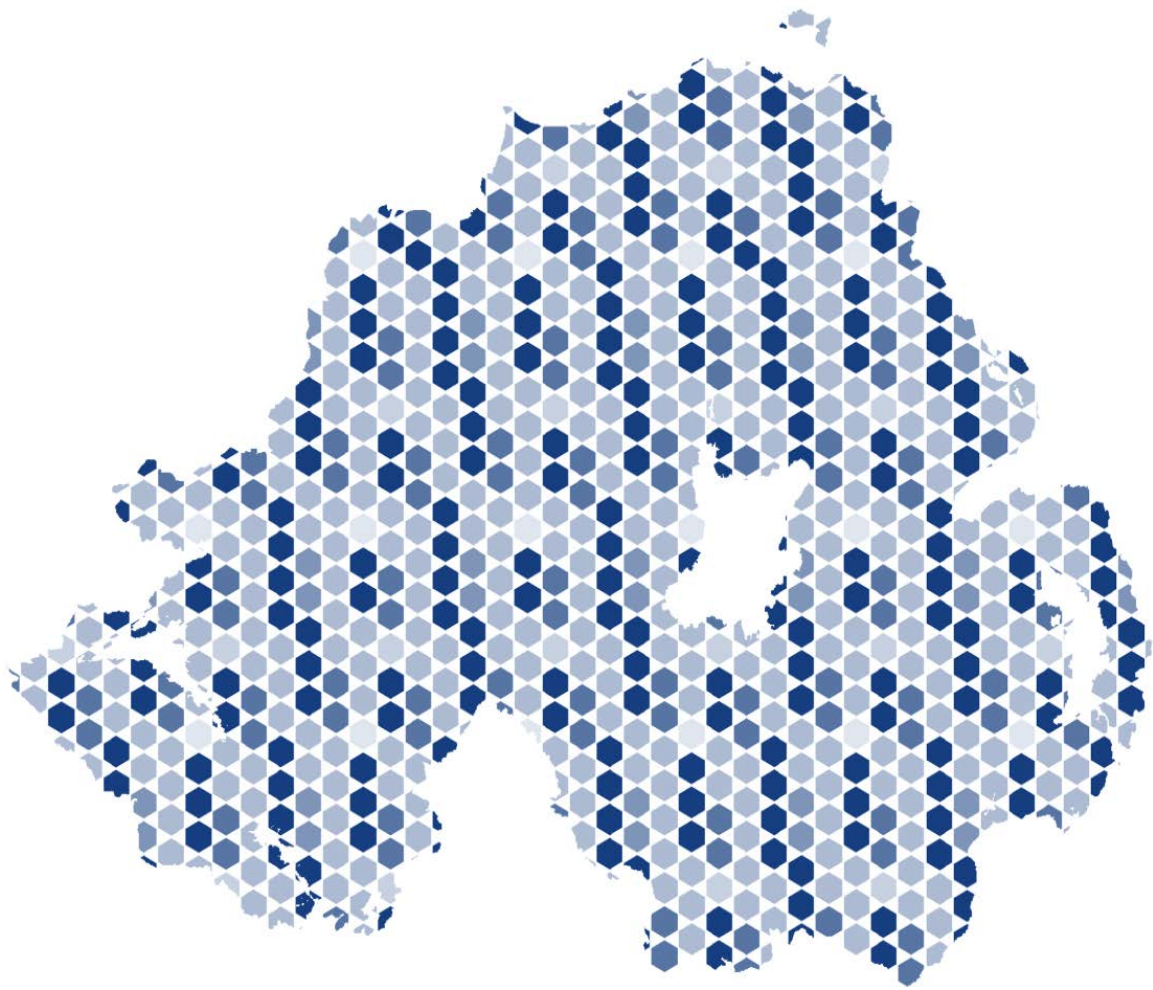


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

St Joseph's Grammar School,  
Donaghmore

Voluntary co-educational 11-18 selective school

Report of an Inspection in  
March 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

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, 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 (61) and 24% of staff (11) responded to the questionnaires. In their responses, almost all of the parents and staff expressed high levels of satisfaction with the work of the school. A small number of parents raised some concerns in their written comments which were discussed with the governors and senior leadership team and, where appropriate, are addressed in the report.

## **2. Focus and purpose of 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.

## **3. Context of the school**

St Joseph's Grammar School was founded in 1922 by the Daughters of the Cross religious order. The school is situated in Donaghmore, serving a large catchment area from the Sperrin Mountains to Lough Neagh. The school is consistently oversubscribed and has increased its enrolment from 496 to 676 over the last decade.

In 2003, the school became co-educational and in 2010 an Irish Medium Stream, Sruth na Gaeilge(An Sruth), was established. An Sruth is distinctive from the grammar school in that pupils are admitted without the use of academic selection as a criterion. The school is firmly committed to expanding An Sruth.

The current principal was appointed in September 2014 and has restructured the senior leadership team, extending the team in number and introducing new roles and positions of responsibility.

<b>St Joseph's Grammar School Donaghmore</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>
Year 8 Intake	98	104	100	98
Enrolment	579	604	635	676
% Attendance (NI Average)	95.5 (95.7% )	95 (95.3%)	96.3 (95.8%)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	15.4	15.7	13.9	22.9
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	4.3 (25)	6.0 (36)	7.1 ( 45)	7.9 ( 53)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	14	16	18	13
No. of newcomers	*	0	0	0
<i>Intake<sup>2</sup>:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	53.1	51	21	n/a <sup>3</sup>
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	71.4	63.5	31	n/a
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	99	94.2	86	n/a
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	99	98.1	88	n/a
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Achievements and Standards</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Provision</b>	<b>Very good</b>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	<b>Very good</b>

#### 5. Quality of achievements and standards

- The pupils are confident and highly motivated; they approach new learning opportunities with curiosity, open-mindedness and commitment and apply their knowledge confidently and competently to all learning contexts. The school has successfully prioritised the development of the pupils' independent learning to complement and enhance the quality of their skills and dispositions.
- The pupils develop a high level of personal, social, leadership and employability skills as a result of an extensive range of additional learning experiences, including the exceptional community link programme.

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

<sup>2</sup> From 2013, Key Stage (KS) 2 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

<sup>3</sup> Due to industrial action data from end-of- year stage 2 assessment in 2014 was not made available

- Over the last three years, in English and English Literature at GCSE level, the outcomes at grades A\*-B are in line with the Northern Ireland (NI) average when compared with similar schools. At GCE A level, the outcomes in English Literature are well above the corresponding NI average.
- In mathematics, the outcomes at GCSE level over the last three years have fluctuated; in 2014, they were just below the NI average. Improving the standards that pupils achieve in public examinations has been prioritised in the departmental action plan; work has been carried out with some success but further improvement is needed. The outcomes at GCE A level are in line with the corresponding NI average.
- Over the last three years, the percentage of pupils attaining seven or more GCSE examinations at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, has been above or in line with the NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category.
- The standards the pupils attain in the majority of individual subjects, at GCSE level, are above the corresponding NI averages for selective schools at grades A\* to B. A significant minority of the subjects are performing at more than ten percentage points above this average.
- In two out of the last three years at GCE A level, the percentage of pupils achieving three or more subjects at grades A\* to C is well above the NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category. While the percentage of pupils achieving three or more subjects at grades A\* to C dipped in 2013, the outcomes for pupils remained in line with the NI average for similar schools.
- The pupils' attainments at GCE A level are a particular strength. The performance of the majority of the individual subjects is above the three-year NI averages at grades A\*-C for selective schools, with almost one-half being more than ten percentage points above the average.
- Over the last three years, all of the pupils entitled to free school meals attain well at GCSE and A level; and, the small percentage of pupils requiring additional support with their learning attain consistently high standards, in line with their peers.
- The percentage of pupils who leave to go to higher education is significantly above the NI average; however, both the percentage of pupils who stay on from year 12 to year 13 and from year 13 to year 14 are below the NI average.

## **6. Quality of provision**

- Planning, teaching and assessment are effective (good or better) in promoting and progressing the pupils' learning, skills and knowledge in just over four-fifths of the lessons observed. In the most effective practice, the teachers' skilful questioning engages the pupils in the learning and develops their thinking skills and oral responses, and the learning is consolidated in effective plenary sessions. The well-planned activities, including purposeful group work, enable pupils to share, evaluate and take responsibility for their learning.

- The less effective practice (satisfactory), in around one-fifth of the lessons observed, is characterised by over-direction by the teacher and insufficient challenge for the pupils.
- In English, in most of the lessons observed, the teaching is very effective (very good or better). Pupils benefit from very effective planning for learning and teachers correct work regularly and in ways which affirms the strengths and highlights any areas for improvement. The provision is guided well by an appropriately informed range of improvement priorities, underpinned by sound self-evaluation processes and whole-school policies and planning, which ensure there is a coherent and progressive programme for developing English and literacy across the school.
- In mathematics, in one-third of the lessons observed, the teaching is very effective (very good or better) and the pupils are highly engaged and motivated. In these lessons, the pupils are given opportunities to develop their communication, reasoning and problem-solving skills. The less effective teaching (satisfactory), in one-half of the lessons observed and mainly in Key Stage (KS) 3 classes, results in a lack of challenge for the more able pupils, too few opportunities for pupils to engage in meaningful group activities and minimal oral contributions by them.
- While there is evidence of recent improvement in numeracy, the provision is lacking in consistency across the curriculum as are the opportunities for the pupils to apply and further develop their mathematical skills in a range of contexts. It will be important for the school to share best practice in, and monitor the provision for, numeracy in order to better promote consistency across the curriculum.
- The quality of the pastoral care is outstanding. The school places a high priority on the holistic development of the pupils and the staff work effectively to meet the emotional, academic and spiritual needs of each pupil. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary; they make a significant contribution to the life and work of the school and benefit from the extensive enrichment programme. This develops well their interests, confidence, leadership skills and independence.
- The pupils who require additional support with their learning are integrated well into the life and work of the school. They are supported through the appropriate use of learning support assistants and the comprehensive range of lunchtime enrichment programmes. Effective arrangements are in place to identify pupils who need additional support and their progress is tracked and monitored to ensure that their needs are being met. A more rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies will address the variation in the out working of the SEN provision.
- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) is highly effective and well-led. The pupils benefit from a taught CEIAG programme which focuses appropriately on key transition points and the educational needs of each pupil. This discrete provision is supported effectively by a range of careers-related events.

- By year 14, the pupils have a very good understanding of the world of work and the education and employment opportunities available to them; almost all of the pupils progress to higher education to take up a wide range of courses with clear progression pathways.
- Key priorities have been identified to enhance the CEIAG provision further. These include evaluating the extent and effectiveness of the contribution of individual subjects to the CEIAG provision and the introduction of work-related learning experiences at KS 4 to meet the needs of a changing intake and the expansion of An Sruth.
- The curriculum at all key stages is broad, balanced and flexible. At KS 4 and post-16, the school is meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework. Through effective collaboration with a number of other schools and the local further education college within the area learning community, pupils have access to an appropriately wide range of academic and vocational subjects.
- Curriculum planning is led well and reviewed and evaluated to very good effect. It takes account of the pupils' interests and abilities in order to ensure progression in their learning and to provide them with core skills and capabilities to meet the demands of the next phase of education or the world of the work.
- Within An Sruth, the pupils benefit from the very positive learning environment, the tailored curriculum and the additional support to develop their language competence in Irish and English, alongside their wider skills and dispositions. An Sruth impacts positively on the educational experience of the pupils, promoting an appreciation of bilingualism, while complementing and enriching the already vibrant cultural and sporting life of the school.

## **7. Quality of leadership and management**

- The school development plan, which is informed by extensive consultation and effective self-evaluation, outlines a range of appropriate priorities for school improvement. The associated action plans focus clearly on achieving the best possible outcomes for all pupils through high quality teaching and learning and high levels of pastoral care.
- The recently restructured senior leadership team is highly committed to effecting improvement across all areas of their responsibility. While work is at an early stage of development, it is characterised by a clearly defined strategic vision, a strong collegial focus on ensuring high quality learning and teaching, and a commitment to mentor, nurture and supportively challenge each other.
- Most of the middle leaders effectively lead and manage their areas of responsibility; they are receptive to change and committed to the collegial vision of improvement through self-evaluation within a culture of encouragement, challenge and support. They have recently, and appropriately, begun to work more collaboratively to address the variation in the quality and effectiveness of self-evaluation and action planning across the departments.



- There can be a high degree of confidence in the effectiveness of all the aspects of governance evaluated. The highly committed governors provide clear strategic direction as well as appropriate levels of support and challenge in driving forward the process of improvement.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe in school and that their concerns are dealt with effectively. They are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

## **8. Conclusion**

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

## Examination performance and other statistical data

### GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2011-12 to 2013-14

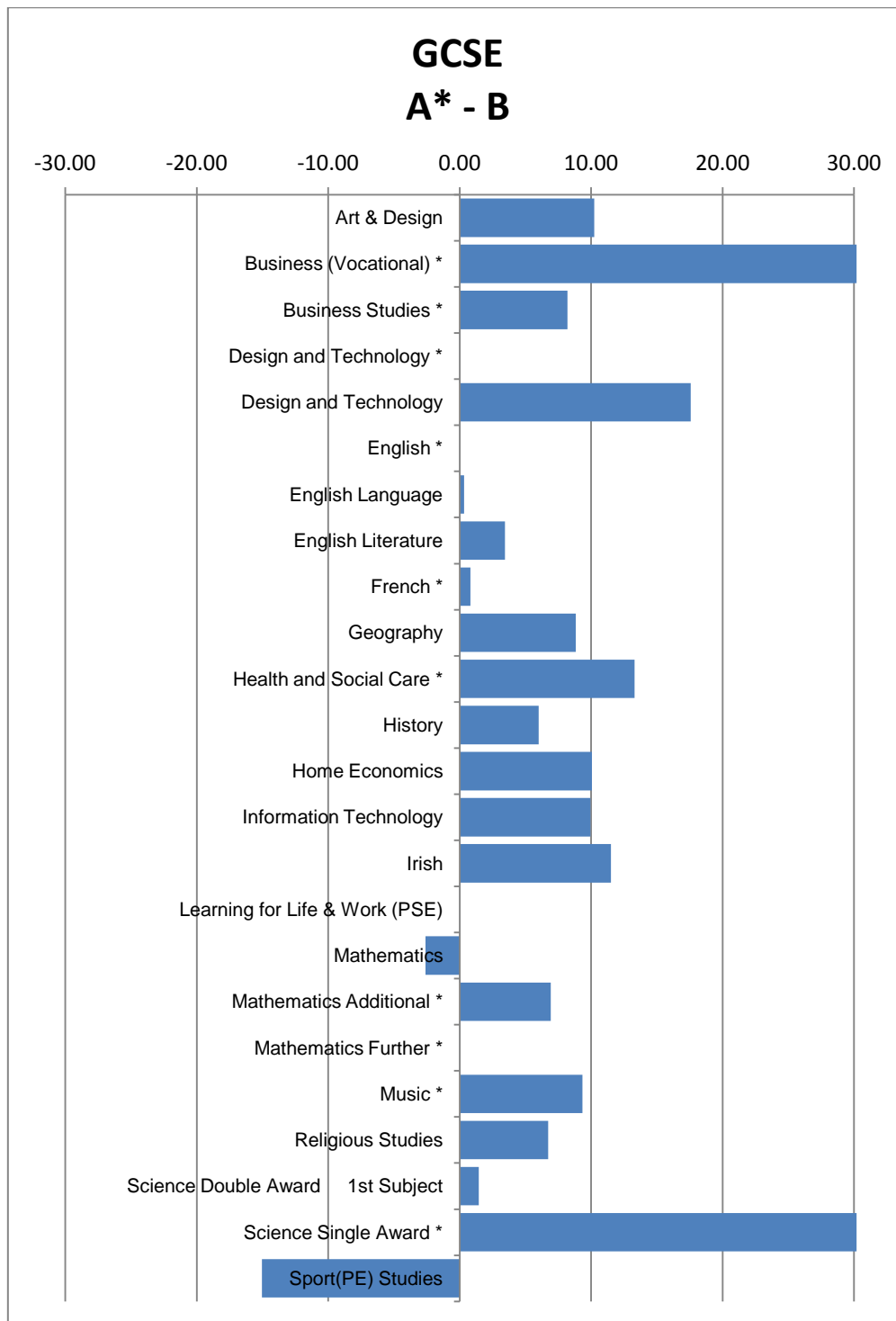
Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in St Joseph's Grammar School achieving 7 or more GCSEs (A\* to C) and equivalent subjects with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category<sup>4</sup>. It also shows the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals achieving 5 or more GCSEs including English and mathematics (grades A\* to C).

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
*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	100	100	98.75
<a href="#">The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</a>	94.9	94.9	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	93.15	96.0	91.25
<a href="#">The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</a>	89.9	91.8	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	100	100	98.75
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)	100	88.89	90.91

<sup>4</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 B from 2011-12 to 2013-14

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

## GCE A level examination results at grades A\* to C from 2011-12 to 2013-14

Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in St Joseph's Grammar School achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A\* to C. The table compares the percentage of pupils achieving three or more GCEs (A\* to C) with the NI average for selective schools in the same free school meals category<sup>5</sup>.

<b>GCE A Level or equivalent</b>	2012	2013	2014
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	98.63	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	91	80.82	87.1
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>83.8</i>	<i>82.2</i>	N/A

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

## Other examination results: post-16

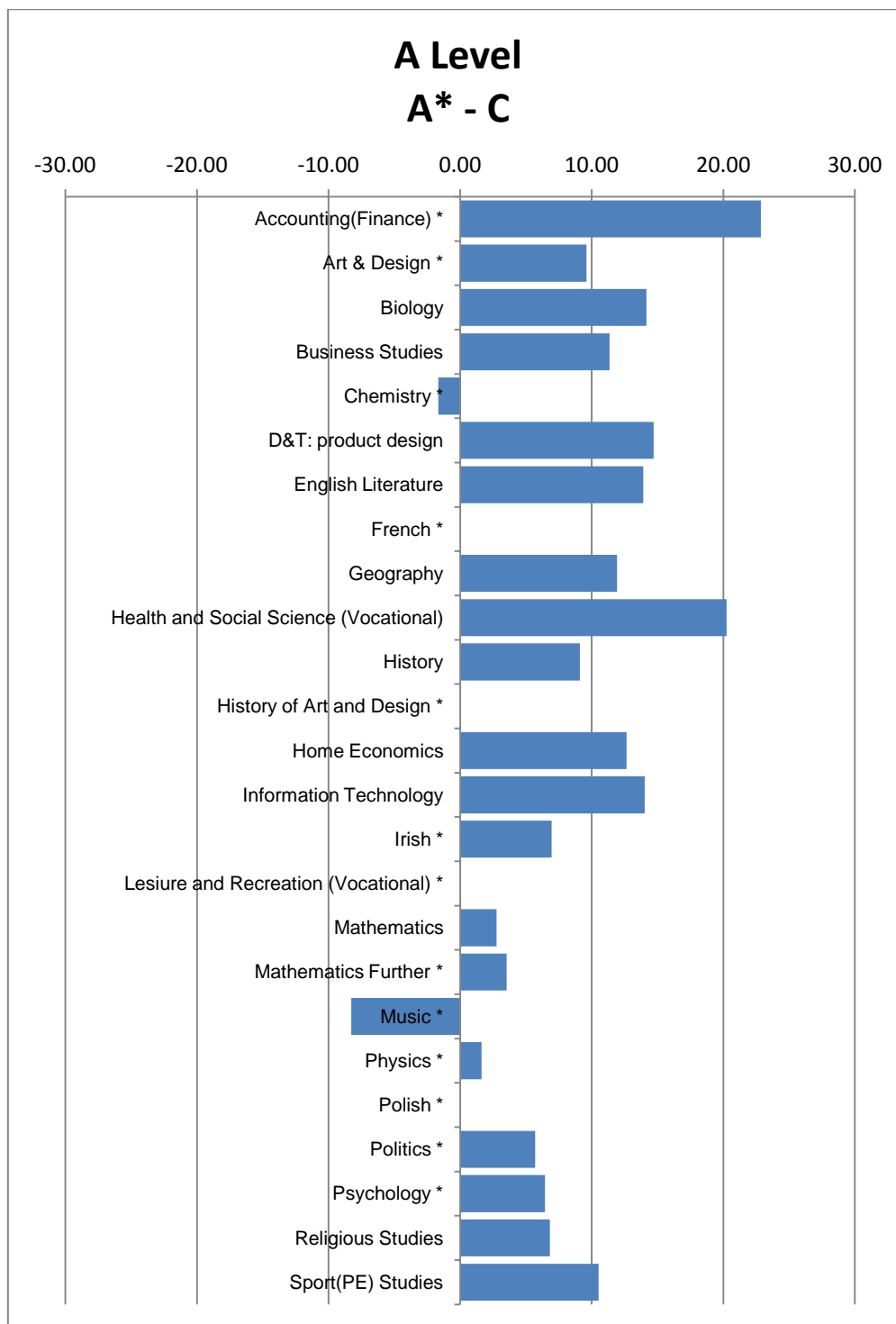
The table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in St Joseph's Grammar School achieving grades A\* to C and A\* to E in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCE A level. No average is available from the examining board(s) for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison.

<b>Level 3</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Total entry over 3 years</b>
	<b>% pass</b>	<b>% pass</b>	<b>% pass</b>	
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness	100	100	100	59
BTEC Engineering	100	100	100	15
Moving Image Art	100	100	100	12
BTEC Performing Arts Level 3	100	100	100	8

<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 GCE A level at grades A\* to C from 2011-12 to 2013-14

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCE A level subject at grades A\* to C, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in 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 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 St Joseph's Grammar School from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average and for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	95.7	90.12
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	94.3	92.8

### Leavers' destinations

Based on data held and verified by the school with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of pupils who leave St Joseph's Grammar School to enter further education, work-based learning (training), higher education or employment, or seeking employment, compared with the average for selective schools for the academic year 2012/13.

	School % (No.)	NI %	Level 2 % (No.)	Level 3 % (No.)	Level 4 % (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	73	9503			
Employment	0.0	3.4			
Further Education	0.0	21.2			
Higher Education	98.6 (72)	72.0			98.6 (72)
Work-based Learning (Training)	1.4 (1)	1.2			
Unemployed	0.0	1.2			
Unknown	0.0	1.1			

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