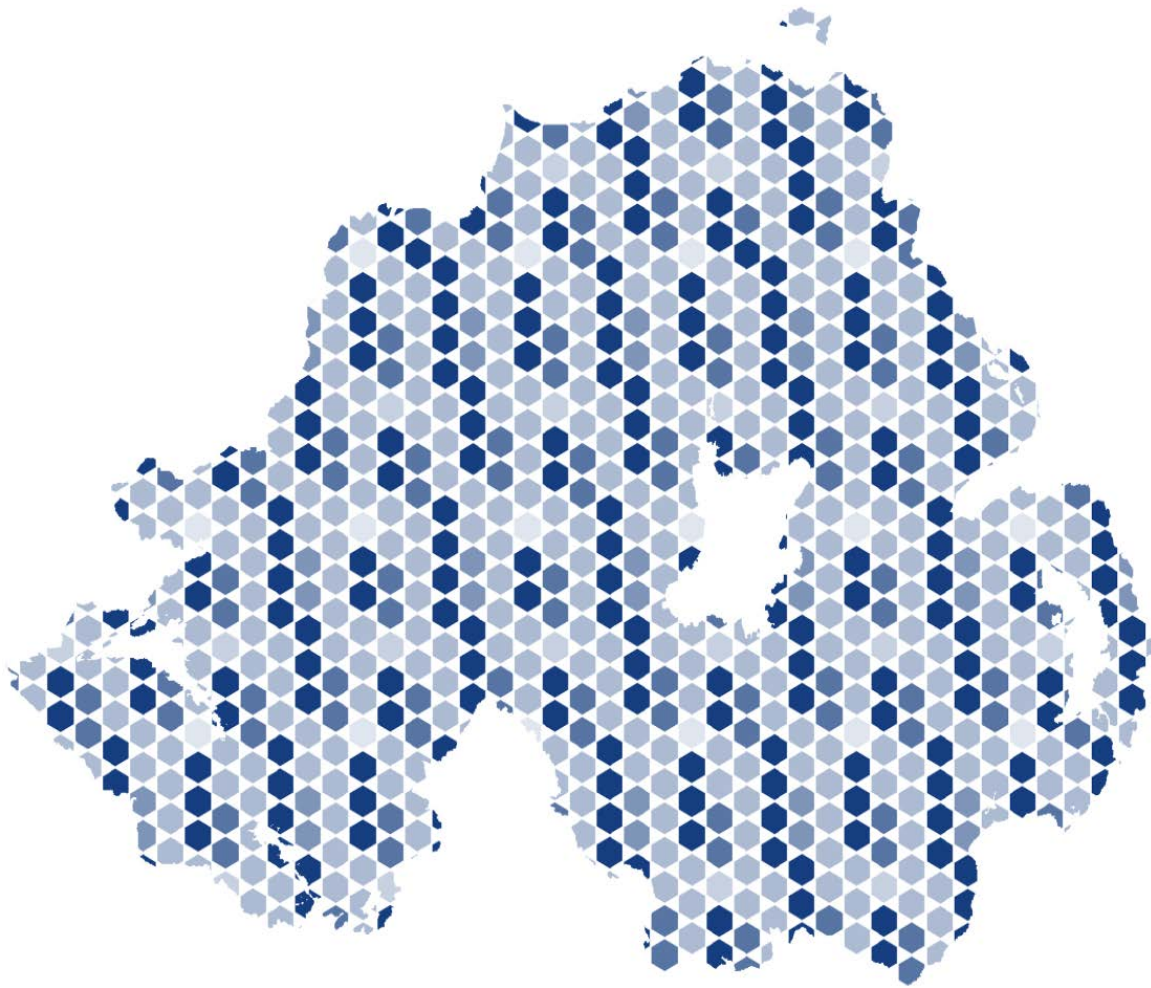


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Omagh Academy

Selective, 11-18, co-educational school

Report of an Inspection
in January 2013



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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	132	65	49	39
Teachers	39	31	80	7
Support Staff	18	9	50	*

* 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 SCHOOL

Enrolment and the ability of the intake in Omagh Academy have remained steady over the past four years. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, while increasing slightly, is low. The school has a sixth form of 197 pupils however, during the inspection the year 12, 13 and 14 pupils were on study leave in preparation for examination.

Omagh Academy	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Year 8 Intake	96	96	89	95
Total Enrolment	660	655	657	675
Attendance (NI Average)	95.7 (92.3)	95.2 (92.3)	95.6 (92.6)	(---)
FSME Percentage	4.2	5.2	5.4	6.5
No. of pupils on SEN register	30	47	35	47
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs	6	7	7	8
No. of newcomers	-	*	-	-
Intake				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	58.33	57.30	69.47	50.53
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	88.54	82.02	85.06	86.32
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	100	97.75	100	97.89
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	100	98.85	100	98.95

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

1.2 FOCUS AND SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of Omagh Academy 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 science provision providing 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 child protection; the provision for pupils requiring additional support with their learning and their inclusion in all aspects of school life; the provision for CEIAG and the progress towards the Entitlement Framework.

1.3. OVERALL FINDING OF THE INSPECTION

1.3.1 In the areas inspected the quality of education provided by the school is good.

Overall Performance Level	Good
Achievements and Standards	Good
Provision for Learning	Good
Leadership and Management	Very Good

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

2.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are good¹.

KEY FINDINGS

The pupils have a positive attitude and the motivation to learn; their personal and social skills are very good. As a result, the pupils engage well with the staff and, when the teacher's expectations are high, the pupils work with confidence. There are very good relationships between the teachers and the pupils which are central to the positive ethos of the school.

From entry to the school, through Key Stage (KS) 4, almost all of the pupils make good progress in their learning across the curriculum. Over the last two years, there has been considerable improvement in the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations.

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 7 subjects	100	100	100
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	90	96	98
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	88	95	96
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	98	100	100
Percentage of FSM entitled school leavers achieving 5 or more GCSEs Grades A*-C or equivalent (including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics)	100	100	100

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

¹ For additional performance data in public examinations, including in vocational subjects, see Appendix 1

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

At General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level, there has been an overall improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving seven or more subjects, at grades A* - C. Importantly, attainment at GCSE when English and mathematics, are included, has also improved. The performance of almost all of the individual GCSE subjects, at grades A* - B, is also within five percentage points of, or above, the corresponding three-year Northern Ireland average.³

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

GCE A Level or equivalent	2010	2011	2012
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & Equivalentents in at least 3 subjects	100	100	100
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	56	64	75
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools in the same FSM category</i>	<i>Well below average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>In line with the average</i>

Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks⁴.

There has been significant improvement over the past 3 years in the proportion of Year 14 pupils attaining at least 3 A levels at grade C or above; achievements are now in line with the average for similar schools. At General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced (A) level, most of the individual subjects are within five percentage points of, or above, the corresponding three-year Northern Ireland average. However, outcomes for the pupils in four of the subjects at A level need to improve significantly.

The school collates, benchmarks and analyses effectively the available examination data in order to inform further improvement. Continuing to raise the standards attained currently by the pupils is a central feature of the school development plan.

While the retention rates are lower than average, most of the pupils who remain in school for A level study progress into higher education.

3. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

3.1 The quality of provision for learning, teaching and assessment is good.

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the provision in English is good; the quality of the provision in mathematics is very good and in science it is also good⁵.

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from outstanding to satisfactory with most of the lessons seen being good or better.

The majority of teachers have appropriately high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and are committed to ensuring that the pupils attain high standards in external examinations. In the best practice, the teachers' planning is thorough and lessons are brisk and well-paced with appropriately time-bound tasks. The teachers adopt a good balance of teaching and

³ See Appendix 1

⁴ DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁵ For detailed findings of the provision in English, mathematics and science, see Appendix 2.

learning strategies and provide an effective review of the pupils' learning. They are good opportunities for the pupils to work well in pairs and small groups. The quality of the resources to support learning and teaching are good, and classrooms are enhanced through the display of the pupils' work.

In the less effective practice, in the minority of lessons seen, assessment for learning is under-developed; there is a lack of effective questioning, peer-review and self evaluation and of suitably-detailed teacher feedback on the pupils' work and progress.

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

KEY FINDINGS

The quality of the pastoral care is very good.

The pupils are friendly, courteous to visitors and well-behaved. In discussions, the pupils reported that they are well aware what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well being. They are confident and articulate and spoke of their appreciation of the care and support provided by their teachers. The pupils report that they value being able to inform and contribute to the continuous development of the school through, for example, the student council, by being as appointed prefects and through the design of the option choices at KS4.

The school's pastoral system promotes and supports effectively the pupils in realising their full potential and is integral to the school's strategy for raising standards.

The very good leadership provided by the vice-principal, and the role of the year heads, supported by the form teachers, is central to the highly supportive, caring ethos of the school. Their thorough knowledge of their pupils enables those who need additional support with their learning to be given timely assistance, which is to good effect.

While there is good collegiality amongst the staff with responsibility for pastoral care, special education needs and careers, the linkages between these elements of care, guidance and support lack cohesion and, consequently, the benefits to the pupils are not maximised.

A well-planned personal development programme for KS3 and KS4 pupils is linked well to the Learning for Life and Work curriculum and provides an effective focus for form period tutorials. The extensive programme of extra-curricular activities enables the pupils to develop important personal, social and employability skills.

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 quality of provision for special educational needs is good.

The pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. They engage well in their learning and are positive about their experiences and the support that they receive from the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO), the classroom assistants and teachers. Pupils with special needs are well integrated into all classes and they are encouraged to develop their independence. The significant minority of pupils on the special needs register, who attend the well-planned additional literacy and maths support sessions, receive very good, targeted support that enhances their skills and confidence.

Good initial assessment identifies the pupils who have a range of behavioural, learning, physical and emotional barriers, so that, with appropriate monitoring, support and communication with parents, they are able to achieve to their full potential. The individual educational plans (IEPs) are detailed, accurately identify each pupil's individual needs, and continue to be refined and developed. All of the teachers are aware of the pupils' individual targets and support them well. To be more effective, the IEPs need to be streamlined with fewer prioritised, achievable and measurable targets. While a range of pupil performance data is available, including end-of-term subject tests, it is not analysed or used well enough to report on how pupils with special needs are achieving compared to other pupils, or to inform target-setting and improvement planning.

The leadership provided by the recently-appointed SENCO, through an inclusive policy, provides for effective links with an appropriate range of external agencies and specialist support organisations. Strategic planning for special needs should be developed further to support the work of the SENCO and to enhance the support for the pupils.

The quality of the provision for careers education, information and guidance is good.

The pupils develop well their skills, knowledge and understanding through the taught programme for employability and careers. The learning activities provide good opportunities for the pupils to consider their aspirations, abilities and interests and the pupils benefit from access to enrichment opportunities such as training in interview skills, participation in work experience and input from guest speakers. Consequently, by the time they leave school, the pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the career options open to them. The school has identified appropriately the need to develop further the provision, including, for example, involving the parents more fully in careers education events and decision-making.

4.3 The curricular provision for the pupils at KS3 and at KS4 is good. The curricular provision for the pupils at sixth form is very good.

KEY FINDINGS

The school is making good progress towards providing a suitably broad and balanced curriculum which addresses the abilities, interests and career aspirations of all of the pupils. The school is meeting the Entitlement Framework requirement at post-16. At KS4, the school development plan (SDP) identifies appropriately the need for increased collaboration at KS4 as a strategic priority and contains targets to ensure that the school will meet the requirements of the Entitlement Framework by 2015. The school is making a good contribution to the development of the Omagh Area Learning Community.

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

4.1 The leadership and the management are very good.

KEY FINDINGS

The Principal provides carefully considered and perceptive leadership based on sound values which prioritise the needs of the pupils. He has a clear strategic vision for the development of the school and, with very good support from knowledgeable and experienced vice-principals, has effectively led the management team and staff through a process of planning, identifying priorities, setting challenging targets, action and self-evaluation, which has resulted in significant improvement in the attainment of the pupils over the last three years.

Despite the impact on morale of recent redundancies, staff maintain a positive attitude with middle managers and those teachers with posts of responsibility willingly taking on additional tasks and some staff teaching subjects beyond their initial specialism in order to sustain effectively the quality of the provision.

The Principal and governors have recently reviewed the senior management team (SMT) structure to enable additional staff to take on management roles and thus build the school's overall leadership capacity.

The SMT and staff have developed good links and partnerships with local schools and with the wider community. The governors are highly committed to the school; they work closely with the Principal to provide clear strategic direction and are very well informed about the life and work of the school. They are very supportive of the Principal, management, teachers and support staff in the school.

5. CONCLUSION

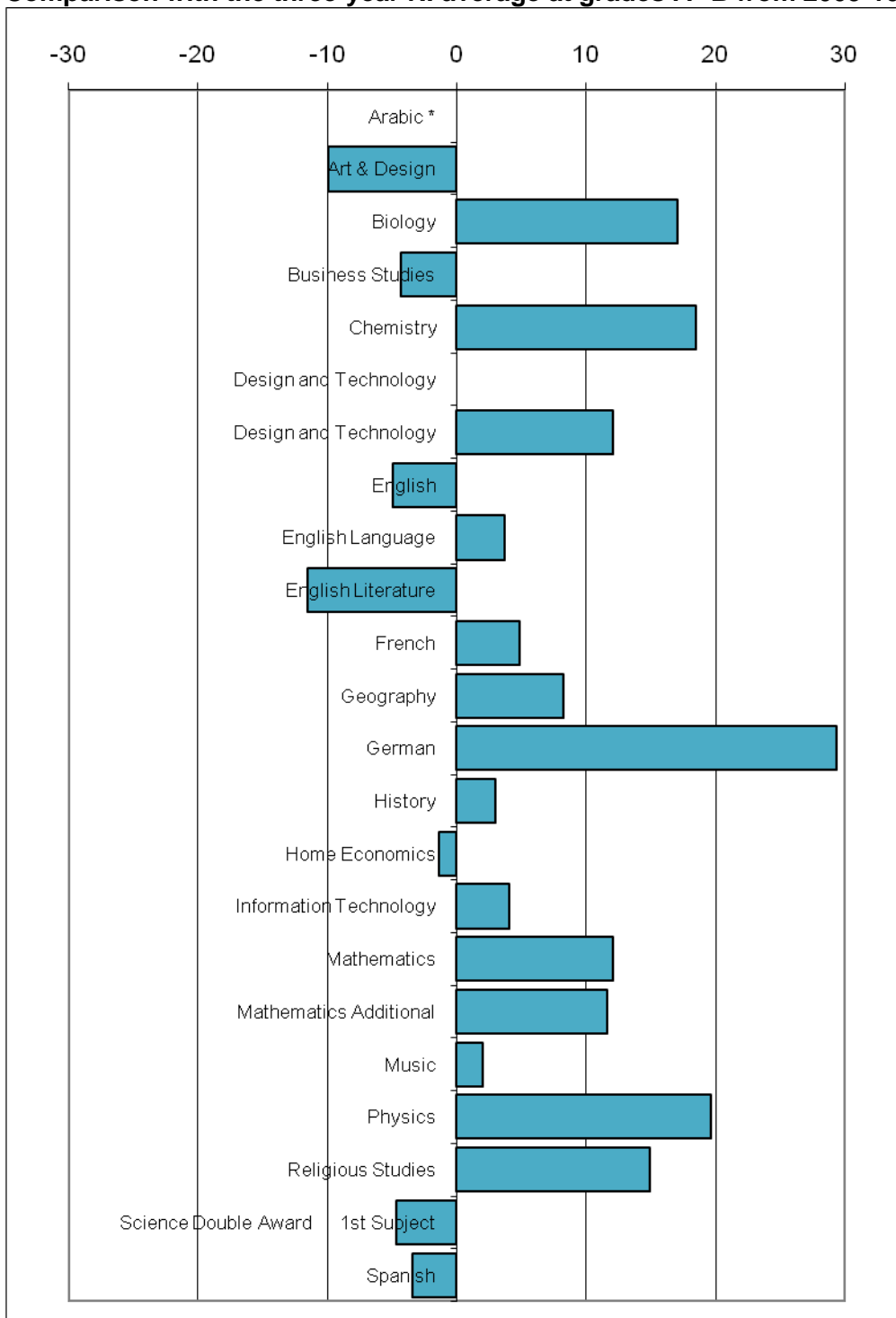
In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is good. The school has important strengths in most of its educational and pastoral provision.

The inspection has identified an area for improvement which the school has demonstrated the capacity to address, which is the need for increased consistency in the quality of teaching and learning, building on existing good practice, with a focus on developing further the pupils' thinking skills and ability to learn independently.

The ETI will monitor the school's progress.

1.1 GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS

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



*total number of entries fewer than 30

OTHER RESULTS: POST-16

Other courses taken in the last three years (All Level 3)

A2 Subject	2010	2011	2012	Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-C	% A*-C	
Applied Business	-	-	100	2
Child Care	100	100	100	5
Construction	100	100	100	3
Engineering	100	100	-	10
Health and Social Care	-	60	100	10
Hospitality	-	-	100	1
Sports Studies	-	-	100	3
Sports Studies Double Award	-	-	50	2

Source: Data as held and verified by the school, with DE benchmarks⁶.

1.3 STAYING ON RATE 2011/2012

(Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	83.7	NI Av. Year 13	95
Year 14	81.9	NI Av. Year 14	90

1.4 LEAVERS DESTINATIONS

2010/11	Year 12	NI %	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	10		86	
Another School	20%	32.5	2%	2.1
Employment	0%	2.4	5%	3.6
Full-time Further Education	80%	50.6	7%	10
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	86%	80.2
Full-time Training	0%	8.4	0%	0.8
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	0%	0%	0%
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	0%	2%	0%

⁶ DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The quality of the provision for English is good.

The strengths of the provision include the:

- very good standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English Language and in A level English Literature;
- very good working relationships in all of the lessons observed;
- strategic analysis and use of data to track the pupils' progress, identify their needs and provide appropriate support;
- very good links and communication between the teachers and the literacy support staff; and
- enthusiastic and effective leadership by the head of department.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- improve further the standards attained by the pupils in GCSE English Literature.

The quality of provision in mathematics is very good.

The strengths of the provision include the:

- strong collegiality within the department and the commitment of the teachers;
- work of the teachers to promote an interest in and enjoyment of mathematics;
- detailed planning which guides the use of effective learning strategies, including collaborative activities in which pupils explain their reasoning;
- good or better quality of teaching in all of the lessons observed;
- very good standards achieved in public examinations; and
- very good leadership and management by the Head of Department.

The quality of the provision for science is good.

The strengths of the provision include the:

- quality of the ethos throughout the department, in particular, the learning environment which has been enhanced effectively through the display of the pupils' work;
- the good relationships between pupils and teachers in all of the lessons observed;

- quality of the teaching observed during the inspection which ranged from satisfactory to very good, in most of the lessons it was good or better;
- range of teaching strategies provided for the pupils, particularly the opportunities provided for them to engage in practical work;
- quality of the self-evaluation conducted by the teachers prior to the inspection; and the
- improvement in the results achieved by the pupils in external examinations over the past three years.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- maintain the improvements in the standards achieved by the pupils in external examinations, particularly at A level.

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