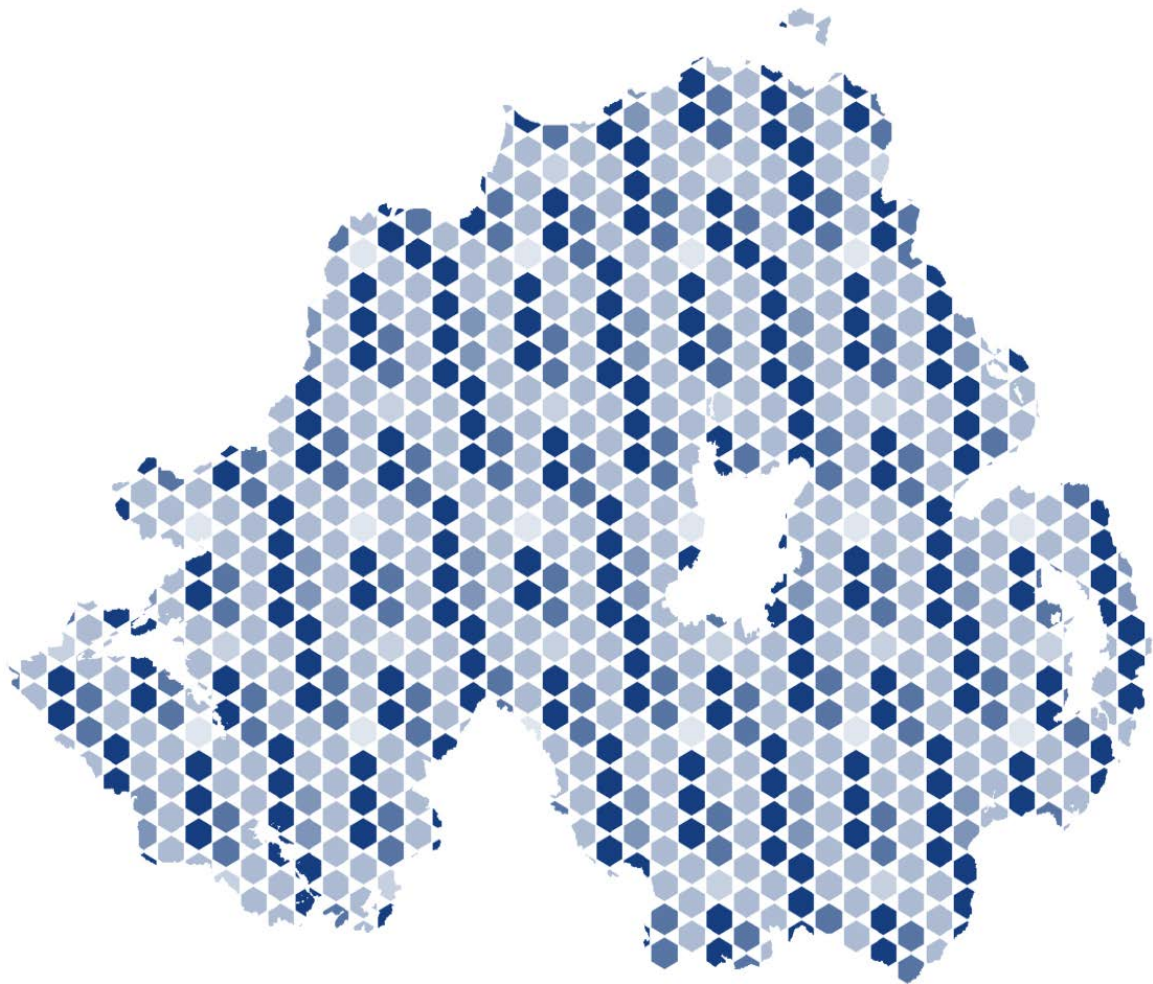


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

Bangor Academy and Sixth
Form College, County Down

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

Report of an Inspection in
September 2016



Providing inspection services for:

Department of Education
Department for the Economy
and other commissioning Departments



Quantitative terms used by the Education and Training Inspectorate

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 when reporting on Achievement and standards, on Provision for learning and on Leadership and management:

Outstanding
Very good
Good
Important area(s) for improvement
Requires significant improvement
Requires urgent improvement

Overall effectiveness

The ETI use one of the following inspection outcomes when evaluating the overall effectiveness of the school:

The school has a high level of capacity for sustained improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school demonstrates the capacity to identify and bring about improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor how the school sustains improvement.
The school needs to address (an) important area(s) for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the area(s) for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.
The school needs to address urgently the significant areas for improvement identified in the interest of all learners. It requires external support to do so. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement. There will be a formal follow-up inspection.

Contents

Section	Page
1. Inspection method and evidence base	1
2. Focus of inspection	1
3. Context	1
4. Overall findings of the inspection	2
5. Achievements and standards	2
6. Provision for learning	3
7. Leadership and management	5
8. Overall effectiveness	6
Appendix on trends in examination performance and other statistical data	

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 learning and teaching, 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.

Eight percent of parents (105) and 64% of staff (77) responded to the questionnaires. Almost all of the staff responses were strongly affirmative of the approachable senior leadership team, the supportive ethos throughout the school and the opportunities provided for their own professional development. Almost all of the parents commented positively on the school's leadership, the enthusiastic and helpful staff, the induction process for new pupils and the school's reputation in the community. A small number of concerns were raised and these were discussed (maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents) with the governors and senior leaders.

2. Focus of inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of inspection is, through 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.

In addition to the focus on English/literacy and mathematics/numeracy, there was a supplementary subject focus on technology and design in this inspection.

3. Context

Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College is a co-educational, non-selective school providing for pupils aged from 11 to 18 years of age. It is located close to the town centre and draws its pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and from more than 25 primary schools in Bangor and the wider North Down area. The school is over-subscribed for entry to year 8 and enrolment has risen to around 1500 pupils, due largely to increasing numbers in the sixth form. Bangor Academy participates in a Shared Education programme with a local maintained school and a voluntary grammar school, and is developing links with a local special school. The senior leadership team has been re-structured and extended significantly over the past two years.

Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Year 8 Intake	231	247	249	248
Enrolment	1464	1448	1483	1501
% Attendance (NI Average)	91.1% (92%)	90.7% (92%)	90.2% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage ¹	17.21%	25.90%	29.13%	25.25%
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	25.61% (375)	31.49% (456)	32.70% (485)	14.46% (217)
No. of pupils with statements of educational need in the mainstream school	26	21	29	29
No. of newcomers	13	5	6	9

Source: data as held by the school.
N/A not available

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall effectiveness	Important areas for improvement
Achievements and standards	Important areas for improvement
Provision for learning	Important areas for improvement
Leadership and management	Good

5. Achievement and standards

- Most of the pupils are keen to learn and engage readily in their lessons. They respond respectfully to staff and to one another. In a majority of the lessons observed, they worked well independently and with others, taking responsibility for their own learning. The pupils' oral communication and thinking skills are not developed consistently well enough across the curriculum.
- The standards attained by the pupils in English are an important area for improvement. While the percentage of pupils achieving grades A* to C in GCSE English has increased over the past three years, it remains below the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. The school has revised appropriately its entry policy for GCSE English literature, which was over ambitious and contributed to the low levels of attainment in this subject. The small numbers of pupils entered for GCE A level English literature attain standards which are significantly below the NI average.
- The standards attained by the pupils in GCSE mathematics are also an important area for improvement. Their attainment at grades A* to C is below the corresponding average in two of the past three years. Most of the pupils are motivated, engage actively in learning mathematics and the standard of work in their books is of a good quality. The school has appropriately introduced GCSE further mathematics and GCE A level mathematics to the curriculum.

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

- The standards attained by the pupils in technology and design require significant improvement. The outcomes at grades A* to C at GCSE level are well below the corresponding NI average. The proportion of pupils attaining at grades A* to C in GCE A level is also well below the corresponding average. The senior leaders in the school are working to address the low standards attained by the pupils in this subject and, consequently, the department has revised the schemes of work at key stage (KS) 3 and is currently reviewing the entry criteria to post-16 study.
- Over the past three years, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A*-C has fallen slightly, from 73% to 68%, and is now below the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band.
- Over the same period, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE qualifications or equivalent at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, has risen, but remains well below the NI average. The standards attained by the small number of pupils entitled to free schools meals have fluctuated and are currently below the NI average for non-selective schools.
- While there is evidence of improvement in the pupils' attainment in around one-half of the GCSE subjects at grades A* to C, a majority of the subjects are performing below the corresponding three-year average for similar schools; around two-fifths of the subjects are more than 10 percentage points below the subject average.
- The outcomes achieved by the pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are an important area for improvement. The school does not yet have robust systems to monitor the progress of individual pupils and ensure that they attain standards which are in line with their ability.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels, or equivalent, at grades A* to C has increased from 31% to 54%, which is now above the average for non-selective schools.
- The high attainment by the large numbers of pupils in an appropriately wide range of vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 is a significant strength of the work of the school.
- The proportion of year 14 pupils progressing to higher and further education is well above the NI average. This high proportion is underpinned by the school's retention of pupils between year 13 and year 14 which is also well above the average for similar schools.

6. Provision for learning

- There is too much variation in the quality of the learning and teaching experiences provided for the pupils. Three-quarters of the lessons observed were good or very good and promoted and progressed the pupils' learning. Key features of this effective practice include the: teachers' high expectations for what the pupils can achieve; well-resourced learning activities which engage, challenge and motivate the pupils; and development of the pupils' thinking skills. In these lessons, the well-planned opportunities for the pupils to consider and improve their oral and written responses reflect the whole-school focus on high-quality feedback to improve learning and attainment.

- One-quarter of the lessons had important areas for improvement. In these lessons, the lack of differentiation in the planning means that the activities are not tailored sufficiently to meet the needs of all the pupils. Over-direction by the teachers limits the pupils' responses, leading to disengagement and passivity. The school needs to disseminate better the most effective practice in order to provide the pupils with more consistent learning and teaching experiences across the curriculum.
- The promotion of the pupils' literacy skills across the school has been identified appropriately as a priority and all staff have benefited from well-focused staff development in literacy. There are useful opportunities for senior pupils to support the junior pupils, along with children in neighbouring primary schools, as reading partners. The school has prioritised marking for improvement as an initiative to develop further the pupils' literacy skills; accordingly, the school needs to monitor rigorously this initiative to ensure that it is implemented consistently and that it impacts on the standards attained by the pupils.
- Numeracy is notable in displays across the school, in the pupils' participation in mathematical competitions and in specific enrichment events. However, opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills accurately and effectively during well-planned and subject-specific tasks are not offered consistently enough across the subjects.
- The provision for learning in English is good. Almost one-half of the lessons observed were effective (good), with a significant minority being very good in promoting the pupils' learning. In the most effective practice, the teachers: establish very good working relationships with the pupils, based on mutual respect; elicit reasoned and extended responses from the pupils through effective questioning; and adopt a range of strategies, including the adept use of information and communication technology (ICT), to enhance the pupils' learning. In one-quarter of the lessons there were important areas for improvement. In this less effective practice, the pupils are unduly passive and the low level of challenge fails to engage them sufficiently in their learning.
- The provision for learning in mathematics is good. Most (86%) of the teaching observed was good, with just over two-fifths of the lessons being very good. In these lessons, there is a suitable structure with clear learning intentions, engaging starter activities, reviews of previous learning and well-planned assessment strategies to progress the pupils' learning. In addition, there are opportunities for the pupils to work collaboratively to discuss, reason, solve problems and explain fully their mathematical thinking.
- The provision for learning in technology and design requires significant improvement. In the good or better practice, in around one-third of the lessons observed, the pupils engage in appropriate paired and group work and the teachers use to good effect a range of questions to promote the pupils' thinking and problem-solving skills. In a majority of the lessons observed, however, there were important areas for improvement. In these lessons, the pace and level of challenge are too low to engage the pupils adequately in purposeful learning. The teachers' planning does not take sufficient account of the range of abilities within the class; consequently, the learning activities do not meet the needs of all the pupils.

- The provision for the care and support of the pupils is good. The school has introduced programmes to empower and support pupils socially and emotionally, including an effective anti-bullying initiative led by senior pupils. There are effective arrangements to ensure the well-being and inclusion of vulnerable pupils who run the risk of being marginalised, including the appointment of a specific pastoral team member who also has responsibility for the small number of pupils currently in Education Other Than At School provision.
- There is effective withdrawal and additional support for pupils who require additional help in aspects of their learning. The special educational needs register is regularly reviewed to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress following programmes of targeted intervention and support. In the mainstream classes, the individual education plans are not used consistently to inform planning and to develop strategies for supporting individual pupils in their learning. The school development plan articulates appropriately the need to develop further this aspect of the whole-school approach to implementing the pupils' individual education plans.
- The curriculum at KS 3 has appropriate breadth and balance. At KS 4 and KS 5, there is a balanced, coherent curriculum with a range of appropriate pathways and many opportunities for progression when the pupils leave school at year 12 or year 14. The school has reviewed the entry policy to sixth form and offers a relevant post-16 curriculum. A well-established partnership exists with the local further education college, and the school is an active member of the area learning community. The ongoing review of the curriculum is informed well by an in-depth knowledge of the local labour market and the currency of qualifications. The senior leaders monitor closely the recent adjustments to the curriculum as the needs and abilities of cohorts of pupils change.
- Through a discrete and highly effective programme of careers education, information and guidance (CEIAG) which is delivered progressively across all year groups. Consequently, most of the pupils have a good understanding of the career options and pathways available to them. The pupils in KS 4 and KS 5 access relevant work experience matched to their career aspirations. They benefit from partnerships with industry, further education and the universities which enhance their knowledge of employment and educational opportunities beyond school. A notable strength is the detailed analysis of leaver destinations which informs curricular planning. While a start has been made to mapping careers education, information and guidance across departments, the specific and consistent contribution of individual subjects to the pupils' careers education is an area for further development.

7. Leadership and management

- Through a rigorous process of monitoring and evaluation, informed well by extensive consultation with pupils, parents, governors and staff, the senior leaders have identified appropriate priorities for school improvement. These priorities are clearly outlined in a well-conceived school development plan which underpins the staff development and review programmes.

- While ongoing improvement work is evident in key areas of the provision, the quality of the associated action planning is inconsistent. In the less effective action plans, there are too many targets and the success criteria are not specific enough. As a consequence, it will be difficult to measure accurately the progress made against the key targets.
- The constitution of the senior leadership team (SLT) has changed significantly over the past two years. This process has resulted in a strategic re-structuring of roles and responsibilities; this has resulted in, importantly, stronger links between members of the SLT and subject departments, and more effective monitoring of the provision. The members of the SLT articulate a shared vision for school improvement. They work collegially to support the improvement work across the school and within their respective areas of responsibility.
- A majority of the middle leaders provide effective leadership in their discrete areas of curricular or pastoral responsibility. However, more work needs to be done at this level, as recognised by the SLT, to build the capacity of all middle leaders to: monitor the provision; use data to plan and set realistic targets; increase the consistency in learning and teaching; and raise the standards attained by the pupils.
- Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI's evaluation is that there can be a high level of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated. The governors are well informed about the priorities for school improvement. They are actively involved in making key decisions and supporting and challenging the senior leaders as appropriate.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding the pupils are comprehensive and reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils reported that they feel safe and secure in school. They know who to speak to if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

8. Overall effectiveness

The school needs to address important areas for improvement in the interest of all the learners. The ETI will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement, which include the need to:

- address the variation in the standards attained by the pupils;
- raise the standards in English, and the overall provision in mathematics and design and technology; and
- disseminate the most effective practice in learning and teaching in order to provide the pupils with learning experiences across the curriculum which are matched more closely to their needs, abilities and aspirations.

There will be a formal follow-up inspection in 12 to 18 months.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS² and verified with the ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Bangor Academy achieving five or more GCSE examinations and equivalent at grades A* to C and grades A*-E, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals with the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals category³.

GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
*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	72.65%	71.43%	68.33%
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁴</i>	<i>68.3%</i>	<i>75.7%</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	28.70%	37.79%	33.48%
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>42.9%</i>	<i>51.7%</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	92.83%	94.01%	88.69%
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)	23.33%	35.38 %	17.65%

² SIMS: School Information Management System

³ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁴ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the DE Circular 2011/03: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

Other examination results at key stage 4 from 2013-14 to 2015-16

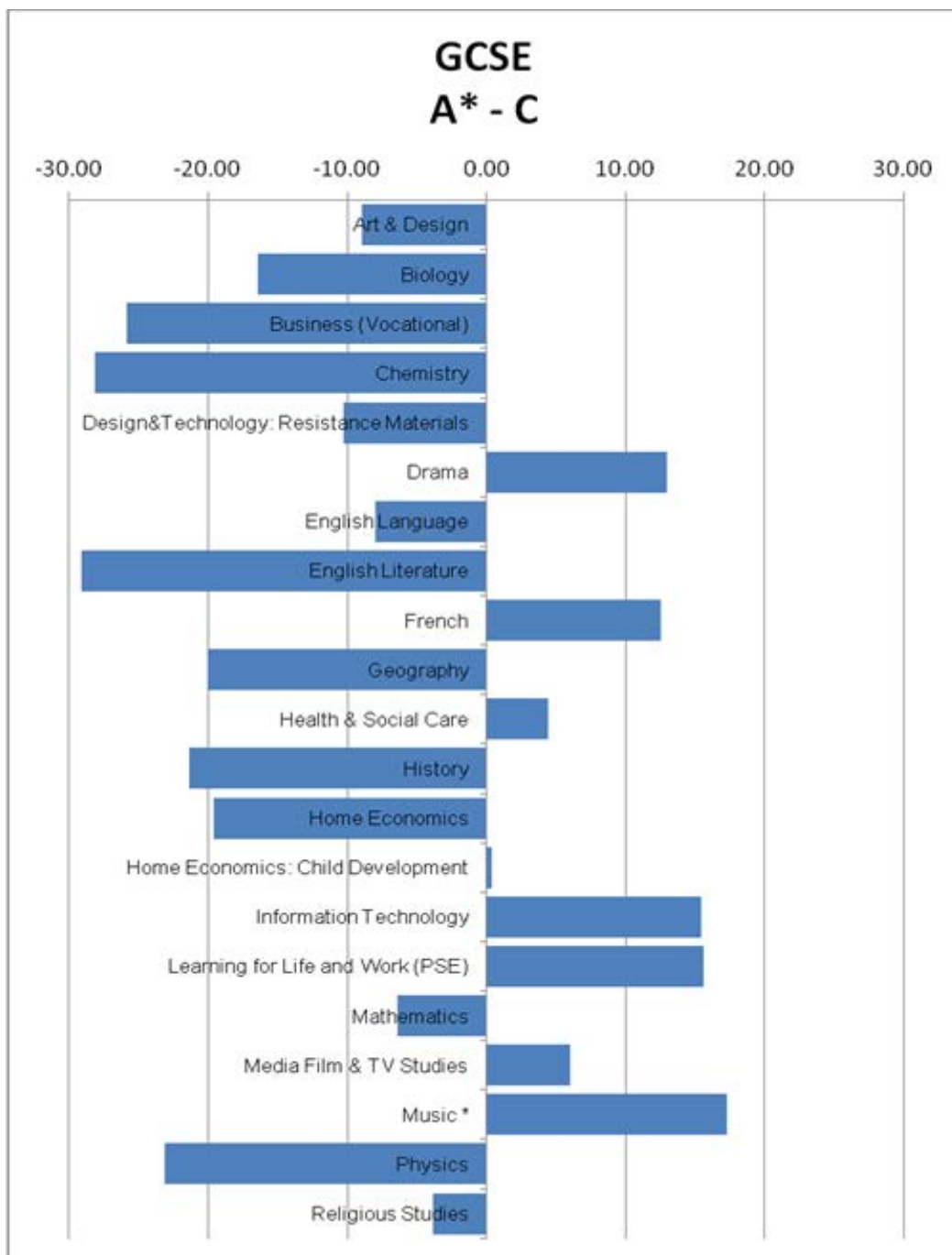
Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 12 pupils in this school achieving grades A* to C in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCSE level. No average is available from the examining board(s) for the subjects in this table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

Level 2 BTEC	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-C	% A*-C	
Engineering Extended Certificate	100	97.5	100	112
Science Extended Certificate	100	100	100	205
Sport Extended Certificate	100	100	100	158
Science Certificate	100	100	100	88
Sport Certificate	100	100	100	19
Business Certificate	100	100	100	36

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to C from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of year 12 pupils achieving at GCSE level at grades A* to C in individual subjects in Bangor Academy is compared with the three-year NI average for similar pupils. 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 between subjects should be treated with caution.

Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A* to C



*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Bangor Academy 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	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
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	30.95%	49.09%	53.54%
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 2 A2 levels	79.37%	99.09%	92.91%

Other examination results: Post-16

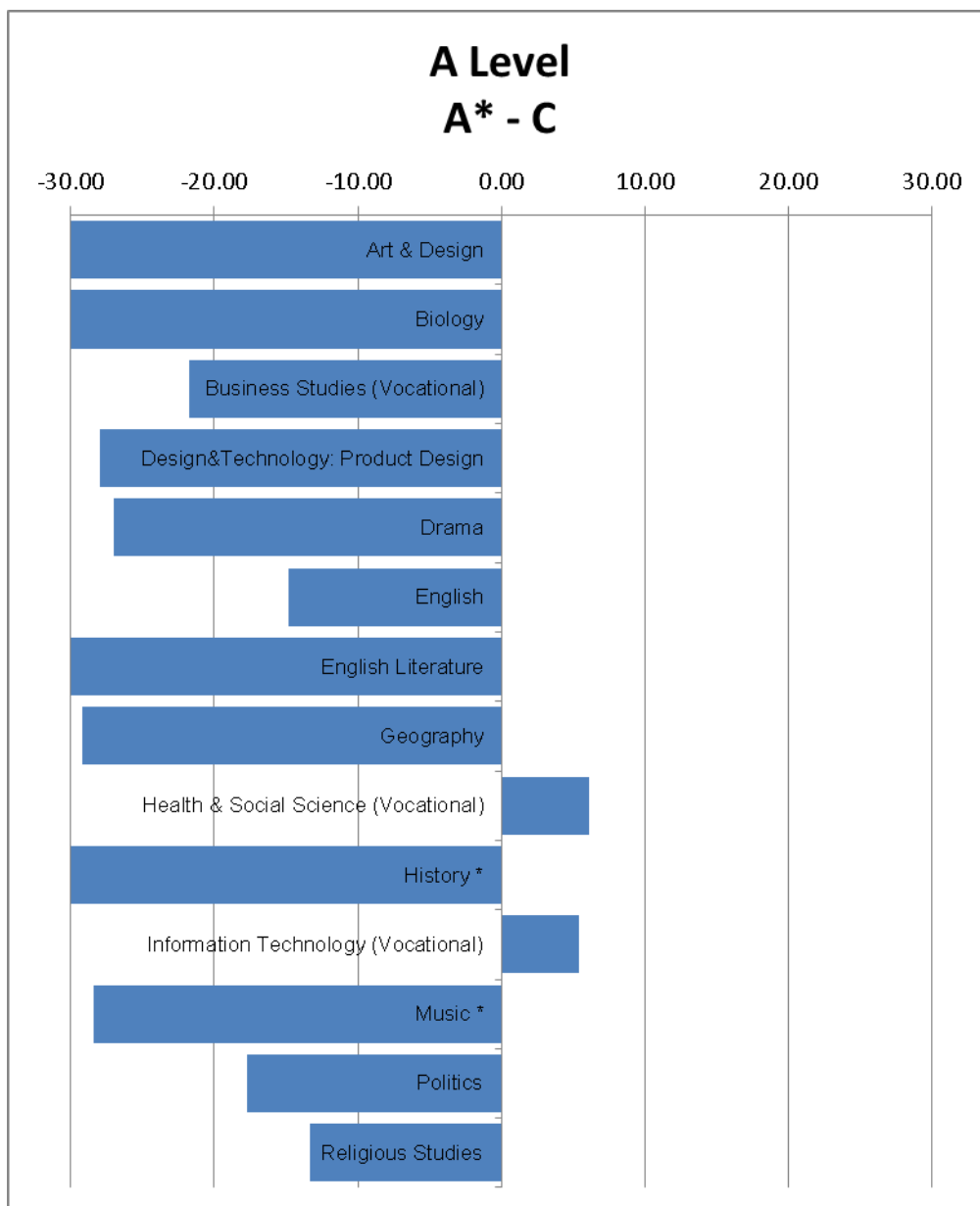
Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of year 14 pupils in Bangor Academy achieving grades A* to C in vocational/applied courses equivalent to GCE A level. No average is available from the examining board(s) for the subjects in this table to facilitate comparison.

Level 3 BTEC	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Total entry over 3 years
	% A* - C	% A* - C	% A* - C	
Engineering Subsidiary Diploma	100	100	100	42
Science Subsidiary Diploma		100	100	22
Hospitality Subsidiary Diploma	100	89	85	24
Sport Subsidiary Diploma	100	100	85	46
Travel and Tourism Subsidiary Diploma	100	100	100	31
Travel and Tourism Diploma	100	100	100	20

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A* to C from 2013-14 to 2015-16

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the bar chart below shows the average over three years of the percentage of pupils achieving at GCE A level at grades A* to C in individual subjects in Bangor Academy compared with the three-year NI average. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above the NI average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, comparisons between subjects should be treated with caution.

Comparison with the three-year NI average at grades A* to C



*indicates fewer than 20 entries over 3 years

Staying on rate

Based on data held in SIMS by the school and verified with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of the pupils who stay on at Bangor Academy from year 12 to year 13 and then from year 13 to year 14, compared with the NI average for non-selective schools (from school census returns to the Department of Education for the most recent year for which data is available.)

	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	47.8%	50.4%
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	78.2%	87.4%

Leavers' destinations

Based on data held and verified by the school with the ETI, the table below shows the percentage of all of the pupils from Bangor Academy who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	NI	School	Level 2 (No.)	Level 3 (No.)	Level 4 (No.)
Total Number of Leavers	13157	248			
Employment	11.7%	14.9%			
Institute of Further Education	44.9%	50.8%	57	49	20
Institute of Higher Education	16.0%	21.4%			53
Work-based Learning (Training)	20.6%	4.4%			
Unemployed	4.4%	5.2%			
Unknown	2.5%	3.2%			

© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2016

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part, except for commercial purposes or in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, provided that the source and date thereof are stated.

Copies of this report are available on the ETI website: www.etini.gov.uk