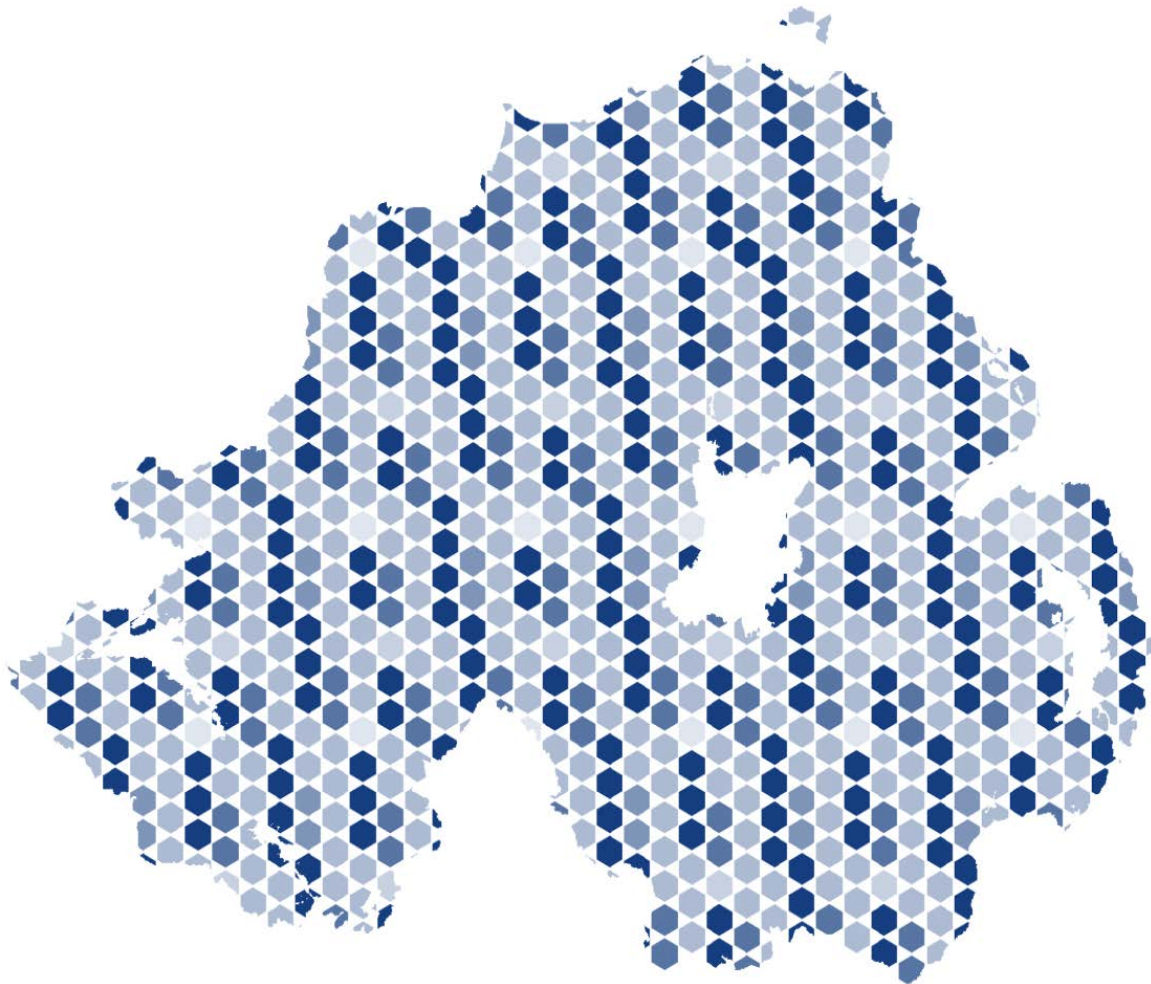


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Omagh High School

Controlled, co-educational, 11.18, non-selective school I

Report of an Inspection
in February 2013



Providing Inspection Services for

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



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CONTEXT OF THE INSPECTION (METHOD)

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 Inspectorate's publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>.

Inspectors scrutinised documentation and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for this inspection included:

- a meeting with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of pupils from years 8, 12, 13 and 14; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Data on the questionnaire returns is shown in the table below.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	108	44	41	23
Teachers & Support Staff	42	34	81	*

* fewer than 5

QUANTITATIVE TERMS

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 (Inspectorate) use the following performance levels (grades) in reports:

Performance Level	Descriptor
Outstanding	Outstanding characterised by excellence
Very Good	Consistently good; major strengths
Good	Important strengths in most of the provision. Areas for improvement which the school has the capacity to address
Satisfactory	Overall sound/satisfactory but with areas for improvement in important areas which need to be addressed
Inadequate	A few strengths; significant areas for improvement which require prompt action
Unsatisfactory	Poor; major shortcomings which require urgent action

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Omagh High School draws approximately one-third of its pupils from the town of Omagh and the rest from the surrounding rural area. While the enrolment has decreased over the past four years and stands currently at 406 pupils; the sixth form has grown steadily to just over 90 pupils. Approximately 18% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and almost one-half of the pupils require additional support with their learning.

Omagh High School	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 8 Intake	73	59	57	55
Enrolment	478	445	430	404
% Attendance (NI Average)	91.5% (92.3%)	93% (91%)	93% (93%)	NA
FSME Percentage	14.6	16.8	15.8	17.8
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	35.7% (171)	37.1% (165)	43.3% (186)	47.7% (193)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	17	17	17	18
No. of newcomers	13	15	7	7
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	1.37	3.39	7.02	14.55
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	17.81	15.25	24.56	14.55
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	79.45	84.75	75.44	80
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	82.19	76.27	77.19	80

Source: data as held by the school.

1.2 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Omagh High School focused on achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and on leadership and management across the school as a whole.

Specialist inspectors paid particular attention to English, mathematics and the science provision, and provided detailed oral feedback to the teachers in these areas; a summary of the findings is reported in Appendix 2.

The inspection also focused on: the provision for pastoral care and the arrangements for safeguarding; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life; the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG); and, the progress towards the Entitlement Framework.

1.3 OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

Overall Performance Level	Outstanding
Achievements and Standards	Outstanding
Provision for Learning	Outstanding
Leadership and Management	Outstanding

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are outstanding.

KEY FINDINGS

The pupils are confident and articulate. They respond well to the high expectations set by their teachers and, as a result, make excellent progression in their learning.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2010	2011	2012
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	93.3	90.79	90.12
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	59	65	82.5
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category¹</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	32	60.53	65
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	76	84.2	86.3
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)	7	27	60

Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks²

The improvement in the pupils' standards in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations over the past three years is outstanding. At grades A*-C, the standards attained by the pupils in most of the subjects surpasses the NI average by 10% points or more. In 2012 there was 100% attainment at A*-C in six subjects; and in addition, a majority of the pupils achieved top A*-B grades in approximately one-half of the GCSE subjects; this is a significant strength in the work of the school and demonstrates high expectations and curricular breadth and access in individual subjects at KS4. The attainment in GCSE examinations of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased significantly from a low base over the past three years and is well above the NI average.

¹ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

² DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

GCE A Level or equivalent	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	71	76	76
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	31.71	34.29	31.25
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	97.56	94.29	87.5

At A level, although approximately one-third of the pupils have achieved three A2 grades at A*-C, these figures are affected disproportionately by the small numbers in the individual subjects. In contrast there is a very strong performance in the vocational subjects on offer. The proportion of year 14 pupils progressing to higher education is well above the Northern Ireland average for non-selective schools.

3. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 The quality of the provision for learning is outstanding.

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the provision in English is outstanding and in mathematics and in science it is very good.³

In almost all of the lessons seen, the teaching was good or better, and in almost two-thirds, it was either very good or outstanding. The teachers plan effectively for the learning, taking good account of the pupils' needs and experiences. The pupils are provided with well-planned opportunities to reflect on and demonstrate the extent of their learning through high quality discussion with their teachers and their peers.

3.2 The quality of the care, guidance and support of pupils is outstanding.

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of pastoral care is outstanding.

The behaviour and personal presentation of the pupils is exemplary. In discussions with inspectors, the pupils spoke positively about their school experiences; they expressed their appreciation of the high level of care and support provided by their teachers, in particular, the benefit derived from additional non-timetabled support with their academic studies and the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

The high level of commitment by staff (as highlighted also in the very positive parental response to the parental questionnaire) at all levels to the welfare of the pupils is central to the school's ethos and is demonstrated by the collegial approach to, and shared responsibility for, pastoral care by all staff and by the key role it plays in supporting effective teaching and learning. The pastoral provision is linked clearly to curriculum planning, ensuring that all pupils have excellent opportunities to realise their potential through well-considered progression pathways.

³ For detailed findings of the provision in English, mathematics and science see Appendix 2.

The school gives good attention to healthy eating and physical activity, thereby encouraging the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles.

The quality of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding.

As the pupils progress through the school, their very wide range of additional needs is met within an ethos of high expectation and caring guidance and support. The pupils make very good progress and many overcome significant barriers to learning within a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. Positive and affirming arrangements, including specialised accommodation, ensure that those pupils with significant social, emotional and behavioural difficulties continue to achieve successfully.

All pupils with special educational needs make excellent progress and the rigorous and thorough tracking and monitoring allows staff to identify and provide support when needed, often at key transition points or when pupils need support with their literacy or numeracy. The classroom assistants are deployed well throughout the school; they work in close co-operation with the teachers and often provide additional expertise to support the very effective reading partnership programme or those pupils who require time out of class for short periods.

The pupils with special learning needs make very good progress and by the end of KS4 they achieve good success in public examinations at GCSE.

The quality of the provision for careers education and guidance is outstanding.

The pupils benefit from a high quality taught programme of careers from year eight onwards and there is suitable progression and equal access to guidance across the ability range. The lessons for the employability strand of Learning for Life and Work are integrated well into the overall CEIAG provision; effective auditing and mapping of provision ensures that there is suitable progression in learning and little overlap or duplication of experiences for the pupils. Well-planned CEIAG is available to those pupils considering entering further and higher education and there is equally relevant and useful support for those pupils in the Occupational Studies Programme who require close support from the care guidance and support staff.

The school has established a wide range of effective links with business and community partners as well as with further and higher education providers. The pupils talked enthusiastically about the activities during the young entrepreneur week and reported that they had gained a good understanding of this aspect of their careers choices. They were aware of the range of opportunities available, including those within the STEM⁴ range of subjects. They have good access to careers officers and guidance interviews.

3.3 The curricular provision for the pupils is very good.

KEY FINDINGS

The school has effective curricular links within the Omagh Learning Community which ensure that the pupils are given the opportunity to follow courses in a wide range of subjects at KS4 and at post 16. The Occupational Studies Programme is a particularly well-conceived programme aimed at those pupils who require additional support with their

⁴ STEM: Science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

learning. This programme consists of a wide range of courses which provide these pupils with an outstanding range of learning activities tailored to meet their individual learning needs and ensure that they have appropriate opportunities for progression into employment or further study at the local college of further and higher education.

The school's policy on entering pupils for public examinations is appropriately flexible and pupil-centred.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The overall quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

The senior leadership team comprising the Principal and the two vice-Principals provide clear, decisive leadership built on professional knowledge, excellent relationships, a shared understanding of effective practice and the identification of strengths and areas for development. The creative approach to curriculum design and pastoral care, in particular, ensures an integrated, cohesive approach to the provision of care, guidance and support, which maximises the opportunities for all of the pupils to realise their full potential.

The highly-committed and effective middle management team and teachers at all levels, avail of the excellent opportunities to undertake additional roles of responsibility and to lead and contribute to school improvement. This has enabled the school to maintain and improve the quality of provision, as well as providing valuable professional development for all staff, and has built the capacity for leadership and management across the school.

There is culture of open communication and professional respect among staff at all levels, which provides a firm foundation for the rigorous self-evaluation of all aspects of the school's work. The self-evaluation process, which is underpinned by the effective analysis of relevant quantitative and qualitative information, informs reliably the development planning process and is instrumental in the continuous improvement of the school's provision. The school development plan is supported further by a systematic process of action planning which ensures the continuous monitoring of the progress made towards the implementation of the school's strategic objectives.

The school has made very good use of the development planning indicators identified within the DE policy, *Every School a Good School*, to improve further the cohesion and focus of the plan.

The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school and work very effectively with the Principal to ensure that the school is managed well. In discussions, they expressed their confidence in the leadership of the Principal and appreciation of the work of the staff in meeting the individual needs of the pupils.

The ETI reported to the Principal and representatives of the governors the many affirmative responses and the few minor areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and where appropriate these have been commented on in the report.

The school maintains very effective links and partnerships with a wide range of organisations and external agencies including local employers, schools, and support services which broaden the range of the pupils' experiences and support well their learning.

On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people which reflect the guidance issued by DE.

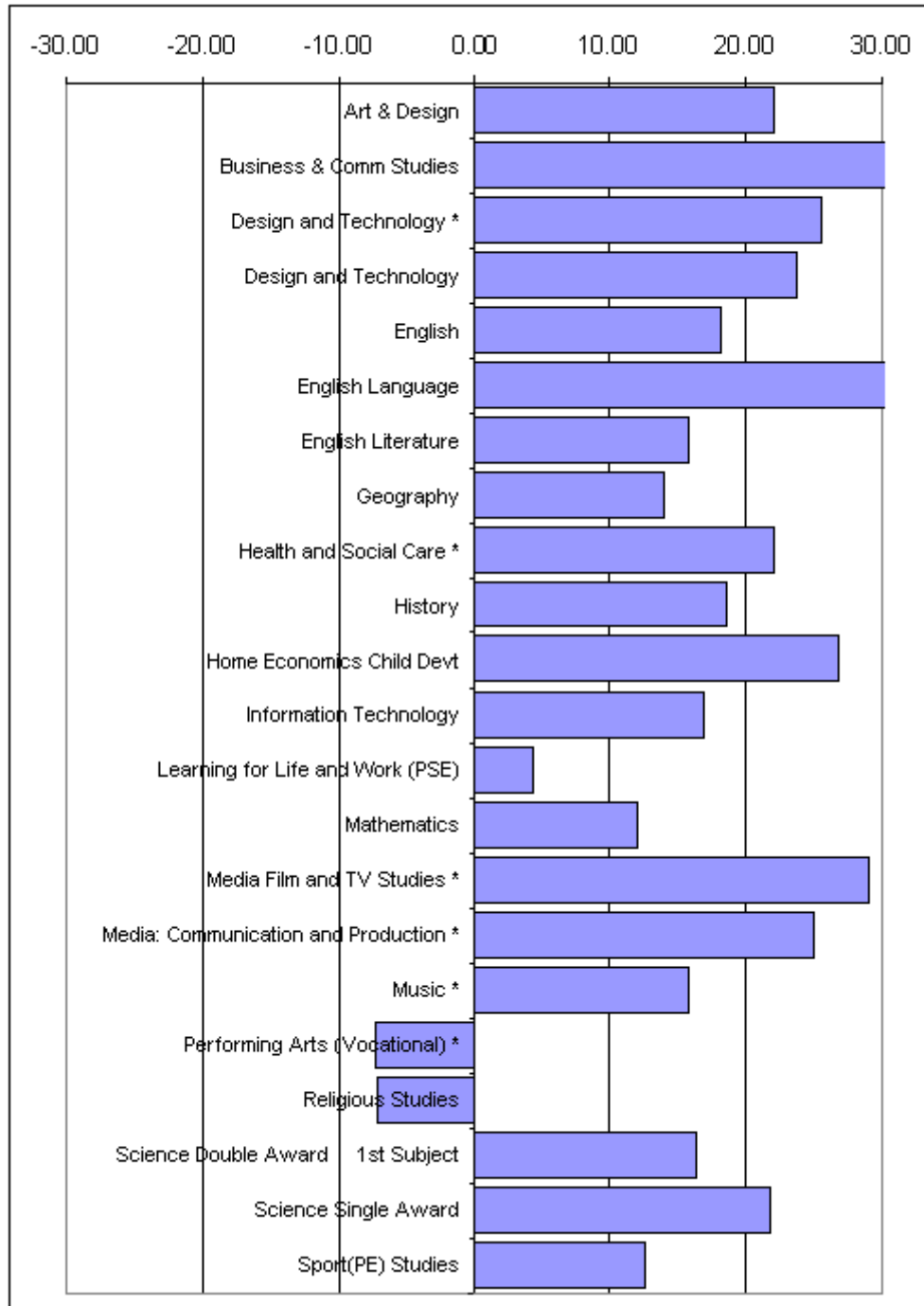
The available accommodation is used well to support learning and teaching despite the concerns expressed by the teachers, pupils and parents about its age and quality.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by this school is outstanding; the quality of pastoral care is also outstanding. The school has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

1.1 GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A*- C from 2009-10 to 2011-12



- total number of entries fewer than 30

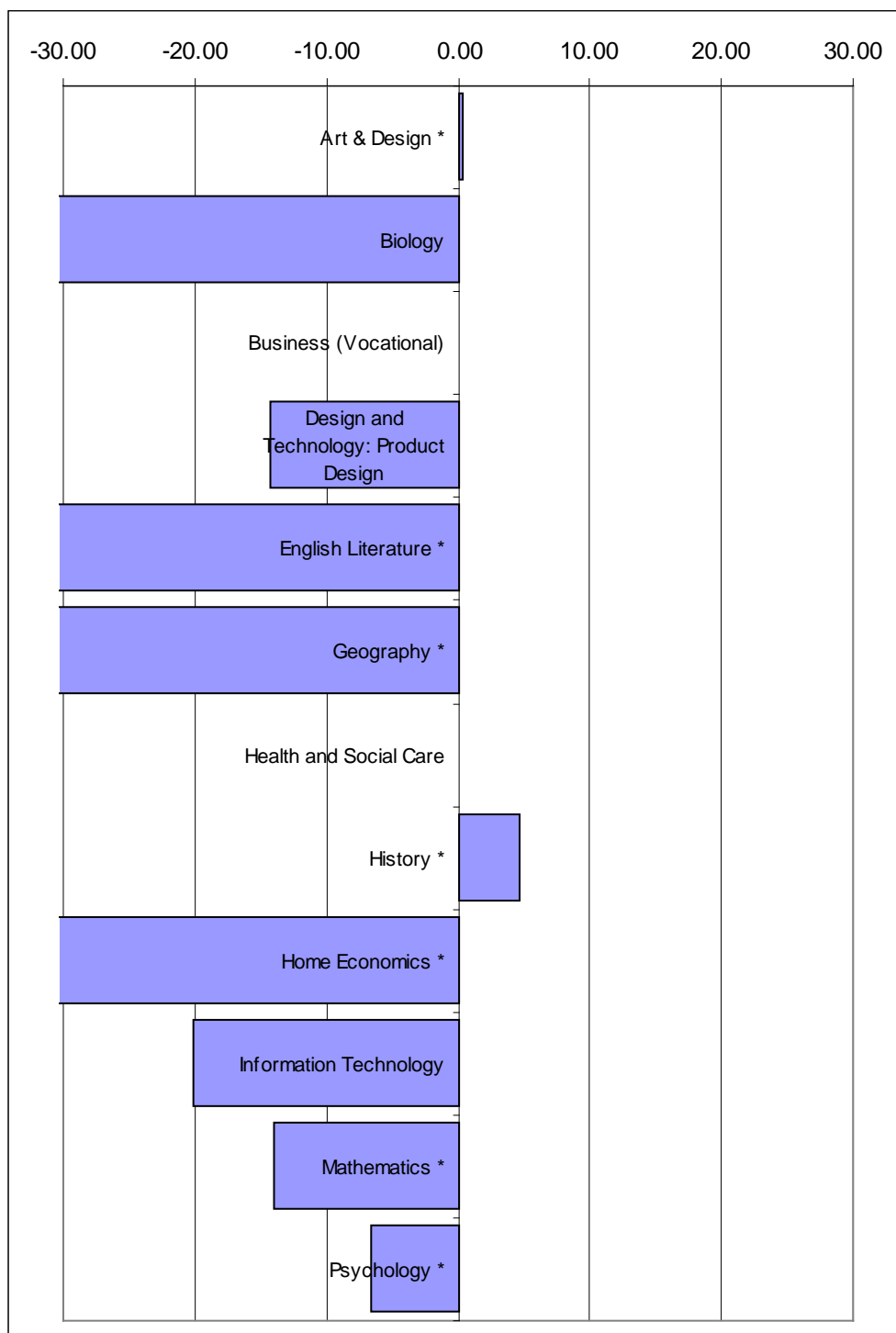
OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: KEY STAGE 4:

Other courses taken in the last three years.

Examination	Grade	Number of Pupils and Year			
		2010	2011	2012	Total
Entry Level Communication	Entry Level 3	4	1	7	12
	Entry Level 2	3	2	4	9
	Entry Level 1	0	0	1	1
Key Skills Communication	Level 1	6	11	5	22
	Level 2	1	2	0	3
English Speaking Board – Pre Vocational Certificate in Oral Communication Level 1	Distinction	6	10	5	21
	Credit	3	2	3	8
	Pass	4	0	0	4

1.2 GCE RESULTS

Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A*- C from 2009-10 to 2011-12



- total number of entries fewer than 20

OTHER EXAMINATION RESULTS: POST 16

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

BTEC National Award/Level 3	2009/10			2010/11			2011/12				Total entry over 3 years
	% Pass	% Merit	% Dist	% Pass	% Merit	% Dist	% Pass	% Merit	% Dist	% Dist*	
Sport (Performance and Excellence) Single Award	36	18	46			100			50	50	18
Engineering	33.33		66.7	66.7		33.33				100	7
Agriculture				17	17	66					6
Child Care, Learning and Development					50	50	75			25	8
Construction									50	50	2
Media								66.7	33.3		3

	2010/11				2011/12			Total entry over 3 years
	% Pass/Pass	% Merit/Merit	% Dist/Merit	% Dist/Dist	% Merit/Pass	% Dist*/Dist	% Dist*/Dist*	
Sport (Performance and Excellence) Double Award	17	33.3	33.3	17	25	50	25	10

	3 year school average A*-C
Business (Vocational)	91.67%
Health and Social Care	61.36%

LEAVERS DESTINATIONS

	Year 12	Percent.	NI %	Year 13/14	Percent.	NI%
TOTAL	31			43		
Another School	2	6	15.8	0	0	25
Employment	0	0	4.4	0	0	11.7
Full-time Further Education	26	84	45	14	33	31.1
Full-time Higher Education	0	NA	NA	25	58	38.5
Full-time Training	1	3	28	0	0	6.5
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0	0	3.5	3	7	6.6
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	2	6	3.3	1	2	3.1

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS: ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

The quality of the provision for English is **outstanding**

The strengths in the provision are:

- the excellent pupil outcomes in English at KS3 and in English and English literature at GCSE;
- the pupils' positive dispositions to learning and the outstanding working relationships in all of the lessons observed;
- the quality of the learning and teaching which was very good or outstanding in most of the lessons observed and characterised by the provision of a variety of creative, challenging and stimulating learning experiences for the pupils;
- the outstanding care, guidance and support given to the pupils and the appealing range of extra-curricular opportunities from which the pupils benefit;
- the systematic approach given to developing the pupils' literacy skills and the value placed on making English an enjoyable experience for the pupils; and
- the outstanding leadership provided by the head of department.

Mathematics

The quality of the provision for mathematics is **very good**

The strengths of the work include:

- the motivated, confident pupils who enjoy and engage actively in learning;
- the suitably flexible policy on entering the pupils for public examinations and the improved standards at KS4 over the past three years, particularly the excellent results achieved by the pupils in GCSE mathematics in 2012;
- the quality of the teaching observed during the inspection, most of which was good or very good;
- the hard-working teachers who set high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and support effectively them in their learning;
- the effective use of available data to monitor the progress of the pupils, and to identify low and underachievement together with the action to help them improve; and
- the highly effective leadership of mathematics throughout the school, the committed department team and their reflective approach to development work.

Science

The quality of the provision for science is **very good**.

The strengths of the work include the:

- excellent relationships between pupils and teachers in all of the lessons observed;
- quality of the teaching observed during the inspection which was always satisfactory and in nearly all of the lessons good or better;
- range of teaching strategies provided for the pupils, particularly the opportunities for engaging in practical work;
- hard-working teachers who are committed to ensuring the pupils achieve high standards;
- very good leadership and management provided by the head of department; and
- the outstanding results achieved by the pupils in external examinations at GCSE level in both the challenging double award science course, which is followed by the majority of pupils, and the single award science course.

ACCOMMODATION AND/OR HEALTH AND SAFETY

- There are no vision panels in the classroom doors.
- There are trip hazards in the tarmac play areas around the school.
- The security arrangements around the school need to be reviewed.
- The tennis courts and access steps to the rear of the school require repair.

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