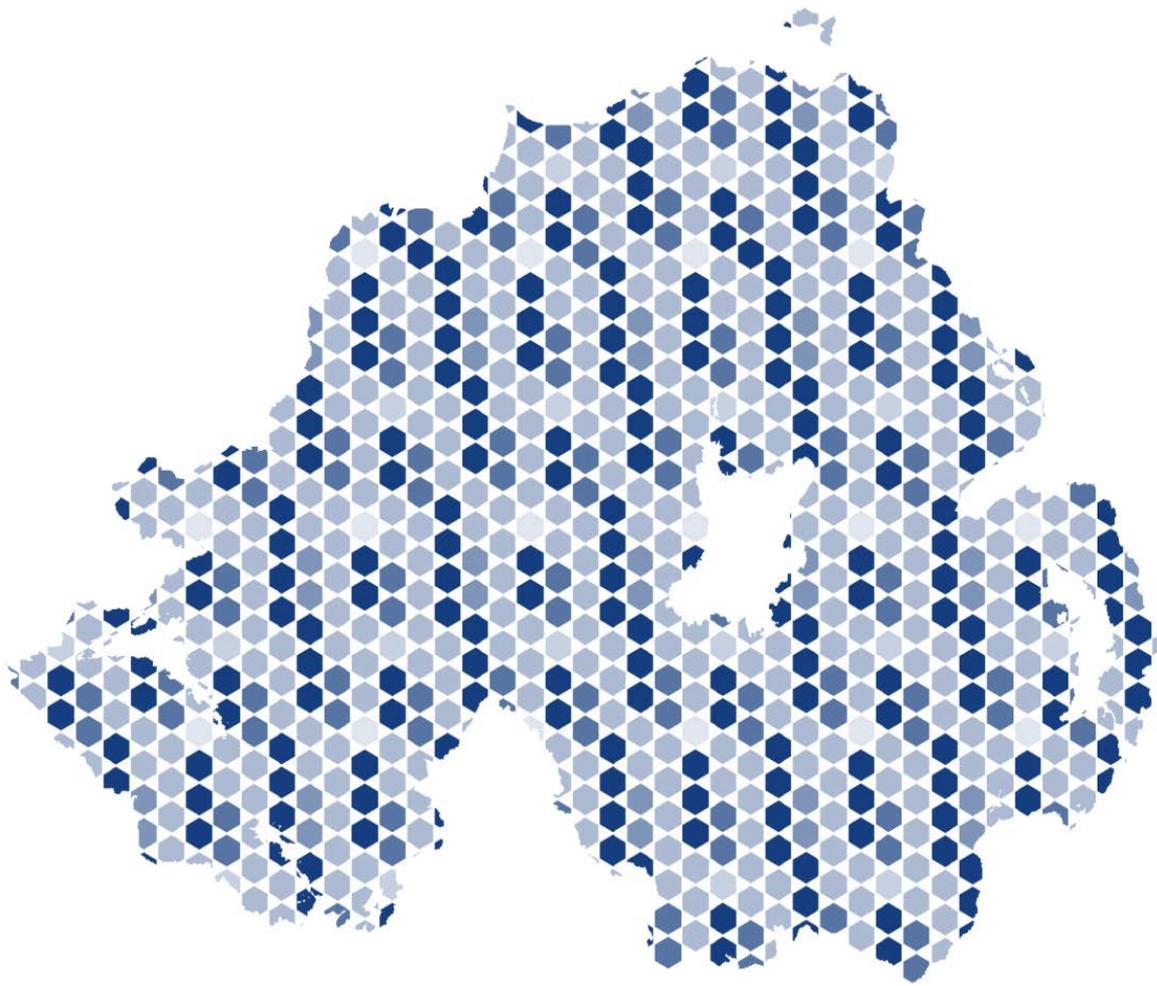


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Paul's College, Kilrea

Maintained, co-educational, 11-16, non-selective school

Report of an Inspection
in September 2013



Providing Inspection Services for

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

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



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 (ETI) use the following performance levels in reports:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

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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 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; and
- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Data on the returns on questionnaires¹ sent in advance of the inspection to parents and school staff is shown in the table below.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	242	22	9.1 ^{&}	7
Teachers	23	16	69.6	*
Support Staff	26	9	35.6	*

* fewer than 5 & available to all families; return as percentage of families

2. Context

St Paul's College serves the community in the town of Kilrea and the wider rural area. Over the past three years, the numbers of pupils coming into the school with the expected levels in English and mathematics have fluctuated. Attendance is always above the Northern Ireland average and has continued to improve over the past three years. The current principal is in post for just over three years.

St Paul's College, Kilrea	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Year 8 Intake	62	54	61	54
Enrolment	328	317	317	304
% Attendance (NI Average)	93.4 (92.3)	94.0 (92.6)	95.9 (N/A)	N/A
FSME Percentage ²	21.7	19.9	19.2	19.7
% (No.) of pupils on the SEN register	19.5 (64)	24 (76)	25.9 (82)	32.2 (98)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	25	24	24	26

¹ ETI is trialling a range of methods for collecting the views of parents/carers about the life and work of the school. As a result, the response rate to the parent/carer questionnaires may be low.

² The term 'FSME Percentage' refers to the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals

No. of newcomers	6	8	6	8
<i>Intake:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	12.3	18.5	11.4	*
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	13.9	27.8	13.1	*
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	56.9	81.5	78.7	63.0
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	58.5	85.2	70.5	57.4
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

* fewer than 5

3. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of the 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
- to inform the school's planning for improvement.

4. Overall findings

Overall Performance Level	Very good
Achievements and Standards	Very good
Provision	Good
Leadership and Management	Very good

5. Achievements and standards

The pupils are proud of their school and their behaviour is exemplary. They respond well to the high expectations set by the staff. They listen carefully and respectfully to their teachers and to each other. When given the opportunity, in a majority of classes, they are able to contribute to discussions and contribute their ideas. Almost all acquire very good written communication skills through their work in all of the subjects, notably in English. They can apply well a range of mathematical strategies in a range of different contexts.

In two of the last three years, the proportion of pupils achieving five or more GCSE examinations at grades A*-C, including English and mathematics, has been significantly above the average for similar schools.³ Over three years, almost all subjects were more than 10% above average at grades A*-C and a majority were more than 20% above

³ See Appendix for data: note that when averages are compared, they are with the average for selective or non-selective schools, as appropriate, with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

average. At grades A*-B most of the subjects were more than 10% above average and one-half were more than 20% above. While standards at grades A*-B are strong, the school has rightly prioritised improving further this percentage, with a clear, appropriate focus on maximising the achievement by pupils of their potential and preparing for their transition to learning in other settings.

The pupils who require additional support with their learning develop their social and personal skills well; most make very good progress, attaining GCSE standards which are comparable with their peers. Three-quarters of the pupils on the special needs register attain five or more GCSE at grades A*-C.

The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals who achieve at the expected level has varied considerably, but is well above average

The school has identified appropriately a key priority to improve further the level of the pupils' thinking skills and personal capabilities, especially at KS3. The inspection endorses this area for improvement.

6. Provision

Planning, teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. Some three-quarters of lessons observed were good or better; the majority were good. Highly effective teaching is exemplified by: realistically high expectations; well-paced lessons with consistently demanding challenge; skilful questioning which enables the pupils to think and express their opinions; and, well-planned plenary sessions which consolidate the pupils' skills and knowledge. In the minority of lessons needing improvement, there were insufficient opportunities to develop thinking skills and independence in learning.

The school supports the pupils who are at risk of marginalisation and ensures effectively their inclusion and retention in the school. These pupils are identified effectively at an early stage and benefit from well-planned individual support provided by a team of classroom assistants and a learning support teacher.

The effective pastoral provision, characterised by excellent relationships and genuine care among all members of the school community, supports the pupils' learning very well. The pupils spoke positively of the commitment and work of their teachers and support staff, which helps them achieve their full potential. The pupils have helped to identify priorities for improvement in the school, for example, in the policy for promoting positive behaviour.

Based on evidence at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people which reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education.

The pupils are prepared effectively to make well-informed career choices and to use their research skills to locate, select and evaluate careers information relevant to their needs through the careers education, information advice and guidance curriculum. Through good links with outside agencies and local employers a wide range of events has been organised for the pupils, including a STEM⁴ day and careers convention. The pupils have a good understanding of the world of work and of the education, training and employment opportunities that are available locally and regionally.

⁴ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

The pupils benefit from an extensive range of educational, social and cultural experiences. At Key Stage (KS) 3, the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and meets well the needs of the pupils. The KS4 curriculum meets the requirements of the Entitlement Framework by including a range of applied and vocational courses which are well suited to the pupils' abilities, interests and career aspirations, underpinning the pupil-centred ethos of the school. The school is a committed member of the Rural Learning Partnership, and the pupils access a number of courses through the Northern Regional College. The school reviews the curriculum to ensure that pupils have access to qualifications which widen their opportunities for progression, post-16.

The pupils have adequate opportunities to develop their technology skills, including through a GCSE ICT course, but limited opportunities to apply these skills and to use ICT in innovative and creative ways across the curriculum. The development of the ICT infrastructure and the increased use of ICT across the curriculum is an appropriate priority in the school development plan (SDP).

7. Leadership and management

The governors, principal, senior leadership team (SLT) and staff are focused strategically and effectively on maintaining and improving the excellent standards and outcomes obtained by the pupils as evidenced by the excellent GCSE examination results.

The SDP⁵ is of a very good quality, identifying appropriate areas for improvement including the necessary further development of ICT. Overall, the school development planning processes are underpinned by a very good culture of self-evaluation leading to improvement. The school is, appropriately, developing its self-evaluation to disseminate better the effective practice in learning and teaching. For this purpose, there is a need to strengthen further the working links between the members of the SLT and middle management.

One of the principal's main aims since taking up appointment has been to develop successfully the strategic role of all post-holders, in particular to meet effectively the whole-school priorities identified in the SDP. In this aim she is succeeding very well. The work of most middle managers is instrumental in delivering the excellent GCSE examination results. Middle management needs now to develop their self-evaluation practice further, in particular, to use a greater range of first-hand evidence and to focus on improving further the level of the pupils' thinking skills and personal capabilities.

The governors support the principal and staff effectively in implementing the SDP and make a very positive contribution to the work of the school. The parents, staff and school community can have confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors need to review a greater range of evidence and to challenge, where needed, the effectiveness of the action being taken by post holders at SLT and middle management level.

8. Conclusion

8.1 In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is very good. The school is meeting very effectively the educational and pastoral needs of the pupils; and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.

⁵ The SDP meets fully the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

It is important that the employing authority and board of governors plan for, and manage, issues related to the school budget, in order to address the future needs of the pupils and the staff of the school.

Performance and statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving 5 or more GCSEs (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 category⁶.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2011	2012	2013
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	95.2%	91.2%	95.2%
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	77.8%	80.7%	88.7%
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁶</i>	<i>60.0</i>	<i>69.7</i>	<i>(----)</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	53.9%	40.4%	58%
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>33.6</i>	<i>45.4</i>	<i>(----)</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	95.2%	89.5%	91.9%
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)	57.14%	35.71%	43.75%

⁶ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the tables below show the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving grades A* to C and A* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining board(s) for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison due to the small size of the cohort.

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

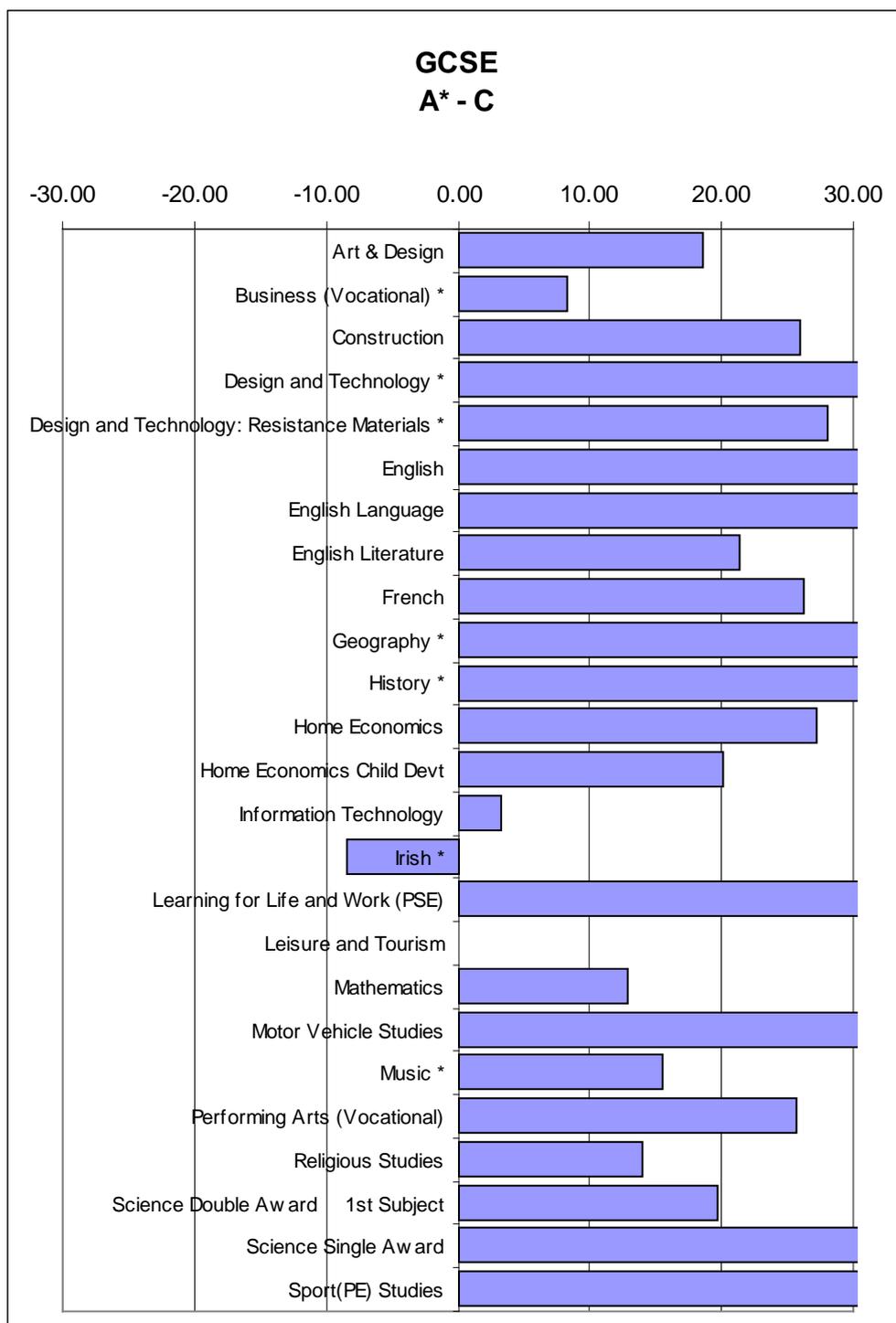
GCSE Subject	2011		2012		2013		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Leisure and Tourism	83.3	100	92.3	100	100	100	27

Level 2	2011	2012	2013	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
Essential Skills Communication	100	100		29
Occupational Studies SA	0	100	100	37

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to C from 2010-11 to 2012-13

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of pupils achieving at GCSE level at grades A* to C in individual subjects in this school is compared with the three-year NI average.

The comparison is shown below as the difference between these two values; 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 should be treated with caution.



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

Leavers' destinations (2012)

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

	Year 12	Percent.	NI %
TOTAL	63		
Another School	21	33.3	(---)
Employment	2	3.2	7.9
Full-time Further Education	31	49.2	46
Full-time Training	8	12.7	18.2
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	1	1.6	4.4

Health and safety

- There are gaps in the fencing which need to be repaired for safety and security reasons.
- There are no visual panels in the doors of many of the classrooms.
- There is an urgent need either to remove or to install one of the two circular saws and associated extraction system currently placed in the Technology and Design manufacturing store room.

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