science Level 2	77.8	100	85.7	21

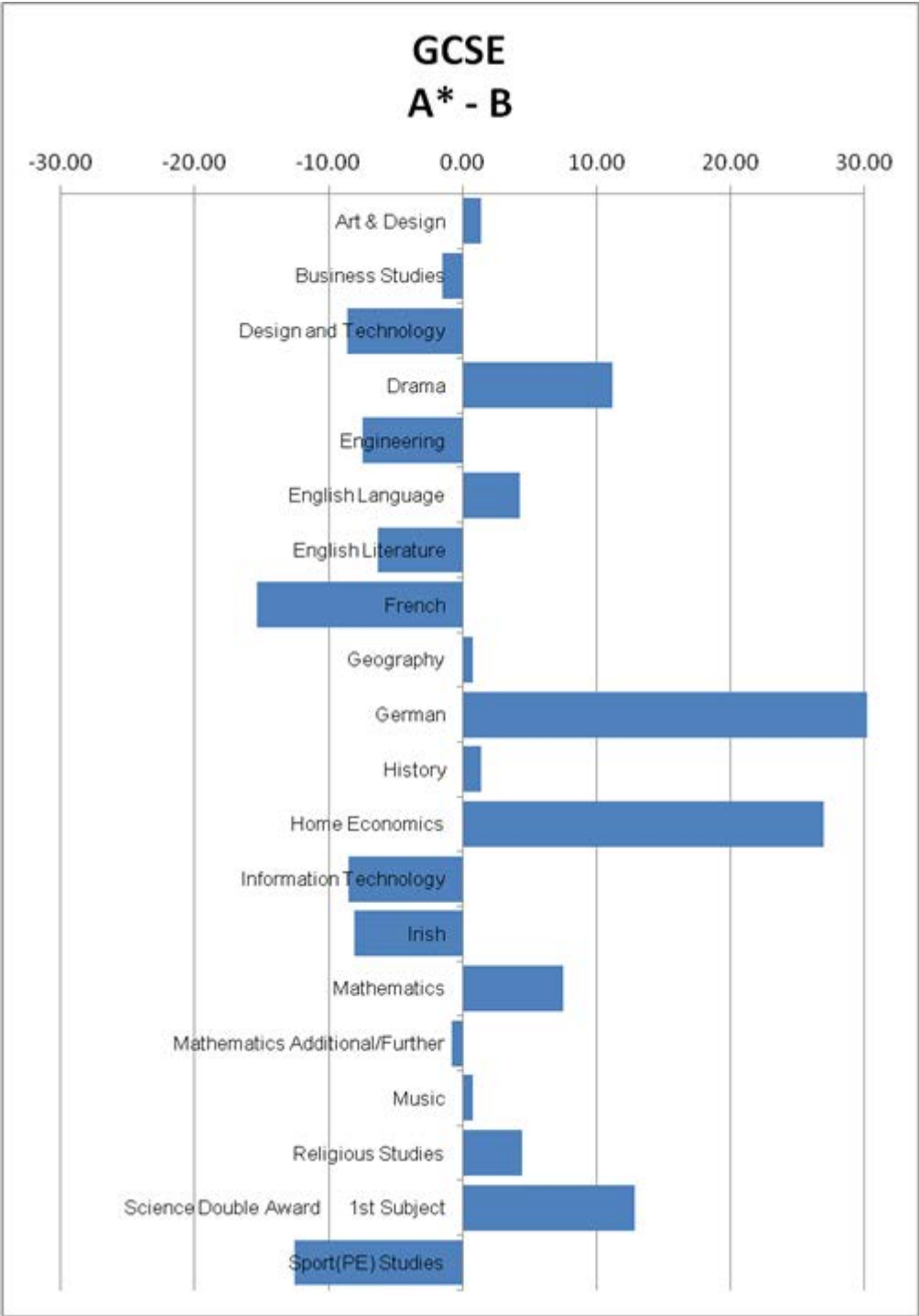
² SIMS: School Information Management System

³ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to B from 2013-14 to 2015-16

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by St Michael's College and verified with the ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject at grades A* to B, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in selective schools. 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.

Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A* to B



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2013-14 to 2015-16

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 St Michael's College achieving three or more GCE A levels, or equivalent, at grades A* to C, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A* to E

GCE A Level or equivalent	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	99	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	66.67	61.25	76.14
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>74.3</i>	<i>75.8</i>	N/A

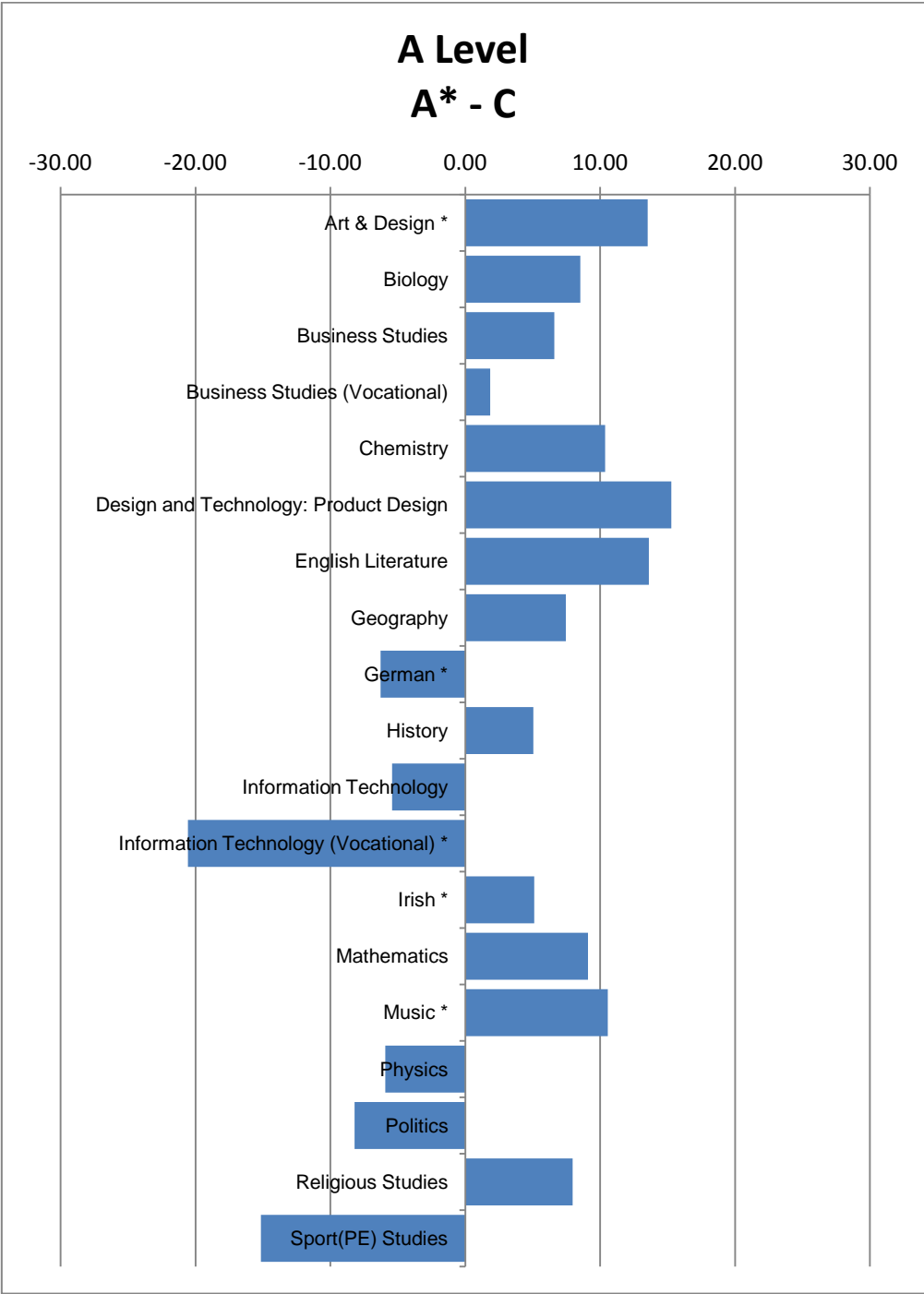
Other examination results: Post-16

Level 3	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total entry over 3 years
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C	
BTEC Level 3 Construction	94%	93%	100%	42

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A* to C from 2013-14 to 2015-16

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 St Michael's College 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



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 St Michael's College from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for 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	88.5	88.2
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	91.3	83.3

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from St Michael's College who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment, compared with the average for all boys in selective schools.

	NI	School	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	9204	113			
Employment	4.8%	5.3%			
Institute of Further Education	21.5%	30.1%	1	27	6
Institute of Higher Education	69.5%	62.8%	0	0	71
Work-based Learning (Training)	1.8%	1.8%			
Unemployed	1.1%	0.0%			
Unknown	1.3%	0.0%			

Source for NI data: School Leavers Survey

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