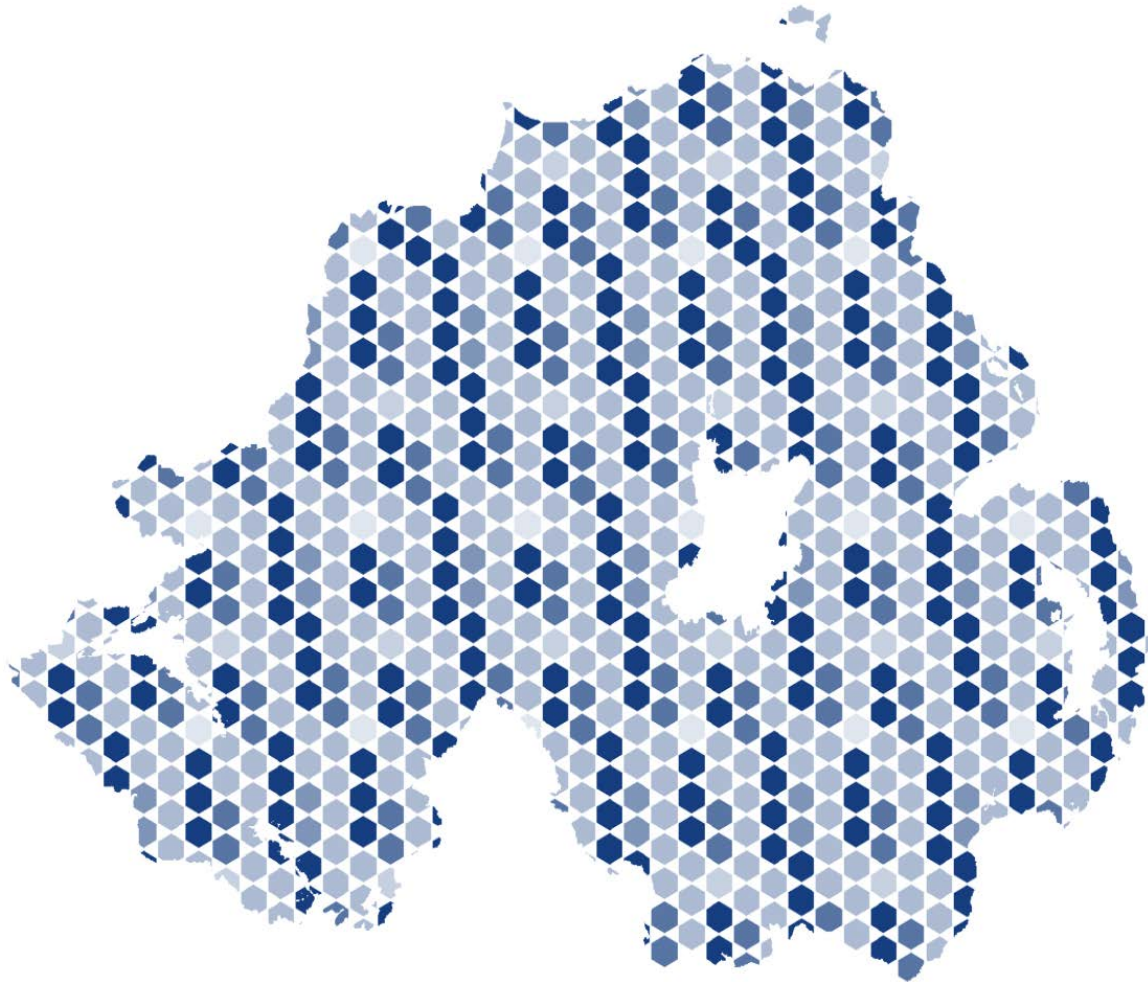


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Patrick's College, Maghera

Bi-Lateral, Co-Educational , 11-19 school

Report of an Inspection  
in November 2015

*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.

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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.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.

Fourteen percent of parents (111) responded to the questionnaires. Nearly all of the parents expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the educational and pastoral provision in the school. In particular, the parents praised the approachable, dedicated staff, the inclusive ethos and the importance of the school in the local community. The parents value and commented very positively on the excellent transition arrangements in place for the year 8 pupils. Twenty-four percent of the teaching staff (20) and sixty percent (12) of the support staff responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of the responses were positive about many aspects of school life. In particular, the staff commented on their enjoyment of working in the school and the very good working relationships amongst the staff. The small numbers of issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the governors and the principal.

## **2. Focus of the 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**

St Patrick's College is a bi-lateral, co-educational school, situated in the centre of Maghera. The outworking of the school motto "every child matters" permeates the life and work of the school. In addition to the mainstream classes, year 8 to year 14, the school provides a designated learning support centre (LSC). The school also provides an Irish medium stream although it is not funded by the Department of Education.

The school draws most of its pupils from Maghera and the surrounding rural hinterland. During the last three years, enrolment in the school has remained relatively steady. The number of pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning has also remained steady but the number of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased. The

school has achieved a range of national awards and accreditations. It holds the Investors in People award at bronze standard, the Northern Ireland Quality Award for excellence in education and it is an Eco-School. The school is an active participant of the Rural Learning Community. At the time of the inspection, the principal had been in post from September 2015.

St Patrick's College	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Year 8 Intake	173	194	196	192
Enrolment	1289	1288	1313	1310
% Attendance (NI Average)	94% (91.3%)	96% (92.0%)	95% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	16.6	15	19.4	20.2
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	9% (120)	8% (109)	9% (116)	10% (113)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	8	7	15	18
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate)	18	21	16	16
No. of newcomers	12	15	11	7
<i>Intake<sup>2</sup>:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	34	10	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	38	18	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	88	82	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	87	87	#	#

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

\* fewer than 5

N/A not available

# Data unavailable due to industrial action in some primary schools

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very Good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Very Good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very Good

<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

## 5. Achievement and standards

- The pupils are very welcoming, highly motivated and demonstrate very good levels of engagement and enjoyment in the learning process. They articulate well their opinions, are willing to help others and they take pride in their achievements. The fostering of the pupils' musical and sporting talents is a significant feature of the school's provision and contributes significantly to their personal development.
- The standards attained by the pupils in public examinations<sup>3</sup> at key stage (KS) 4 are a significant strength of the work of the school. Almost all of the subjects are performing well above the corresponding Northern Ireland (NI) average. The percentage of the pupils attaining GCSE grades at A\* to C or equivalent in at least five subjects, including English and mathematics is significantly above the average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band and well above the average for all schools.
- The percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels or equivalent at grades A\* to C is significantly above the average for non-selective schools and just below the average for all schools. At GCE A level or equivalent, there is however, variation across the subjects in the standards attained over the last three years; 13 subjects are performing above the corresponding NI averages but 15 are below. The school has identified the need to address this variation in attainment at GCE A Level and the inspection findings endorse this as a priority.
- The standards obtained by the pupils' in English are outstanding. Over the last three years the standards attained by the pupils' in both English language and English literature at GCSE grades A\* to C are significantly above the NI average for non-selective schools. At GCE A Level the pupils attain well above the NI average at grades A\* to C.
- The standards attained by the pupils in mathematics are very good. Over the past three years, the school's performance in GCSE mathematics at grades A\* to C is significantly above the NI average for non-selective schools. There is a notable upward trend in the attainment by the pupils in GCSE further mathematics, from below to above the NI average at grades A\* to C. In GCE A level mathematics, over the last three years, while the attainment by the pupils is in line with the NI average, the level of attainment by the 2015 cohort of pupils is below the corresponding NI average and this needs to be kept under review.
- The standards attained by the pupils in modern languages are very good. Over the last three years, almost all of the pupils attained GCSE grades at A\* to C in French, German, Irish and Spanish and most of them achieve at grades A\* to B. At GCE A Level, the pupils' attainment in Irish is very high; over the last three years, almost all of the pupils attained grades A\* to B and it is noteworthy that in 2015 all of the pupils attained at grades A\* to A.
- Over the last three years, the attainment of five or more GCSE's or equivalent at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, by pupils entitled to free school meals, is well above the NI average.

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<sup>3</sup> The examination data and an analysis of trends in examination standards over the past three years are given in the appendix.

- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning make good progress and reach the standards of which they are capable. The achievements of the pupils in the LSC are outstanding, all of them achieve commensurate to their ability.
- The percentage of pupils progressing to higher education courses is well above the NI average for non-selective schools. Over the last three years, nearly all of the year 12 pupils progressed to post-16 provision in the school and most of the pupils progress from year 13 to year 14.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Most (85%) of the lessons observed were effective (good or better) in promoting learning; in just under one-half they were highly effective (very good or better). This effective practice was characterised by: well planned opportunities for the pupils to work together and learn from one another; effective use of open-ended questioning allowing the pupils to make confident, extended oral responses and to develop their higher order thinking skills; and the very good use of plenary sessions to consolidate learning. In the less effective practice, in a minority (15%) of the lessons observed, there was over-direction by the teacher and insufficient differentiation to meet the needs of all of the pupils.
- There is a literary rich environment in the English classrooms where the most effective practice observed was characterised by appropriate pace and challenge and the use of stimulating resource materials. Teachers provide a range of writing tasks that are appropriately challenging and the pupils are given the opportunity to write creatively in a variety of forms and for a variety of audiences. The school is committed to promoting literacy across the curriculum; there is a shared understanding of high quality communication skills and a developing focus on ensuring accuracy in the pupils' written work across the subjects.
- In mathematics, the teachers have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the motto of the department "where everyone counts", permeates the mathematics lessons. In the effective practice, in most of the lessons observed, the lessons have a clear structure and very good account is taken of the pupil's previous learning. Numeracy is effectively delivered across the curriculum and the pupils use mathematics accurately in a range of subjects.
- In modern languages, almost all of the lessons observed were effective in promoting language learning. In the most effective practice, in a majority of the lessons observed, a wide range of appropriate learning activities are deployed to engage the pupils' interest and to further develop their language skills. In almost all of the lessons, the extensive use of the target language helps to develop the pupils' confidence in comprehension, talking and listening skills. The strong profile of modern languages provision evident at KS 3 and 4 is not reflected sufficiently in the uptake of languages by the pupils at post-16.
- The quality of care and support is very effective. The whole-school strategy of 'championing the child' underpins the outstanding child centred provision throughout the school. Key features of the provision include: the warm, respectful relationships between the staff and pupils; the high level of commitment by all of the staff to the welfare of every pupil; the extensive leadership opportunities available to the pupils; and the distinctive, successful transition arrangements for year 8 pupils. As a result, the pupils have a clear sense of identity and purpose; they are highly engaged and ambitious to achieve of their best.

- Throughout the school there is a clear commitment to inclusion; the pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning interact confidently with their peers and engage positively in their learning. There are well developed links with external agencies to support the pupils not only in their learning but also in their emotional development. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the quality of the provision for the pupils who require additional support with their learning, in relation to the learning and teaching strategies identified in the individual education plans and with the effectiveness of the monitoring of the pupils' progress. The school has appropriately identified the need to develop further the individual education plans to inform learning and teaching and to monitor more rigorously the progression of the pupils.
- There is a caring, supportive ethos in the LSC and the pupils' achievements are appropriately celebrated. The teachers have high expectations for the pupils and the curriculum is flexible and tailored to meet their needs. Excellent opportunities are provided for the pupils in the LSC to integrate with their mainstream peers in a variety of subjects which broadens the range of their learning and further develops their socialisation. While the progress of the pupils in the LSC is rigorously monitored and evaluated, this exemplary practice is not sufficiently evident when the pupils are integrated into the mainstream classes. There is a need for subject teachers, throughout the school, to monitor and evaluate more robustly the progression of pupils from the LSC in their classes in order to ensure that their diverse needs are fully met.
- The school gives a high priority to developing a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum, which meets well the wide-ranging needs and aspirations of individual pupils and ensures appropriate progression opportunities into continuing education and employment. The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Entitlement Framework and is reviewed annually in the light of the pupils' changing needs and the wider educational and labour market contexts. The school provision is effectively enhanced through collaboration with the local college of further education and the Rural Learning Partnership.
- The pupils benefit from a highly effective programme of careers education, information, advice and guidance. The school has strong links with local business, industry and the wider community which support the provision of well managed, purposeful work-related learning experiences for the pupils. From KS 3, the pupils develop effective career planning skills, demonstrate an excellent understanding of the educational and employment routes available to them and are consequently empowered to make informed, appropriate progression pathways and career choices.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The leadership and management of the school is very effective, with a shared vision for school improvement and clear strategic direction for the future direction of the school. The school improvement process is clearly linked to a well constructed school development plan<sup>[1]</sup>. The key priorities of the school development plan focus appropriately on improving further the quality of the pupils' learning experiences and the schools commitment to further raising standards. In taking the school improvement work forward, the school has identified appropriately the need to develop further the capacity of the staff, in particular the middle leaders, to monitor and evaluate more effectively the quality and consistency of provision across the school.

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<sup>[1]</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.



- Most of the middle managers are enthusiastic about their role and have implemented effective strategies to improve the quality of learning, teaching and the outcomes achieved by the pupils in public examinations; appropriately the dissemination of this practice is an ongoing priority in the school. In a minority of departments, however there is variation in the effectiveness of these strategies, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, learning and the standards attained by the pupils.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors have a wide range of complementary skills and they are highly committed to the school. They monitor well the outworking of the school development plan and provide appropriate support and challenge to the senior leadership team. The governors are very proud of the inclusive nature of the school, the academic success of the pupils and the strong reputation the school has in sport, drama and music.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding young people which reflect broadly the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school needs to review and monitor more robustly access to the school buildings and mobile classrooms. The pupils report that they feel safe in school and are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

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.

## 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>4</sup> and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Patrick's College 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>5</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 five subjects	98	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least five subjects	86	93	95
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>6</sup></i>	<i>71.3</i>	<i>73.5</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	68	80	78
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>44.4</i>	<i>46.2</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least five subjects	97	100	100
Percentage of Year 12 entitled to free school meals achieving five or more GCSEs Grades A* to C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	46	76	68

### 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 St Patrick's College achieving 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.

<b>GCSE Subject</b>	<b>2013</b>		<b>2014</b>		<b>2015</b>		<b>Total entry over 3 years</b>
	<b>% A*-C</b>	<b>% A*-E</b>	<b>% A*-C</b>	<b>% A*-E</b>	<b>% A*-C</b>	<b>% A*-E</b>	
Gaeilge	100	100	100	100	100	100	10

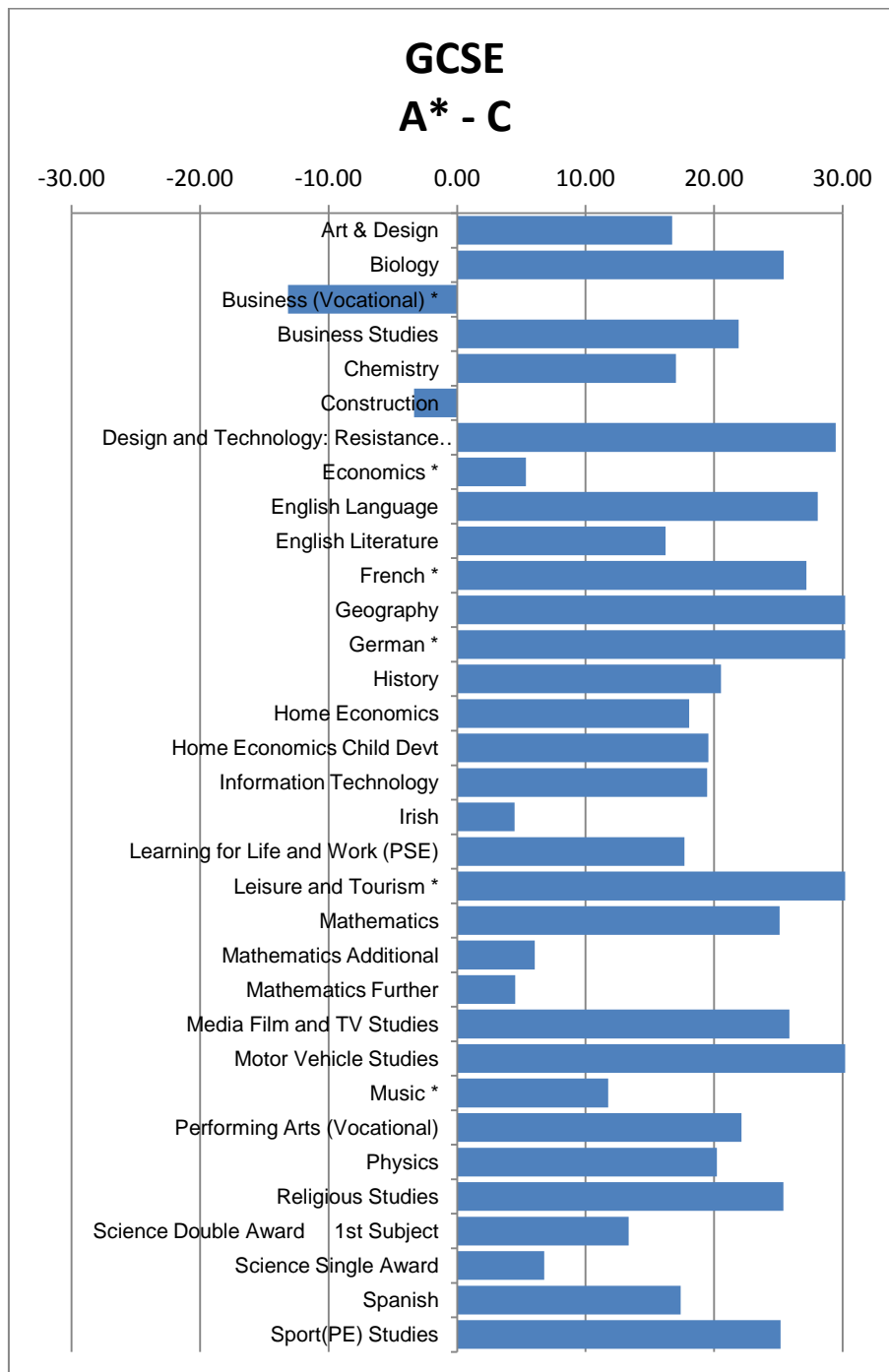
<b>Level 2</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>Total entry over 3 years</b>
	<b>% pass</b>	<b>% pass</b>	<b>% pass</b>	
Occupational Studies		100	94%	32

<sup>4</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

<sup>5</sup> 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 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 year

### 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 St Patrick's College 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	94	99	97
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	57	61	62
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	99	100	99

### Other examination results: Post-16

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

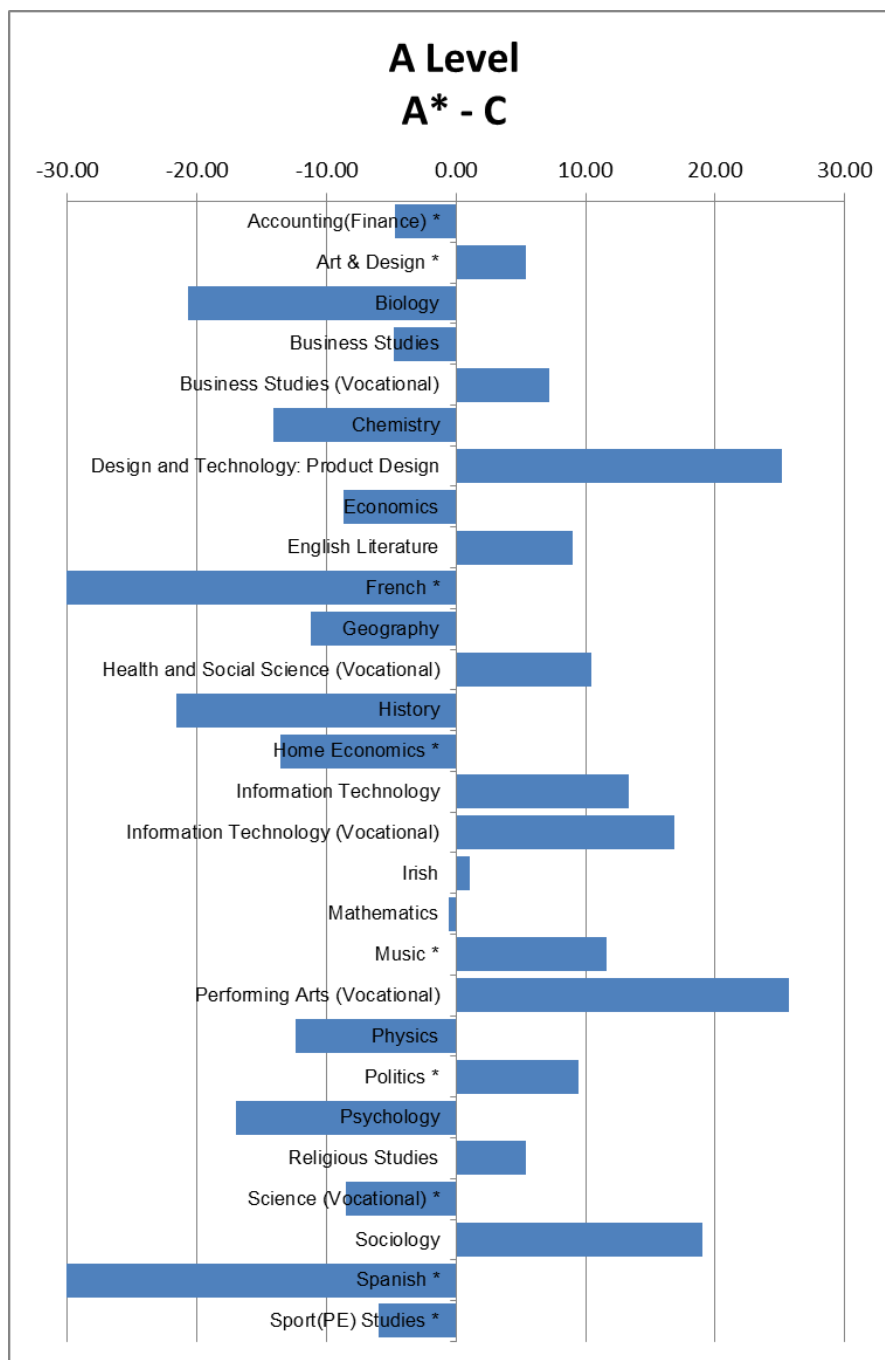
GCE Subject	2013		2014		2015		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
BTEC Sport (Double Award)	100	100	100	100	100	100	54
BTEC Construction (Single Award)	100	100	100	100	100	100	22

## 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 St Patrick's College compared with the three-year NI average for similar pupils.

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 St Patrick's College, 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	79.5
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	79.5	87.1

### 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 St Patrick's College 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	198	13187			
Employment	2.0%	8.8%			
Further Education	25.3%	46.0%	24	16	10
Higher Education	61.1%	21.2%	0	0	121
Work-based Learning (Training)	7.6%	16.9%			
Unemployed	1.0%	3.6%			
Unknown	3.0%	3.6%			

**Health and safety**

1. The school needs to carry out a health and safety risk assessment of:

- access control into and out of the school buildings and school grounds; there is open access to the school grounds, and there is insufficient secure door access to some of the school buildings and mobiles;
- the technology and design department's machine safety/maintenance, emergency stops, and oxy acetylene storage; and
- the large number of pupils accessing and occupying the canteen at lunchtime.

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