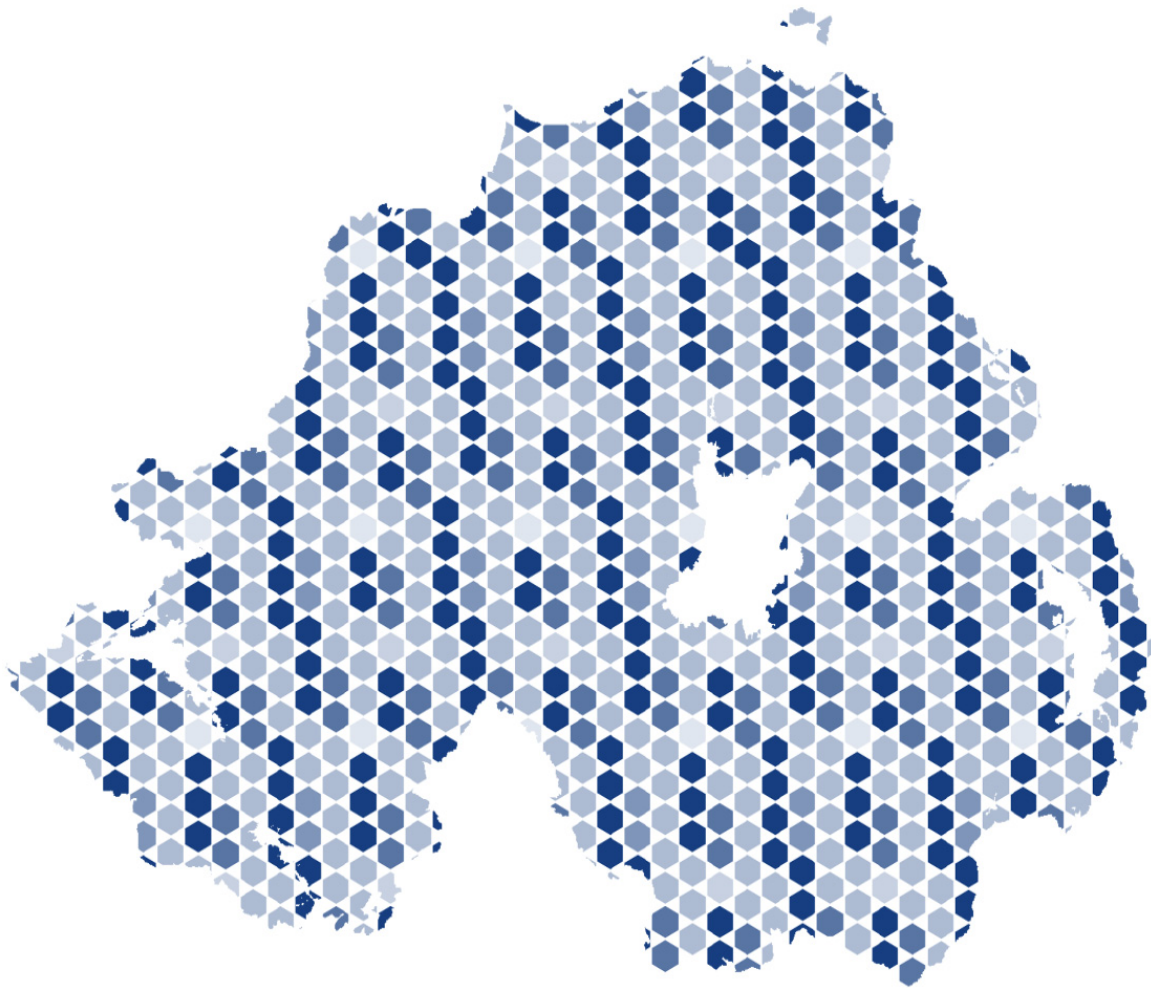


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## St Comhghall's College Lisnaskea

Maintained, non-selective, co-educational 11-18 school

Report of an Inspection  
in January 2012



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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%

In assessing the various features of the provision, Inspectors relate their evaluations to six descriptors as set out below:

DESCRIPTOR
Outstanding
Very Good
Good
Satisfactory
Inadequate
Unsatisfactory

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE REPORT

The term 'similar schools' refers to schools in the same free school meal category, whether they are selective or non-selective, as defined by the Department of Education.

CEIAG	Careers Education Information Advice and Guidance
DE	Department of Education
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
FSM	Free School Meals
GCE A	General Certificate of Education Advanced Levels
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KS	Key stage
NI	Northern Ireland
SDP	School Development Plan
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

## 1. CONTEXT

St Comhghall's College is situated in the town of Lisnaskea, County Fermanagh and the majority of the pupils travel to school from within a six mile radius. Enrolment has increased slightly over the last four years.

St Comhghall's College, Lisnaskea	2008	2009	2010	2011
Enrolment	346	346	376	372
FSM Percentage	29%	33%	36%	38%
% (No) of pupils on SEN register	66	63	65	67
<i>No. of pupils with statements</i>	14	12	16	19
<i>No. of newcomers</i>	7	5	8	10
<b>Intake</b>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	8%	12%	15%	19%
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	5%	14%	21%	29%
% of Y8 pupils with L4 English	39	37	49	44
% of Y8 pupils with L4 mathematics	67%	78%	73%	82%

**Source:** Data as held by the school.

## 2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

### 2.1 In the areas inspected the quality of education provided in this school is very good

2.2 It will be important, however, that the employing authority, school governors and the staff plan for, and manage, issues related to the sustainability of the school provision, and in particular the sixth-form provision in order to address the current and future needs of the pupils and the staff.

## 3. ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### 3.1 The standards achieved by the pupils are very good<sup>1</sup>.

#### KEY FINDINGS

The pupils are well-motivated and demonstrate a positive disposition towards learning. Their behaviour in and outside the classrooms is exemplary, showing a strong commitment to the life and work of the school.

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed results in public examinations, including in vocational subjects, see Appendices 1 and 2.

## Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance

<b>Comparisons based on the FSM percentage</b>	2009	2010	2011
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	69	70	71
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</b>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Significantly above average</b>	<b>Significantly above average</b>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	41	34	42
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</b>	<b>Well above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Well above average</b>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	89	100	95

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

All pupils are entered for GCSE examinations and the standards achieved are very good. In almost half of the subjects, the standards achieved are more than 10% above the three-year NI averages. Overall, the percentage of pupils achieving grade C or above in at least five subjects including English and mathematics has remained consistently well above the NI average for similar schools.

## Data on Year 14 (A2) performance

<b>Comparisons based on FSM percentage</b>	2008	2009	2010
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	55	44	48
<b>Comparison with the NI average for all schools</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	100	100
<b>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>	<b>Above average</b>

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

At GCE A level the majority of pupils are achieving above the NI average. A significant minority of pupils take applied subjects offered at GCE and achieve very good standards. There is a need for further collaboration with the FLC to ensure that the pupils are able to access their desired courses. In some subjects the number of pupils falls below that which is educationally sustainable.

## 4. PROVISION FOR LEARNING

### 4.1 The quality of provision for learning is very good.

#### KEY FINDINGS

**The provision for English is good; in mathematics it is very good and in science it is outstanding.**

The overall quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was good; most were good or better. Nearly all of the lessons observed began with a clear outline of the planned learning outcomes and, in the best practice, the lessons were managed effectively to ensure adequate time to see if these outcomes had been achieved.

When given the opportunity the pupils worked well in pairs and small groups. They engaged in learning activity with enthusiasm and some made worthwhile oral responses. In the good or better lessons previous learning was built upon and the needs of the individual pupils were recognised and met. Older pupils understood and could articulate their learning targets and how best to achieve them. In a minority of lessons, however, the pupils spent too much time transcribing the expected outcomes and the lessons were not managed appropriately to allow time for the consolidation and reinforcement of the learning.

The teachers have identified appropriately the need to develop further the strategies for making more effective use of questioning for assessing the pupils' knowledge and understanding and to develop their communication skills.

Despite a focus by the teachers on promoting assessment for learning and, in particular, marking for improvement, there is evidence that in a significant minority of the lessons observed they do not have a shared understanding of this approach.

The school has made a significant investment in ICT to support learning and teaching; the quality of the provision is very good. A particular feature is the development of an online environment where teachers place learning support materials which pupils can access from home or from the many computers around the school.

#### **The quality of provision for SEN is very good.**

The pupils with a range of challenging SEN and additional needs make very good progress. Through effective assessment of the pupils' needs, early identification of the type of support required and good quality intervention for each individual, the pupils achieve their potential. Many achieve good standards in GCSE.

#### **4.2 The quality of the care, guidance and support of pupils is very good**

##### **KEY FINDINGS**

The pupils have very good working relationships with their teachers and value highly the additional support with their learning, which they receive during and after school. The pupils benefit from and enjoy a very good range of both social and academic extra-curricular activities. The year 8 pupils spoke enthusiastically of the Extended Schools summer induction programme, which helped them to make new friendships and to get to know their teachers.

During the inspection, the pupils demonstrated exemplary behaviour and the senior pupils, in their mentoring roles, provide very good models for the younger pupils. The senior pupils are confident and mature in their engagement with others; they feel valued by their teachers and state that they are involved well in making decisions which benefit their experience of school.

The school has effective strategies in place to improve pupil attendance; the figure has risen in recent years to above the average for non-selective schools.

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

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all of the pupils at KS3.

At KS4 the school is working towards meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework for the pupils. Links have been made with the local college of further and higher education college with a view to providing the pupils with a range of vocational courses. These links, however, are being reviewed by the school to ensure that the pupils attending these courses receive a consistently high quality of learning and teaching. Whilst the school has made good attempts to form effective collaborative curricular links with other schools in Fermanagh these are, as yet, underdeveloped.

At post-16 the numbers of pupils enrolled has increased in recent years. The school is providing an increasing range of applied and general qualifications; whilst the school is working towards meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Curriculum for the post-16 pupils the numbers of pupils in some subjects are too low.

#### **The provision for CEIAG is very good.**

The pupils benefit from good quality work placements which result from effective links with a wide-range of external agencies and local employers, including those that provide a particular emphasis on STEM careers. The pupils speak highly of the very good support from the teachers at key transition periods. A detailed scheme of work and annual action plan are linked appropriately to the SDP; the school should further develop the pupils' personal career plans through the online environment. Good links exist between the Learning for Life and work teachers and the careers department which help promote and develop careers within and across departments.

## **5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.1 The leadership and the management are very good**

#### **KEY FINDINGS**

The Principal has been in post for 5 years and from the beginning has provided outstanding leadership driving the school forward with much success. He leads by example and sets a high standard for the other leaders within the school. He has promoted a culture of self-evaluation at all levels of management which has led to a marked improvement in external examination results. Whilst a number of senior and middle managers are recent appointments, their work is having a positive impact on the areas for which they have responsibility. The newly-appointed vice-principal is highly committed to the work and life of the school. He ably supports the principal in all aspects of the day-to-day running of the school. The overall quality of leadership and management throughout the school is very good.

There is a clear and coherent SDP which meets the requirements of the School Development Plan Regulations (NI) 2010). The very detailed plan was created through appropriate consultation with key stakeholders, including parents and pupils; it identifies accurately the strengths of the school and appropriate areas for further development. The

targets for improvement have been informed by the effective use of a wide range of data. The quality of the self-evaluation conducted by the HoDs and the other senior staff within the school is very good; the evaluations are based on a good range of evidence and show that a thorough and honest approach has been taken.

The Board of Governors are well-informed about the life and work of the school and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of improvement.

The school has very good comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding children. These arrangements reflect the guidance issues by the Department of Education.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

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 children, and has demonstrated its capacity for sustained self-improvement.



## STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: St Comhghall's College  
 ii. School Reference Number: 223-0190  
 iii. Age Range: 11-18  
 iv. Status: Catholic Maintained  
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 16/01/12  
 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection

1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Year 8 Intake	45	56	47	65	57
Total enrolment	289	346	346	376	372

1.3 Attendance

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2010/11	NI Average 2009/10
% Attendance	96.6	95.7	95.5	94.8	94.9	95.7	96.9	96	91

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 28.556      iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.895
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 13.027

Year 2011/12	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	18	27	17	26	29	21	10	148
Enrolment: Girls	39	35	32	36	22	39	21	224
Enrolment: Total	57	62	49	62	51	60	31	372
PTR	11.712	12.121	13.156	14.602	13.251	15.589	10.67	

- 1.5 Staying On Rate (2009/10) (Current year 13/14 as proportion of year 12 from 1/2 years previously)

Year 13	92.7	NI Av Year 13	47.4
Year 14	90.0	NI Av Year 14	34.5

1.6 Leavers' Destinations

2009/10	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	11		39	
Another School	0%	14.8	3%	2.4
Employment	100%	5.2	0%	12.3
Full-time Further Education	0%	47.5	3%	28
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	79%	42.5
Full-time Training	0%	25.1	5%	5.1
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	3.6	8%	5.8
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	3.8	3%	3.9

TABLE1: GCSE EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS

## HEADLINE STANDARDS

**NB:** The NI average for all non-selective schools of pupils obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics in 2010 is 34.9%.

The corresponding NI average for pupils achieving five or more GCSEs or equivalent at grades A\* to C is 59%.

<b>Comparisons based on FSM Band 3</b>	2009	2010	2011
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	69	70	71
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Significantly above average</i>	<i>Significantly above average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	41	34	42
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Well above average</i>
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	89	100	95

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

**TABLE 2** shows the **3 year average performance of each individual subject at GCSE Grades A\*-C**, compared with the corresponding Northern Ireland average.



### TABLE 3: GCE (A2) EXAMINATION RESULTS FOR NON-SELECTIVE SCHOOLS

#### HEADLINE STANDARDS

**NB:** The NI averages in 2010 for all schools of pupils entered for A2 level or equivalent: who achieve:

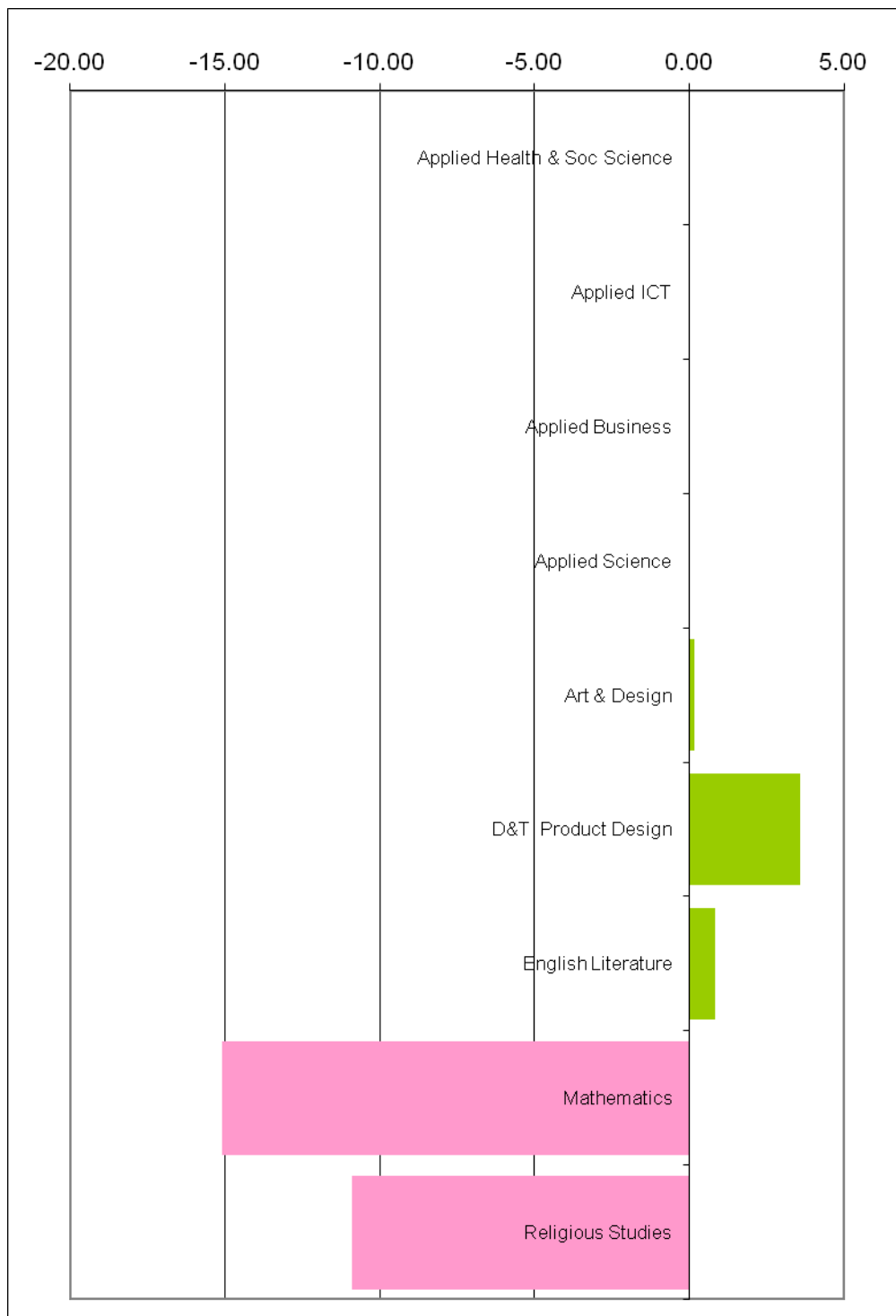
3 or more grades A\*-C = 42.7%

2 or more grades A\*-E = 94.7%

<b>Comparisons based on NI average and on FSM Band 3</b>	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A2 levels	55	44	48
<i>Comparison with the NI average for all schools</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	100	100	100
<i>Comparison with the NI average for similar schools</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Above average</i>

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

**TABLE 4** shows the **3 year average performance of each individual subject at GCE 'A' Level Grades A\*-E**, compared with the corresponding NI average.



## OTHER RESULTS

Occupational Studies	2009		2010		2011	
	Number of Pupils	%Pass	Number of Pupils	%Pass	Number of Pupils	%Pass
Level 1	37	27%	50	36%	31	45%
Level 2		65%		42%		42%

## Applied General Certificate of Education A Level

Subject	2009		2010		2011		Total entry over 3 years
	%A*-C	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-E	
Business Studies	90%	90%	83%	100%	87.5%	100%	50
Health and Social Science	60%	100%	67%	100%	100%	100%	15
Information Technology	100%	100%	93%	100%	83%	100%	25
Science (Double Award)	80%	100%	83%	100%	70.5%	100%	38
Science (Single Award)			90%	100%	33%	100%	13 (2Yrs)
Travel & Tourism			57%	86%	75%	100%	11 (2Yrs)
Religious Education	20%	100%	33%	87%	-	-	25 (2Yrs)

**SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE AREAS UNDER FOCUS**

**The quality of provision in mathematics is very good**

The main strengths of the mathematics provision are the:

- high levels of individual support provided for the pupils in the lessons observed;
- hard-work and commitment of the teachers;
- good or better quality of teaching in almost all of the lessons observed;
- good standards achieved in GCSE examinations;
- very good leadership and management of mathematics, including the self-evaluation practices; and
- the range of activities being used to promote mathematics.

**The quality of provision in English is good.**

The main strengths of the English provision include the:

- good examination outcomes achieved by the pupils in GCSE English;
- pupils' positive dispositions to learning and the very good working relationships in all of the lessons observed;
- good quality of the pupils' learning experiences, supported by the department's revised planning and the use of digital resources;
- quality of the teaching observed, most of which was good or better;
- highly effective leadership provided by the Head of English and the use made of self-evaluation to inform the work of the department in the interests of raising standards further for the pupils; and
- the emphasis placed on improving literacy across the school and on improving reading standards in particular.

**The area for improvement is:**

- the need to develop further an appropriate range of strategies to support differentiated learning, in order to raise standards further.

**The quality of the provision for science is outstanding.**

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 and in the use of ICT to support learning;
- hard working teachers who are committed to ensuring the pupils achieve high standards;
- outstanding leadership and management provided by the head of department; and
- the outstanding results achieved by the pupils in external examinations



## SCOPE AND METHOD OF THE INSPECTION

The standard inspection of St Comhghall's College focused on achievements and standards, learning and teaching, curriculum provision and on leadership and management across the school as a whole. The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in these three aspects 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> The evaluation, based on the quality indicators, enabled ETI to make a judgement about the public value provided by the school.

Inspectors scrutinised documentation and the pupils' written work and held formal and informal discussions with pupils, teachers and staff with specific responsibilities. Specialist inspectors paid particular attention to English, mathematics and science providing detailed oral feedback to the teachers in these areas. Detailed findings are reported in Annex 3.

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, on CEAIG and on progress towards the Entitlement Framework.

The arrangements for the inspection included:

- the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire to the inspection;
- meetings with representatives from the governors;
- meetings with groups of pupils from years 8, 10, 12, 13 and 14.

Questionnaire	Number issued	Number returned	Percentage returned	Number with comments
Parents	126	40	31.7	21
Teachers	28	22	80	7
Support Staff	25	12	48	*

**Source:** Returns from questionnaires to Inspection Services Branch at DE \* = fewer than 5

The returns from questionnaires sent to the teachers and the parents were positive in all respects; ETI reported the comments to the Principal and representatives of the governors.

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