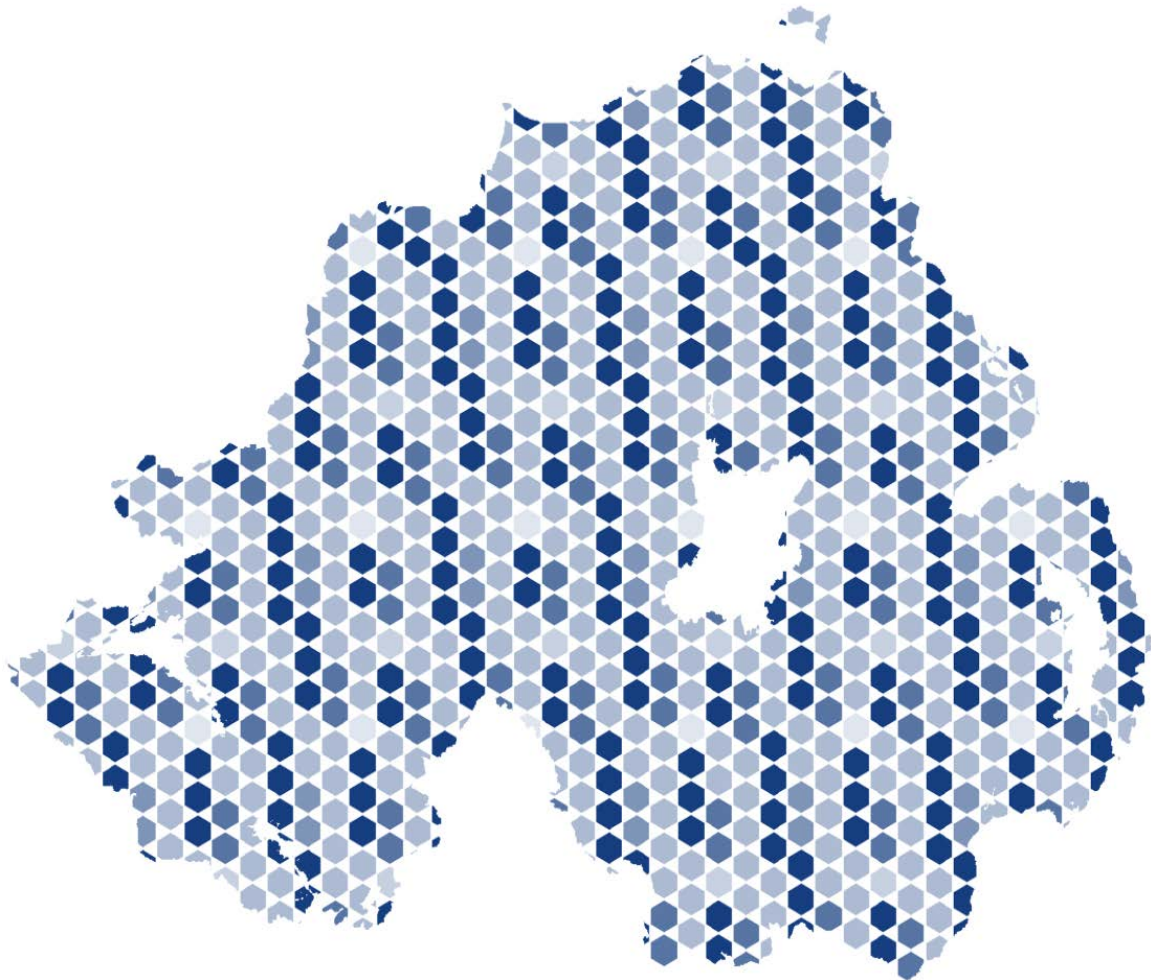


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Wellington College, Belfast

Co-educational, 11-18, controlled, selective school

Report of an Inspection
in September 2015



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 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.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of the 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 learning and teaching, 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.

Eleven percent of parents (60) responded to the questionnaires, with 23 of them providing written comments. Almost all of the parents commented positively on: the high quality of the pastoral care; the dedication of the teachers and support staff to the care of the pupils; and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided for the pupils. A minority of the parents who provided written comments raised issues with the frequency and timings of the arrangements for consultation and communication between teachers and parents. Sixty-three percent of staff (60) responded to the questionnaires, with 17 providing written comments. All staff commented positively on the inclusive, welcoming ethos of the school. A minority of the staff who provided written comments raised concerns about the frequency and effectiveness of communication between senior leadership and the staff. All issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed (maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents) 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 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.

3. Context

Wellington College is a co-educational, controlled, selective school for pupils aged 11-18 years, which draws most of its pupils from the locality of South Belfast. It is oversubscribed for year 8 entry and is undersubscribed for post-16 entry. The number of pupils with statements of educational need has more than doubled over the last three years. The school's internal data shows that almost all of the pupils enter the school having achieved at or above the expected level in literacy and numeracy.

There have been significant changes in staffing at senior leadership level in recent years, with the reconstitution of the board of governors in December 2014 and the appointment of a new principal in February 2015. The two vice-principals carried out the role of (acting) principal on alternate weeks in the interim from September 2014 until the appointment of the current principal. The principal has been in post for seven months at the time of the inspection. The school is embarking on a programme of shared education in collaboration with a neighbouring school aimed at developing further the relationships between the two schools and promoting shared education within the community.

Wellington College, Belfast	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Year 8 Intake	114	119	116	118
Enrolment	783	804	815	789
% Attendance (NI Average for selective schools)	94.6% (95.3%)	95.1% (95.8%)	94.1% (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	8.2	9.1	15.0	20.7
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	10.3 (81)	10.0 (80)	10.1 (82)	14.3 (113)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need	16	23	30	35
No. of newcomers	9	*	*	*
Intake ² :				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	47.4	23.5	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	64.9	35.3	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	99.1	96.6	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	100	99.2	#	#
Source: data as held by the school.				

* fewer than 5

Data unavailable due to industrial action in some primary schools

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Address urgently the significant areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Requires significant improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Requires significant improvement

5. Achievement and standards

- The pupils have positive dispositions to learning and are motivated to engage purposefully in lessons. By year 14, most of the pupils have a reserved confidence and, when given the opportunity, can think creatively and critically. There are, however, insufficient opportunities within lessons for the pupils to develop their thinking skills, personal capabilities, and inter-personal skills.

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

² 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.

- The pupils participate well in a wide range of academic, sporting, cultural, business, musical and charitable opportunities provided by the school. In discussions, they speak with modest pride of their many successes in local, national and international events and competitions. The 'Wellington Plus' programme is effective at providing useful opportunities for year 13 and 14 pupils to develop the skills and attributes essential for leadership and success in the workplace.
- The standards attained by pupils in English have important areas for improvement. In 2015, they are below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for selective schools in GCSE English Language at grades A* to B and just below the NI average in GCSE English Literature at grades A* to B. In 2015, the standards at GCE A Level in English Literature at grades A* to C are significantly below the NI average for selective schools.
- The standards attained by the pupils in mathematics have important areas for improvement. They are consistently below the NI average for selective schools in GCSE mathematics at grades A* to B. A minority of pupils study GCSE further mathematics and GCE A level mathematics; these pupils achieve well, attaining at a level above the corresponding NI averages for selective schools.
- The standards attained by the pupils in science require significant improvement. The outcomes for most of the science options at GCSE level are approximately 20 percentage points below the corresponding NI average for selective schools. The targets set at departmental level are too low and need to be quality assured more robustly by the senior leaders to ensure they are realistic yet sufficiently challenging, with more cognisance being taken of the relevant benchmarking data.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils who attain seven or more GCSE examinations at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has declined steadily from being below to being well below the NI average for similar selective schools. The attainment of the small number of pupils entitled to free school meals in five or more GCSE examinations at grades A* to C including English and mathematics has improved over the last three years. In 2015, over 12% of the year 12 pupils attained grades D or lower in at least three GCSE examinations.
- There is significant variation in the standards attained by the pupils at grades A* to B in individual subjects at GCSE level. In only one-third of subjects do the pupils attain above the corresponding three-year NI subject average for similar schools. Furthermore, in one-quarter of the subjects at this level their attainment is more than 20 percentage points below the three-year NI subject average for similar schools.
- At GCE A level, the percentage of pupils achieving three or more grades at A* to C has fluctuated from being in line with, to being well below, the NI average for similar selective schools. Pupil attainment in approximately two-thirds of the subjects offered are above the three-year NI average at grades A* to C.
- For the academic year 2013-14, the proportion of year 12 pupils who progress to year 13 is below the NI average. The proportion of pupils who, on completion of GCE A2 level study, enter higher education is well below the NI average.

- The school recognises the need to address the low standards attained by the pupils, particularly for those pupils who are identified as having additional barriers to learning, and has put in place a limited range of strategies to help improve pupils' learning experiences and the standards they attain. Appropriately, these include: monitoring pupil progress more regularly to inform early intervention; reporting to parents more frequently; and, introducing some additional courses to meet more effectively the needs, interests and abilities of the pupils. The school now needs to continue to develop this work and to address more effectively the undue variation in performance within and across subject areas, and ensure the curriculum pathways available to the pupils give them sufficient opportunity to experience success and progress appropriately.

6. Provision for learning

- Approximately three-fifths (57%) of the lessons observed during the inspection were good or better; just under 30% of them were very good. This effective practice was characterised by: pupil-centred planning; high expectations and work matched well to the ability levels of the pupils; challenging work which engaged the pupils; and good lesson pace.
- In approximately two-fifths (43%) of the lessons observed there were important or significant areas for improvement. This less effective practice was characterised by: insufficient planning for learning; over-direction by the teacher; questioning which was mainly closed and did not afford the pupils sufficient opportunity to articulate their thinking or demonstrate the extent of their understanding; and tasks that were at too low a level to sufficiently challenge the pupils. As a result, the pupils were overly passive and too many opportunities were missed by the teachers to consolidate their learning and to further develop their understanding or their wider skills and dispositions.
- In too many of the lessons observed, the pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning. Consequently, classroom practice needs to be improved within and across departments. The teachers and middle leaders need to focus on more effective planning for promoting the pupils' learning through consistently high quality teaching and assessment.
- Good progress has been made in developing a centralised system for the collation and analysis of assessment data at key stages 3 and 4, which is used well by the heads of year to identify those pupils at risk of underachieving. However, better use needs to be made of the available data to inform planning at individual teacher level, along with appropriate strategies for learning and teaching, to ensure that the learning needs of all of the pupils are met, and that they are progressing in line with their ability.
- The quality of the provision for English is good. The pupils engage positively with their learning and develop their ability to communicate to good effect through well planned, purposeful active learning strategies. In the better practice, which was in most of the lessons observed, effective questioning is used to stimulate critical thinking and to extend the pupils' oral responses. It will be important to monitor, evaluate and review the consistency of this provision across the department to ensure all pupils fulfil their potential.

- The development of literacy across the curriculum is at an early stage with considerable variation across the subjects; it is timely that the school has identified and prioritised the need to implement a more coherent, whole school approach to further developing the pupils' oral and written communication skills in order to improve attainment.
- In mathematics, there are important areas for improvement in the provision. The pupils consolidate and extend their mathematical understanding by engaging positively in their individual work and through whole-class discussion; the pupils who respond to questioning offer answers willingly and with confidence in class. In a significant minority of the lessons observed, however, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to work in pairs and small groups in order to discuss, reason and explain fully their mathematical thinking and to problem-solve. There is a need for the teachers of mathematics to review their strategies for learning, teaching and assessment in order to engage the pupils more actively in their own learning.
- The school has identified appropriately the need for a more coherent and effective whole-school approach to the promotion and development of the pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum. While a reviewed numeracy policy has recently been implemented, there is a need for well-planned opportunities for the pupils to develop and apply their skills in using mathematics across subjects, which is monitored and evaluated rigorously to ensure the actions are effecting improvement and raising standards.
- In science, the quality of the provision for learning requires significant improvement. In the most effective practice, evident in a minority of the lessons observed, the work was set in meaningful, real-life contexts and engaged well the pupils in their learning. This practice needs to be disseminated across the science department to ensure more consistency in classroom practice and to ensure the pupils' learning experiences are stimulating and motivating, and that they make good progress in their learning.
- Most of the pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the careers options open to them, including vocational pathways, and they benefit from appropriate work experience opportunities. A range of careers-focused events planned at key points throughout the year informs well their subject choices, especially at the key transition stages. There are, however, important areas for improvement in the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). The integration and promotion of CEIAG across subjects varies considerably and is not monitored sufficiently. While the school invests a significant resource in a taught careers programme, the arrangements for evaluating the effectiveness of the provision are not sufficiently robust. As a result, the action planning process to improve the provision lacks rigour.
- The curriculum at key stage 3 is broad and balanced. The school meets the statutory requirements of the Entitlement Framework at key stage 4 and post-16, although the curriculum offer should be reviewed and extended in order to better meet the pupils' interests, abilities and career aspirations, and to maximise the opportunities for them to achieve in public examinations. While the school currently offers a small number of subjects through the Area Learning Community at post-16, involving a nearby school and the local further education college, the opportunities to broaden the curriculum offer through collaboration are underdeveloped.

- The arrangements for the care and support of the pupils are good. Throughout the school, relationships are mutually respectful between pupils and teachers. There is a clear commitment to inclusion and a culture of friendliness and care through the establishment of a school 'House' system and an active school council. The school's promoting positive behaviour policy does not reflect the school's current practice. The school has identified appropriately the need to review the policy to ensure there is an appropriate balance between sanctions (such as detention) and rewards (such as the 'House' points). The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning interact confidently with peers and engage well in their learning. The pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities to develop their interests, confidence and independence.
- The school has prioritised appropriately the further development of the provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) as an area for professional review by all staff this year. The support in class for these pupils is inconsistent in quality and impact. There is a need for a whole-school approach to SEN provision to ensure an appropriate individual education planning process is in place to underpin coherently the support for all pupils who require it, and to monitor and review effectively their progress.

7. Leadership and management

- In collaboration with the principal, the teachers and support staff are working together to agree a shared vision for improvement through the creation of a new three-year school development plan to guide improvement in the school; significant work is still required in this area. At present, the draft version of the school development plan does not meet the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010. Effective consultation with parents and pupils needs to be undertaken to help inform the identification of appropriate priorities within the school development plan. In its current format, the school development plan does not identify nor address sufficiently the areas where improvement is most needed. It is important that the senior leadership of the school, including the governors, review and amend the school development plan in light of the inspection findings.
- Significant staffing changes at senior leadership level have taken place in recent years. At present, there is insufficient self-evaluation leading to improvement of key aspects of provision, in particular, planning for learning, teaching and assessment. The senior leaders need to challenge more effectively the quality of the pupils' learning experiences and the standards attained by them, including departmental target-setting practices, to help ensure that all staff have high expectations of, and for, the pupils. The senior leaders also need to use the Performance Review: Staff Development (PR: SD) cycle to meet much more effectively individual staff development needs, at all levels across the school.
- Most of the middle leaders are committed to improving the quality of provision and raising standards, and they are highly supportive of the vision and work of the new principal. The teachers and middle leaders who have contributed to the work of a number of 'development groups' within the school have produced some useful, high quality documentation to support improvement work. The potential impact of this work, however, has not yet been realised as there have been insufficient opportunities for dissemination and evaluation. The

effectiveness of the development of the middle leaders by the senior leadership in the school requires significant improvement. It will be important for the senior leaders, in their respective areas of responsibility, to develop and support further the capacity of the middle leaders to monitor and evaluate more rigorously the quality of the pupils' learning experiences in the classroom, and the standards they attain.

- While an action-planning process is well-established at the middle leadership level across the school, the associated plans vary significantly in quality and effectiveness; in most of them, the specified actions lack clear and measurable milestones to aid self-evaluation and insufficient guidance is received from senior leaders on how these could be developed to inform more effectively the improvement work of the school.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI evaluation is that there can be limited confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The board of governors, in the short period of time since its reconstitution, has engaged well in numerous training events with the aim of improving its effectiveness to provide high quality governance. In partnership with the principal, it is developing its challenge function and capacity to work more effectively. To build further on this work, there are some aspects of governance which should be reviewed, namely to: oversee the identification of appropriate priorities for improvement through meaningful consultation and robust self-evaluation, and monitor more closely the school's progress in addressing these priorities within the school development plan; and to develop more effective, open lines of communication with staff and parents to ensure both parties are fully aware of the work of the governors and the school.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding children and young people. These arrangements broadly reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education but the following areas need to be addressed:
 - update the training in safeguarding/ child protection for governors; and
 - improve the arrangements for communicating the school's safeguarding procedures to pupils and parents.

In discussions with the pupils, they reported that they felt safe and know who to talk to if they have any concerns about their safety or wellbeing.

8. Overall effectiveness

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 need to:

- raise the standards achieved by the pupils, particularly the levels of attainment in public examinations;
- improve the quality of planning, teaching and assessment in order to promote more successful learning;

- improve the quality of the strategic leadership of the school at a senior level, including governance; and
- build the capacity of all staff to self-evaluate robustly all aspects of provision.

There will be a follow-up inspection in 18-24 months.

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 SIMS³ and verified with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Wellington College, Belfast achieving 7 or more GCSEs (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 category⁴.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following 5 permitted exclusions	2013	2014	2015
*Percentage of year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 7 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	91	89	89
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	96.3	93.1	N/A
*Percentage of year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	91	87	83
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	92.8	92.2	N/A
*Percentage of year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	94	97	98
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)	80	89	100

Other examination results: key stage 4

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 12 pupils in Wellington College, Belfast achieving grades A* to C in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining boards for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison.

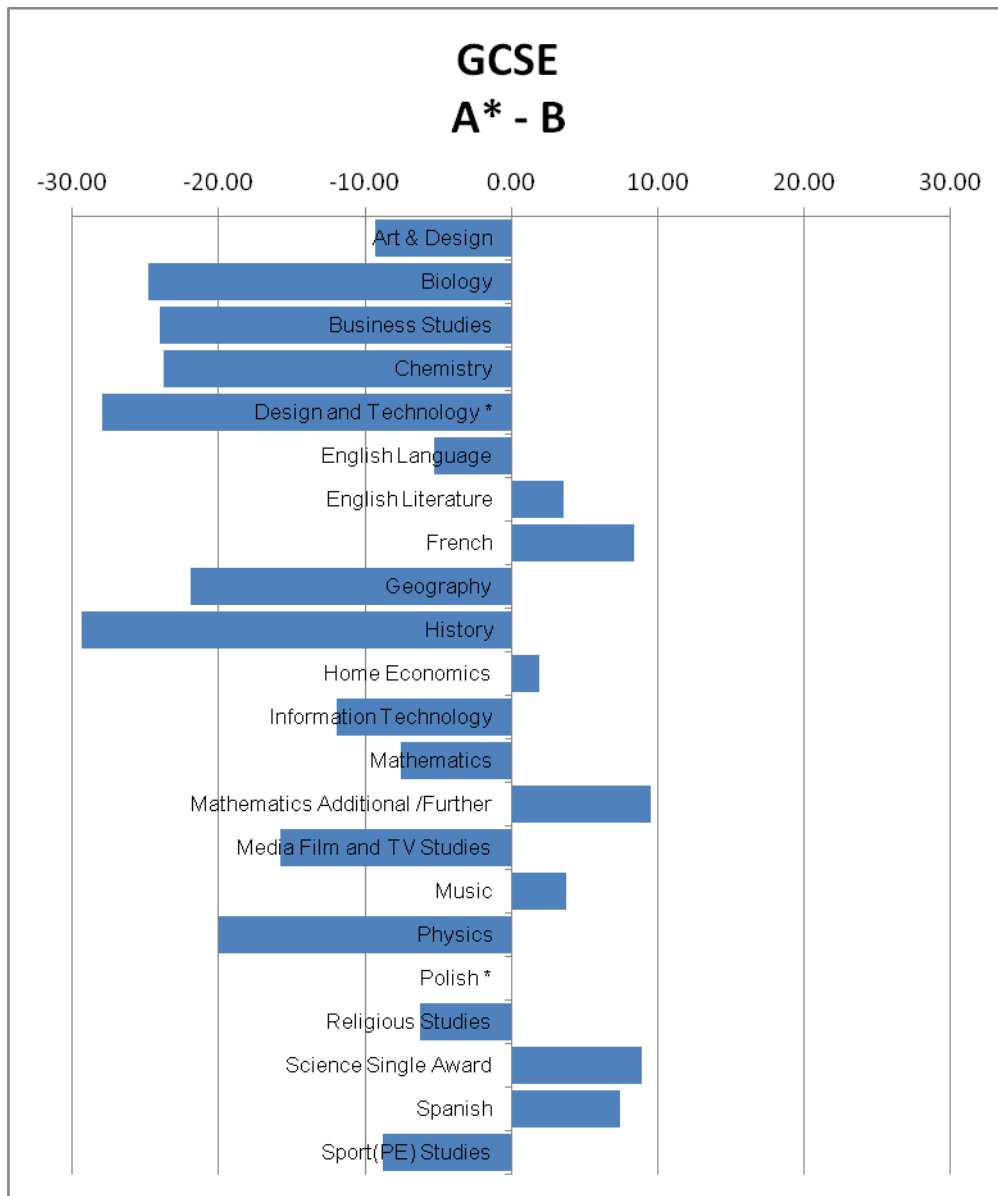
Level 2	2013-14	2014-15	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	
<i>CCEA Occupational Studies (Technology and Innovation)</i>	100	93	51
<i>CCEA Occupational Studies (Engineering and Engineering Services)</i>	100	98	53

³ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁴ 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 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of year 12 pupils achieving at GCSE level at grades A* to B in individual subjects in Wellington College, Belfast is compared with the three-year NI average for similar schools. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above the NI average. The number of entries to each subject will vary considerably and therefore comparisons between subjects 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 ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Wellington College, Belfast achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C. The table compares the percentage of achieving three or more GCEs (A* to C) with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category⁵.

GCE A Level or equivalent – *following 6 permitted exclusions	2013	2014	2015
*Percentage of year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	97	98	98
*Percentage of year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	65	75	66
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	72.9	74.3	N/A

Other examination results from 2013-14 to 2014-2015: post-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in this school achieving grades A* to C and A* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCE level. No average is available from the examining boards for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison.

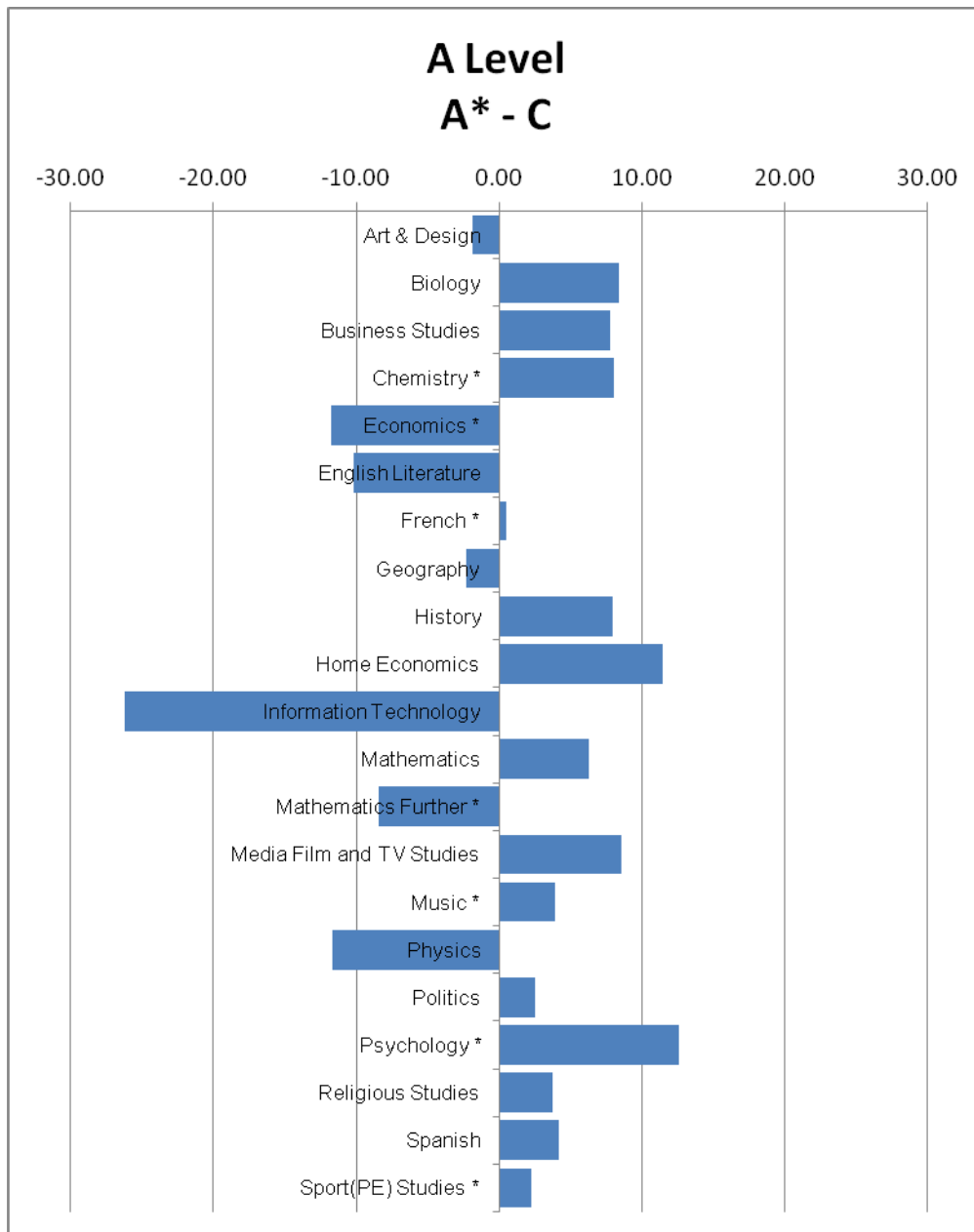
Other [level 3] courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

GCE Subject	2013-14		2014-15		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Pearson Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Diploma in Creative Media Production	100	100	67	67	16
Pearson Edexcel BTEC Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Creative Media Production	71	100	100	100	8

⁵ 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 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 ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of year 14 pupils achieving at GCE level at grades A* to C in individual subjects in Wellington College, Belfast is compared with the three-year NI average for similar schools. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above the NI average. The number of entries to each subject will vary considerably and therefore comparisons between subjects should be treated with caution.



*indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

Staying on rate

Based on data held in SIMS by the school and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at this school 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	95.6	90.8
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	94.1	94.2

Leavers' destinations

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

	2013-14 NI %	2013-14 School %	2013-14 School Nos.	Level 2	Level 3+
<i>Total number of leavers</i>			110		
<i>Employment</i>	4.2	7.3	8		
<i>Further Education</i>	20.6	30.0	33	18	15
<i>Higher Education</i>	70.6	55.5	61		
<i>Work-based learning (Training)</i>	1.4	5.5	6		
<i>Unemployed</i>	1.1	0.9	1		
<i>Unknown</i>	2.1	0.9	1		

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2015

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