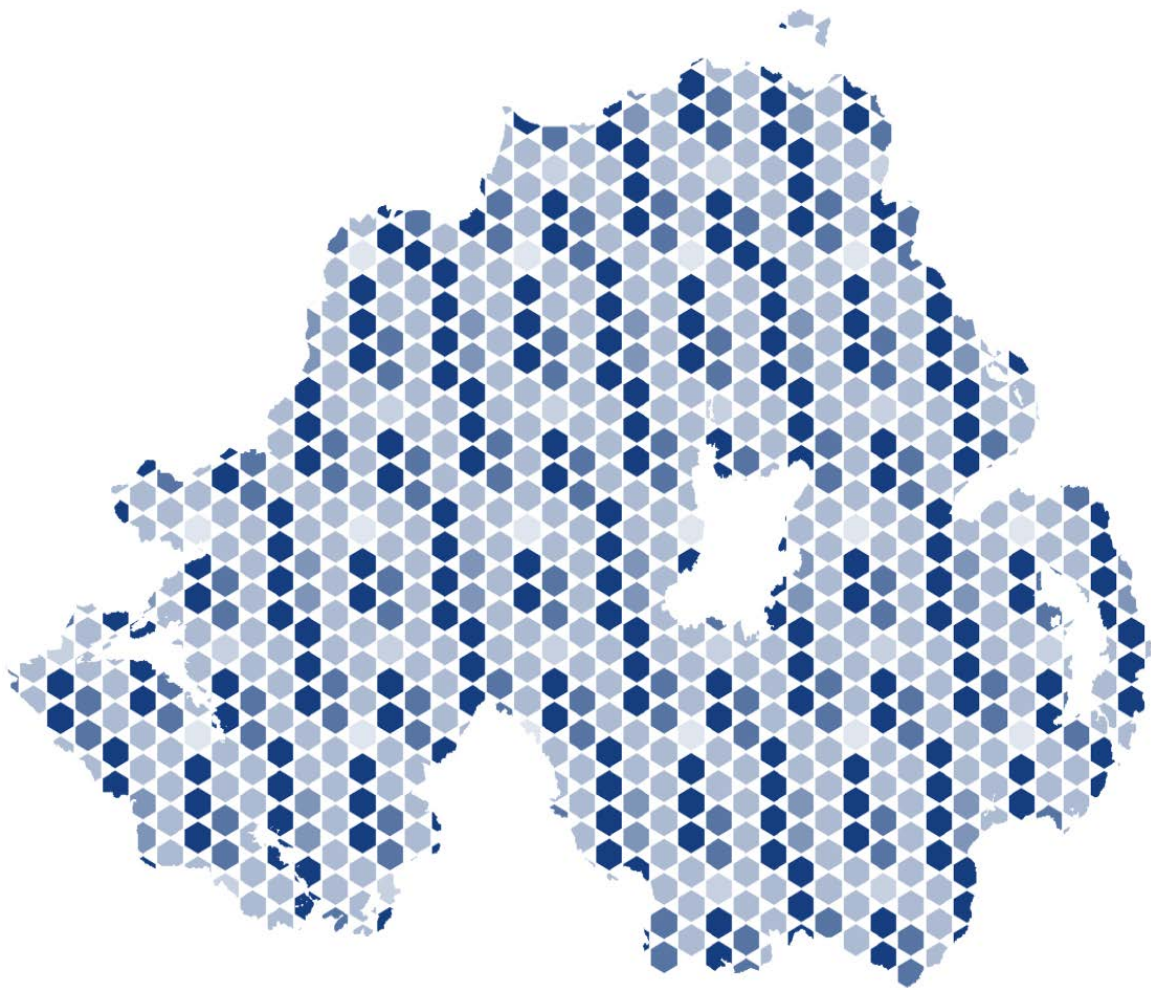


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Patrick's Academy,
Lisburn

11-18, mixed, maintained, non-selective school

Report of an Inspection in
November 2014

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



CSE



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.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>.

Inspectors observed teaching and learning, scrutinised documentation, data and the pupils' written work, and held formal and informal discussions with pupils (individually and in groups), teachers and staff with specific responsibilities.

The arrangements for the inspection included a meeting with the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire. A number of parents (12), two-thirds of the teaching staff (22), and a small number (4) of the support staff responded to the questionnaires.

All of the staff who responded commented positively on: the caring, inclusive ethos in the school; the good opportunities to be involved in self-evaluation and development planning; and the clear understanding the governors have on the work and context of the school. Most of the parents who responded were positive in their support for the management of the school at all levels and the helpful and regular information they receive about their child's progress. The small number of issues raised in the questionnaires about communication and school policy were discussed with the principal and governors.

2. Focus and purpose of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary inspection is, through an effective linking of internal and external approaches, to:

- evaluate the quality of the provision and the outcomes for the pupils;
- evaluate the school's leadership and management and its capacity to effect and sustain improvement in its provision and standards; and
- inform the school's planning for improvement.

3. Context of the school

St Patrick's Academy, Lisburn draws most of its pupils from the city and the greater Lisburn area. Since the last inspection, in 2008, the enrolment has increased by half again from 320 to 476. The school has a small sixth form and a moderate learning unit (MLU). Over the past four years the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals has increased to 30.5%.

Just under two-thirds of the pupils enter the school with the expected levels in English and mathematics, which is below the average for non-selective schools. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs has increased steadily, over the past three years, to almost 38%, which is above average for non-selective schools. Over the same period the number of pupils with statements of educational needs in the MLU has decreased from 27 to 6.

The school is an active member of the Lisburn Area Learning Community (LALC) and the pupils benefit from the strong collaborative links with local schools and the further education college to broaden the curriculum.

The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to learn about community relations, equality, diversity and reconciliation. Through effective links established within the area learning community and the ongoing impact of the school's work and participation in the IFI¹-funded 'Change-makers' project the pupils are able to; engage purposefully with those from other schools and organisations to encourage shared education; and to play an active role as citizens in an increasingly diverse society.

St Patrick's Academy	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Year 8 Intake	82	77	81	74
Enrolment	468	492	492	475
% Attendance (NI Average)	92.7% (91.4%)	92.2% (91.3%)	91.5% (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ²	21.74	21.34	22.76	30.52
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	24.14% (113)	27.43% (135)	31.30% (154)	37.68% (179)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	47	46	53	46
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the Learning Support Centre (if appropriate)	27	23	19	6
No. of newcomers	4	14	17	28
Intake ³ :				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	3.65	18.18	2.50	n/s ⁴
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	9.7	23.37	3.75	n/s
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	58.53	77.92	53.75	n/s
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	59.75	79.22	60.00	n/s
Source: data as held by the school.				

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Very Good
Achievements and Standards	Very Good
Provision	Very Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

¹ The term IFI refers to the International Fund for Ireland

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

³ 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

⁴ KS2 data was not supplied by the contributory primary schools

5. Achievement and Standards

- The pupils are confident, motivated and have a positive disposition to learning. They have a clear sense of pride in their school and their behaviour is exemplary. Through well planned opportunities for teamwork, leadership and mentoring the pupils develop very effective personal and social skills. They display increased self confidence, independence and maturity as they progress through the school and are well-prepared to contribute responsibly to the community and the local and wider economy.
- In public examinations over the past five years, the attainment in five or more examinations in GCSE and equivalent subjects at grades A* to C including GCSE English and mathematics was significantly above the average for non-selective schools.
- Almost all of the pupils take GCSE science (single award science or double award science) and the outcomes are very good.
- The GCSE attainment for the small number of year 12 pupils entitled to free school meals for one out of the last three years was below the Northern Ireland average; the school has identified this as a key area for improvement.
- The percentage of pupils achieving two or more A levels and equivalents at grades A to E is in line with the NI average.
- Most of the pupils with additional learning needs achieve well in their vocational qualifications and progress to further education colleges and training organisations to take up courses in appropriate career pathways.

6. Quality of Provision

- There is a culture of high expectations for all pupils, and they respond positively, engaging with purpose and enthusiasm. Challenging targets for attainment are set, monitored and tracked for individual pupils.
- Planning, teaching and assessment were effective (good and better) at promoting learning in most of the lessons observed.
- In the more effective lessons, the teachers made good use of and built upon the pupils' ideas, interests and prior learning. Learning is set in meaningful contexts and based on well planned and managed activities with high levels of challenge which meet a wide range of abilities. Effective questioning and talking and listening opportunities are used to promote thinking skills and as a springboard for extended writing. Opportunities to connect learning across the curriculum are exploited well; and assessment for learning strategies, including self and peer assessment, are embedded to very good effect.
- In the less effective practice, teaching is not planned well enough and as a result pupils are not clear about the intended learning outcomes; there were fewer opportunities for the pupils to engage actively in learning.

- Literacy is promoted innovatively and effectively through English, as well as across the curriculum. Across the year groups the pupils articulate their ideas and opinions clearly and confidently. The pupils' independent enjoyment of reading is fostered through an extensive range of programmes. They benefit from opportunities to develop written communication skills in meaningful contexts, writing with increasing assurance for a range of purposes and audiences.
- During the inspection there was evidence of the pupils using mathematics accurately and effectively in a minority of subjects, notably in science, to deepen and extend their learning. It will be important for the school to share best practice in, and monitor the provision for, numeracy in order to promote consistency across the curriculum and develop further the pupils' mathematical skills in a range of contexts.
- The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is very good. Key features include: the caring, supportive ethos throughout the school, characterised by the positive relationships between the pupils and teachers; the courteous, well-behaved pupils; the high level of commitment of all the staff to the welfare of the pupils; the strong commitment to inclusion through the development of very good cross-community links; and, the highly effective, innovative transition arrangements for year 8 pupils.
- The curriculum at key stage (KS) 3 and KS4 is broad and balanced and focused on meeting the interests, aspirations and capabilities of all the pupils, including those pupils in the MLU. There is flexibility between the vocational and academic pathways at KS4 with evidence of pupils moving from one to the other. The range of vocational courses has an appropriate focus on STEM⁵ subjects which have been selected to enable progression post-16, and in the longer term to further and higher education and employment.
- The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning achieve well alongside their peers and are integrated fully into the life of the school, both socially and academically. They interact confidently with one another, their teachers and their classroom assistants and benefit from very effective individual and group support.
- The MLU provides a supportive learning environment for those pupils who require additional support in years 8, 9, and 10. By year 11, the pupils choose the most suitable vocational or academic route for their remaining time in school.
- The school has identified accurately the priorities for the development of the special educational needs provision, appropriately recognising the need to involve the pupils and their parents more fully in setting and reviewing learning support targets. It will be important that all teachers set specific, measurable targets within the individual education plans to guide effectively the learning and teaching for pupils with additional learning needs. A sharper focus on the monitoring and evaluation of these pupils' progress needs to inform this work.

⁵ Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

- There is a comprehensive careers programme with appropriate work-based learning opportunities and experiences, which is underpinned by impartial, independent advice and guidance to support pupils in making informed choices about qualifications and career progression pathways. The programme is enhanced by the extensive links the school has cultivated with business and industry. The year 12 pupils participate in mock interviews conducted by industry and business professionals and they obtain constructive feedback on how they can improve their performance and curriculum vitae. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in independent research and they understand what they need to achieve to access their preferred courses.

7. Leadership and management

- There is a clear strategic direction and strong collegiate approach to the school's improvement agenda. The agreed school development plan⁶ draws on effective consultation with governors, parents, staff and the wider school community. Key priorities are appropriately identified with a clear focus on achieving the best possible outcomes for all pupils through quality teaching and learning and high levels of pastoral care.
- The senior leadership team set, share and review realistic objectives and targets to monitor the pupils' progress, and they ensure that the actions to promote improvement are evaluated using a wide range of first-hand evidence.
- Within a culture of encouragement, challenge and support, the leadership and management at all levels support well the achievement of key strategic objectives, promoting effective and innovative strategies to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- The governors are well informed about the life and work of the school. Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the parents, staff and school community can have a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- 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 the Department of Education.
- It will be important that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision, school budget and the KS4 and post-16 provision, in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

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.

⁶ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

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 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 category⁷.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2012	2013	2014
*Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	81.25	56.57	64.29
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category ⁸	62.9	62.9	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	64.06	47.36	42.86
The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category	35.6	35.6	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	98.44	92.10	91.43
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)	44.49	40.00	27.77

Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2011-12 to 2013-14

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

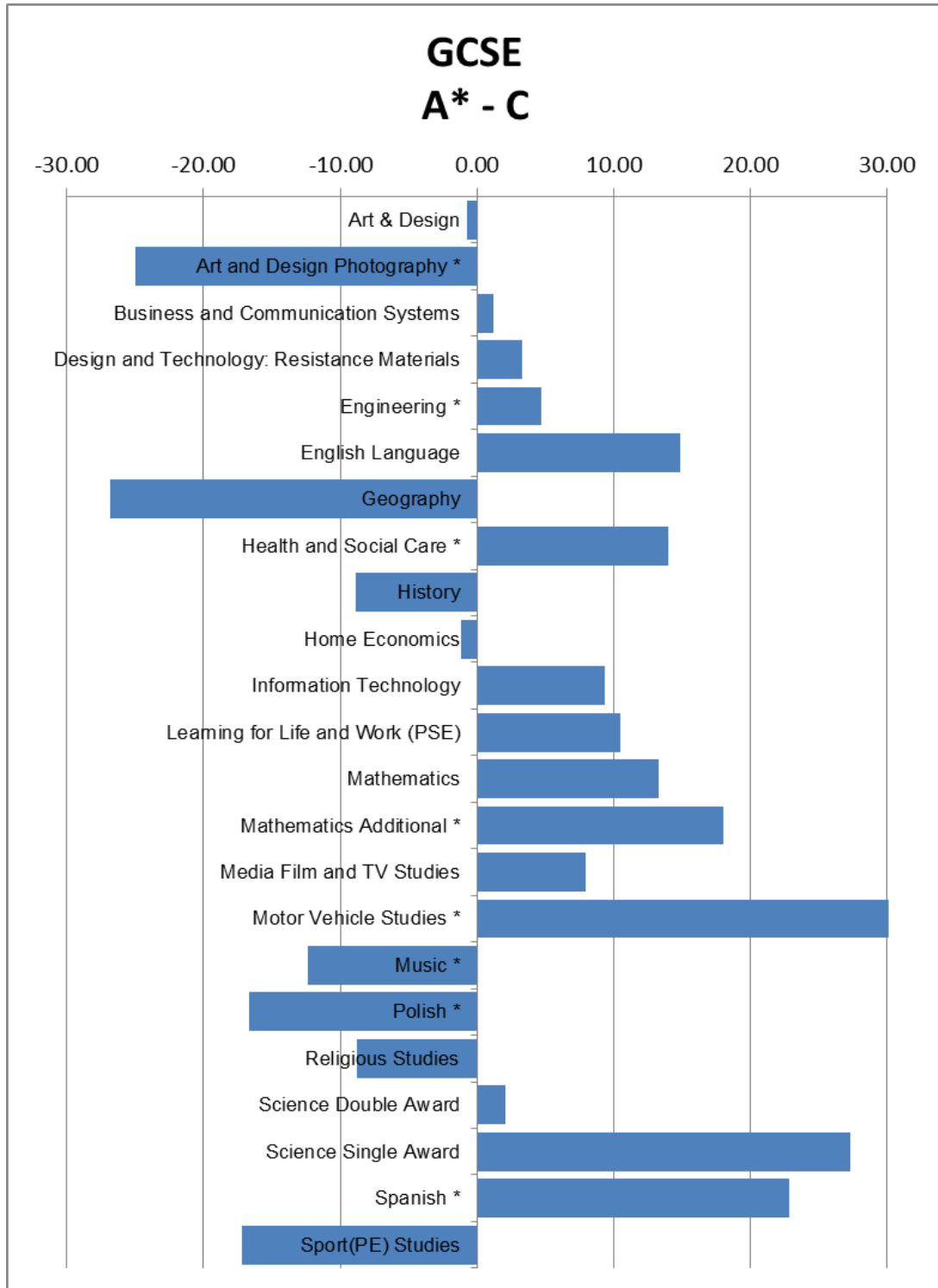
GCSE Subject	2012		2013		2014		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Occupational Studies (design & creativity)	50	100	50	100	44	100	25
Occupational Studies (technology & innovation)	33	100	62	74	56	89	25
ICT	100	100	100	100	0	100	25

⁷ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁸ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE 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 GCSE subject, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in non-selective schools in Northern Ireland. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, comparisons should be treated with caution.



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

GCE A level and equivalent examination results 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 this school achieving three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C, and two or more GCE A levels at grades A* to E.

GCE A Level or equivalent	2012	2013	2014
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalents in at least 3 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels or equivalent	52.17	26.08	38.71
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels or equivalent	95.65	95.65	100

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A* to C from 2011-12 to 2013-14

Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, performance in four GCE subjects (Law, Media, Film and TV Studies, Religious Studies and Sociology) is below the three-year average for pupils in non-selective schools in Northern Ireland. The number of entries in three of the subjects is very low and comparisons should therefore be treated with caution.

Other examination results: post-16

Based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in the school achieving pass, A*-C and A*-E grades in a vocational/applied course equivalent to GCE A level. No average is available from the examining board for the subject in these tables to facilitate comparison.

GCE Subject	2012		2013		2014		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
Health and Social Science	80.00	100	57.14	100	55.56	100	26
Information Technology	59.09	100	50.00	100	61.11	100	52

Level 3	2012	2013	2014	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
OCR National Certificate in Sport	100	100	100	43
EDEXCEL BTEC National subsidiary Diploma (Applied Science)	100	100	100	42

Staying on rate

Based on data held 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 all schools for non-selective schools from school census returns to DE for the most recent year for which data is available.

	NI Average(%)	School(%)
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	52.8	48.75
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	77.6	66.66

Leavers' destinations

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 school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	School	NI	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 3+ (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	72	13498			
Employment	9.7%	8.6%			
Further Education	69.4%	43.7%	14	29	7
Higher Education	5.6%	22.0%			4
Training	12.5%	18.4%			
Unemployed	2.8%	3.9%			
Unknown	0.0%	3.4%			

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