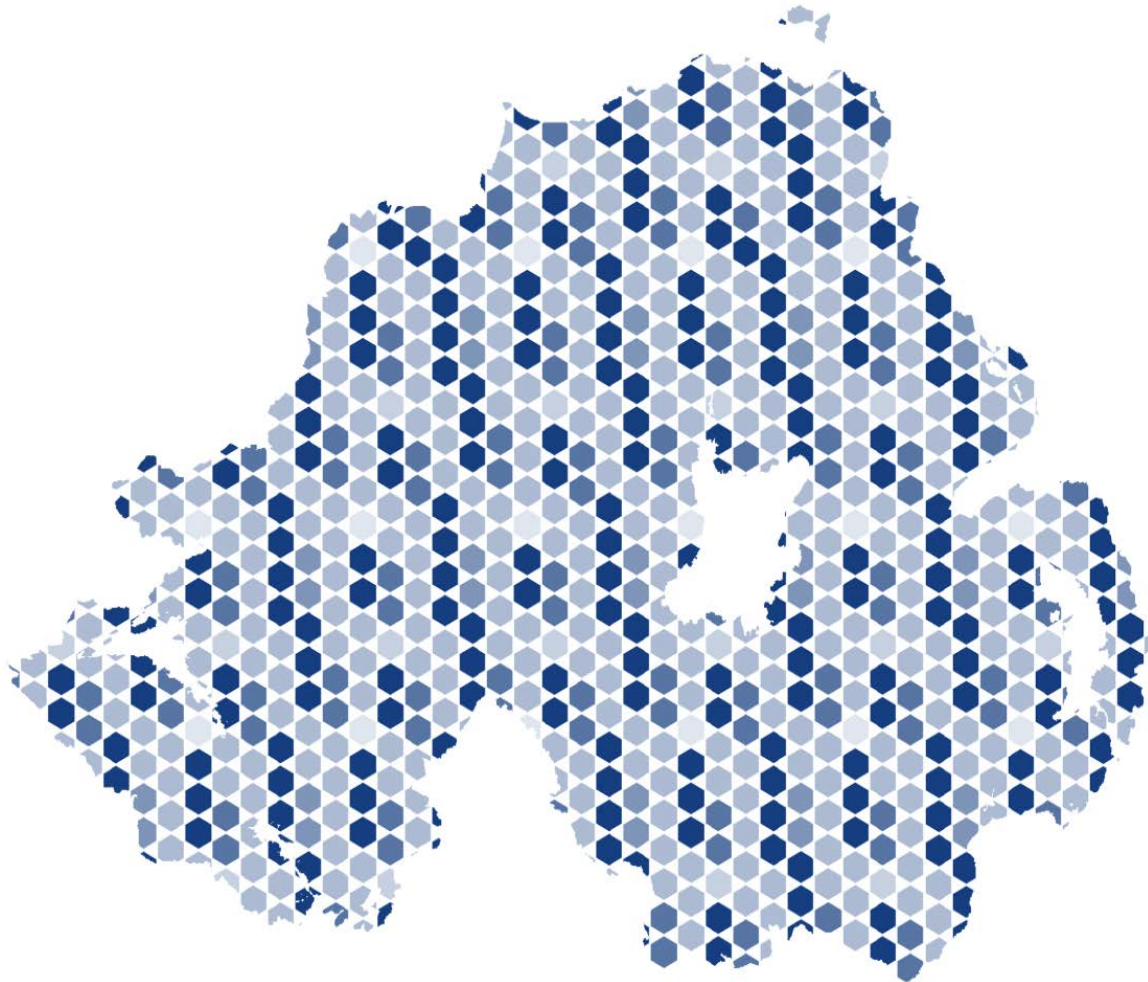


POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training
Inspectorate

St Cecilia's College,
Londonderry

Maintained all-girls', 11-18, all-ability school

Report of an Inspection
in September 2015

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
Needs significant improvement
Needs 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 pupils. 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 pupils. 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 pupils. 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.

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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 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.

Three per cent of parents (20) responded to the online questionnaire, with nine providing additional written comments. Most of the parents who responded to the questionnaires were positive in their comments about, notably, the whole staff's care and support for the pupils, the breadth of the curriculum and the range of extra-curricular activities from which the pupils benefit. Thirty-four percent of staff (30) responded to the questionnaires, with eight providing written comments. The staff commented positively on the mutual respect within the school community and the pupil-centred ethos. A small number of concerns raised about aspects of the provision were discussed (maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents) with the governors and senior leaders.

2. Focus of the inspection

In order to promote improvement in the interests of all pupils, the purpose of a post-primary 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 home economics and hospitality and catering in this inspection.

3. Context

St Cecilia's College is a maintained all-girls', 11-18, all-ability school which serves the community of the Creggan and the wider city. The school is located within the Triax Renewal Ward of Londonderry, an area falling within the top 10% of the most disadvantaged electoral wards in Northern Ireland (NI), which is reflected in the high proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The school returned to its original site in 2010 when the current school building was opened to pupils. In recent years, there have been significant changes in senior leadership, including the appointment of a new vice-principal at the start of the school year.

While the intake to year 8 has stabilised and the school is regularly over-subscribed, entry to post-16 study is under-subscribed. The proportion of pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning has risen by around 50% over the last three years. Over the same period, attendance rates have been just below the NI average. The school is an active member of the Foyle Learning Community and is involved in a shared education programme with two schools within the city, including a common citizenship unit of work for pupils in key stage (KS) 3. Through the school's links with the University of Ulster's Magee campus, sixth form pupils benefit from courses in Step Up Science and Step Up Engineering.

St Cecilia's College	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Year 8 Intake	107	131	130	132
Enrolment	856	856	839	823
% Attendance (NI Average)	90.7% (91.3%)	90.15% (92%)	91% (n/a)	N/A (n/a)
FSME Percentage ¹	43.6	44.28	60	60.66
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	13.8% (118)	15.1% (129)	19.7% (165)	19.6% (161)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	19	19	17	18
No. of newcomers	0	1	0	0
<i>Intake²:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	—	(9/130) 7%	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	—	(6/130) 5%	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	—	(97/130) 75%	#	#
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	—	(90/130) 70%	#	#

Source: data as held by the school.

* fewer than 5

N/A not available

Data unavailable due to industrial action in some primary schools

4. Overall findings of the inspection

Overall Effectiveness	Capacity to identify and bring about improvement
Achievements and standards	Good
Provision for learning	Good
Leadership and management	Good

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

² 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

5. Achievements and standards

- The pupils are articulate, loyal to their school and motivated to learn. They show respect for, and sensitivity towards, the needs of others. The pupils work well independently and engage maturely in paired and group tasks. They think critically and creatively, and, when given the opportunity, review their own learning and assess each other's work to good effect. Their behaviour, both in and out of the classroom, is exemplary.
- Through their participation in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and competitions, the pupils develop effective social and personal skills, including leadership, teamwork and mentoring, which prepare them well for the transition to the next stage of their education and adult life.
- The pupils attain very good standards in mathematics. A key strength is the progression in learning throughout KS3 and KS4 and the resulting high achievement in GCSE mathematics at grades A* to C, where the outcomes are consistently above the NI average for similar non-selective schools. The standards achieved by the small numbers of pupils who take GCE A level mathematics have followed an upward trend in recent years.
- The standards attained by the pupils in English are an important area for improvement. They are consistently below the NI average for similar non-selective schools in GCSE English language at grades A* to C. The uptake for GCSE English literature is good and attainment by the pupils at grades A* to C is in line with the NI average for similar non-selective schools. The standards attained by the pupils in GCE A level at grades A* to C have fluctuated over the past three years, but are significantly below the NI average. The actions required to promote improvement in the standards attained by the pupils in English need to be specific, measurable and monitored at regular intervals.
- The standards attained by the pupils in home economics and hospitality and catering are very good. They display positive attitudes to learning and engage with confidence in class, developing a sound knowledge and understanding of their work in this vocational area. The pupils achieve consistently good or better standards of work, in line with their ability. Their attainments in KS4 and post-16 vocational qualifications are excellent.
- Over the past three years, the percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSE examinations, or equivalent, at grades A* to C has been significantly above the NI average for non-selective schools in the same free school meals band. The percentage of pupils attaining five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, is consistently well above the NI average for similar schools.
- In the same period, the percentage of pupils attaining three or more GCE A levels at grades A* to C has been in line with the NI average for similar schools.
- There is variation in the standards attained by the pupils in individual subjects at GCSE and A level. At GCSE level, one-half of the subjects are in line with or above the three-year NI average. In over one-third of the GCSE subjects which are below the NI average, an improving trend is evident. At GCE A level, the performance of a majority of subjects is below the NI average, with only a small number showing an improving trend.

- Over the past three years, the attainment by pupils entitled to free school meals has been in line with or above the NI average. A majority of the pupils who require additional support with their learning achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C, with a small number achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics. There is a need to create further opportunities for achievement, particularly in English and mathematics, to extend the educational pathways for those pupils with additional needs.
- The attainment by the pupils in a wide range of appropriate vocational courses at levels 2 and 3 is a particular strength of the school. These courses, often complemented by relevant additional qualifications enable high numbers of pupils to access courses in further and higher education.

6. Provision for learning

- More than four-fifths (84%) of the lessons observed during the inspection were effective (good or better) in promoting and progressing the pupils' learning. Just over two-fifths (44%) were very effective. In these lessons, the teachers and pupils share high expectations and enjoy excellent working relationships. The teachers' skilful questioning enables the pupils to deepen their subject knowledge and develop sound oral and thinking skills. Well-structured plenary sessions help the pupils to consolidate their learning and improve the quality of their own work.
- The less effective practice (important areas for improvement), in just under one-fifth (16%) of the lessons observed, is characterised by insufficient pace and missed opportunities to extend the pupils' skills and understanding of key concepts. The work is insufficiently matched to the varying needs and abilities of the pupils and the narrow range of strategies employed does not engage them well enough in the learning.
- The provision for learning in English is good. In the best practice observed, the teachers used information and communication technology (ICT), group activities and thoughtful questions and prompts effectively to stimulate purposeful discussion and elicit extended responses from the pupils. In order to raise further the standards of written work, the department is fostering a culture of meaningful talk where the development of oral and thinking skills underpins high-quality written communication. The planning for differentiation is too limited; the teachers need to adopt a wider range of learning strategies in order to ensure that all pupils achieve in line with expectation.
- The provision for learning in mathematics is very good. The teachers promote successfully a positive disposition towards mathematics and have high expectations for what the pupils can attempt and ultimately achieve. They plan thoroughly for the lessons, which have appropriate pace and challenge, and provide clear explanations of key concepts and ideas.

- The school has recently constituted literacy and numeracy groups to develop and promote the cross-curricular skills of communication and using mathematics with a view to raising further the standards attained by the pupils. It will be important for the literacy group to identify those subjects where literacy is promoted well in departmental planning and disseminate this good practice in order to ensure consistency across the curriculum. On the few occasions during the inspection when opportunities arose in other subjects, the pupils' numeracy understanding and skills were enhanced and consolidated. The numeracy group needs to develop further these opportunities, initially in the subjects in which thinking mathematically is an integral part of the learning.
- The provision for home economics and hospitality and catering is very good. The pupils engage well with the learning activities, in both theory and practical sessions. As a consequence, their overall progression in learning is very good. Their learning in this subject area makes an effective contribution to the development of the pupils' wider skills and dispositions.
- The quality of provision for care and support is highly effective. The pupils are supported well by their teachers and classroom assistants. There is evidence of a genuine rapport between the pupils, teachers and peers which fosters a positive climate for learning. The pupils who require additional support with aspects of their learning are provided with appropriate opportunities to develop further their independence and inter-personal skills. There are appropriate links with external agencies to support the pupils in their learning and personal, social and emotional well-being. A comprehensive provision map has been developed to identify appropriate intervention strategies for individual pupils and is being used to monitor closely their progression. The individual education plans and supporting documents are informative, but lack specific measurable targets which will enable progress to be measured and achievement celebrated.
- The curricular provision is very good; the curriculum is broad, balanced and flexible. At KS4 and post-16, the school is meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework through effective collaboration with a number of other schools, a college of further education and a local university to ensure that the pupils have access to an appropriately wide range of academic and vocational subjects. Curriculum planning is well led, evaluated and reviewed to very good effect. It is pupil-centred and takes account of the pupils' interests, abilities and career aspirations, providing them with core skills and capabilities to meet the demands of the next phase of their education or the world of work.
- Throughout the school, the well-conceived learning and enrichment experiences in careers education, information, advice and guidance are a key strength of the provision. Such experiences including, for example, 'Insight into Industry' enhance the pupils' understanding of the world of work and of the education, training and employment opportunities available to them locally and regionally. The school has placed appropriate emphasis on the new taught careers programme for every year group and has established extensive links with businesses and industry to complement this programme. It will be important to monitor, review and, where necessary, adjust this programme in order to ensure that it meets the needs of all the pupils.

7. Leadership and management

- Through the school development plan³ and associated action plans, the senior leaders identify appropriate priorities for school improvement and the strategies to effect the planned improvements. Consultation with parents, staff and governors informs effectively the identification of the priorities. The pupils, however, have limited opportunities to participate in consultation; it will be important to include the pupils' voice as an integral part of the school development planning process.
- The make-up of the senior leadership team has undergone significant change in the last three years. This process has resulted in a strategic re-structuring of roles and responsibilities, which includes closer links with the subject departments in order to support and monitor effectively their improvement work, and leadership of the focus groups responsible for implementing the priorities set out in the school development plan. The members of the senior leadership team have complementary strengths and provide clear strategic direction for curricular development. They have forged strong links and partnerships links with the community, including with local businesses.
- Most of the middle managers provide clear curricular leadership within their areas of responsibility. In the best practice, they prioritise the professional development of staff within their respective departments, with a clear focus on enriching the pupils' experiences in the classroom and on raising their attainment. The quality of action planning across the middle management tier is, however, variable. Through effective consultation with the staff, the senior leadership team has identified the need to build the capacity of middle managers to monitor, evaluate, review and plan for improvement within their own subject areas.
- The governors are highly supportive of the life and work of the school. They are well informed about the standards attained by the pupils, are consulted effectively on the priorities in the school development plan and play an active role in school improvement. On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the ETI evaluation is that the school and wider 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 inspection, the school's arrangements for safeguarding young people are comprehensive. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils reported that they feel safe in school and know what to do if they are concerned about their safety or well-being.

³ The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010

8. Overall effectiveness

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 in:

- addressing the variation in the standards attained by the pupils across the subject departments at GCSE and A level; and
- building further the capacity of middle managers to monitor, evaluate and review the provision within their areas of responsibility in order to identify and disseminate the best practice and raise further the standards attained by the pupils.

Examination performance and other statistical data

GCSE and equivalent examination results from 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS⁴ and verified with the 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 category⁵.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance:

<i>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</i>	2013	2014	2015
*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	92	87	92.9
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category⁶</i>	<i>73.8</i>	<i>66.9</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	52	52	50
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>34.3</i>	<i>N/A</i>
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	100	98	98.3
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)	33.3	27.3	35.9

⁴ SIMS: School Information Management System

⁵ See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: 'School Development Planning and Target-Setting'.

⁶ 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 2012-13 to 2014-15

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 and A* to E 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.

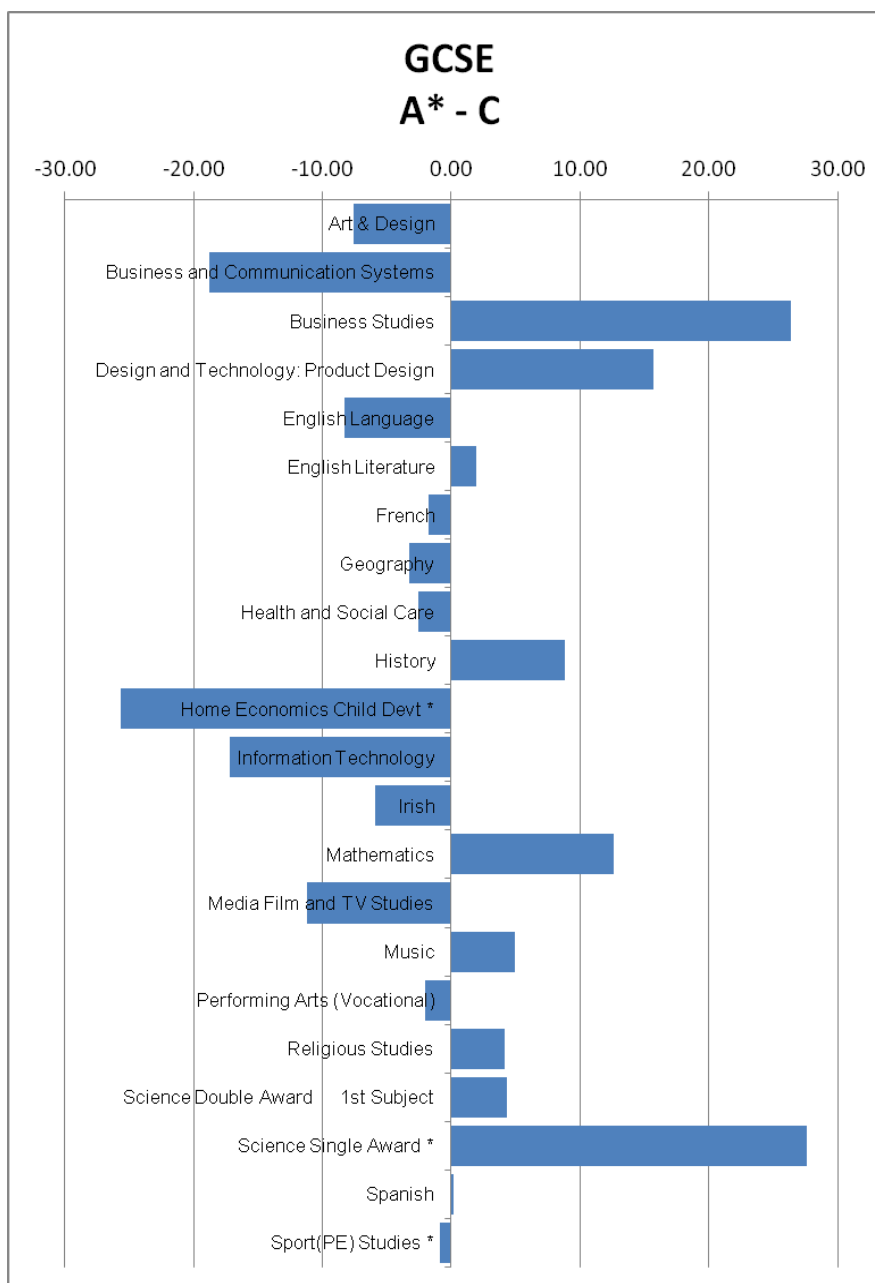
Other [level 2] courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

Level 2	2013	2014	2015	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
BTEC Performing Arts	14 100%	N/A	17 100%	31
BTEC Performing Arts – Dance (Extended Certificate)	20 100%	16 100%	16 100%	32
Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE)	36 100%	68 100%	68 100%	172
City & Guilds Customer Service	23 100%	9 100%	N/A	32
BTEC Hospitality & Catering Studies (Extended certificate)	12 100%	28 100%	25 96%	65
BTEC First Certificate in Hospitality & Catering	3 100%	2 50%	2 100%	7
OCR National First Award ICT	27 100%	51 55%	N/A	78
Occupational Studies (Hair & Beauty)	9 67%	9 100%	11 81%	29
BTEC Science – Extended Certificate	19 100%	9 100%	24 71%	52
BTEC Science – First Certificate	60 93%	58 100%	48 100%	166

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCSE level at grades A* to C from 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS⁷ 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 this school 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.



*Indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 years.

Note: home economics (child development) and science single award were taken by pupils in only one of the last three years.

⁷ SIMS: School Information Management System

GCE A level examination results at grades A* to C from 2012-13 to 2014-15

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 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.

Data on Year 14 (A2) performance:

GCE A Level or equivalent	2013	2014	2015
Percentage of Year 14 taking A2 levels & equivalents in at least three subjects	66	74	67
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least three A2 levels	34.3	28	38
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least two A2 levels	96	88	98

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 St Cecilia's College 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.

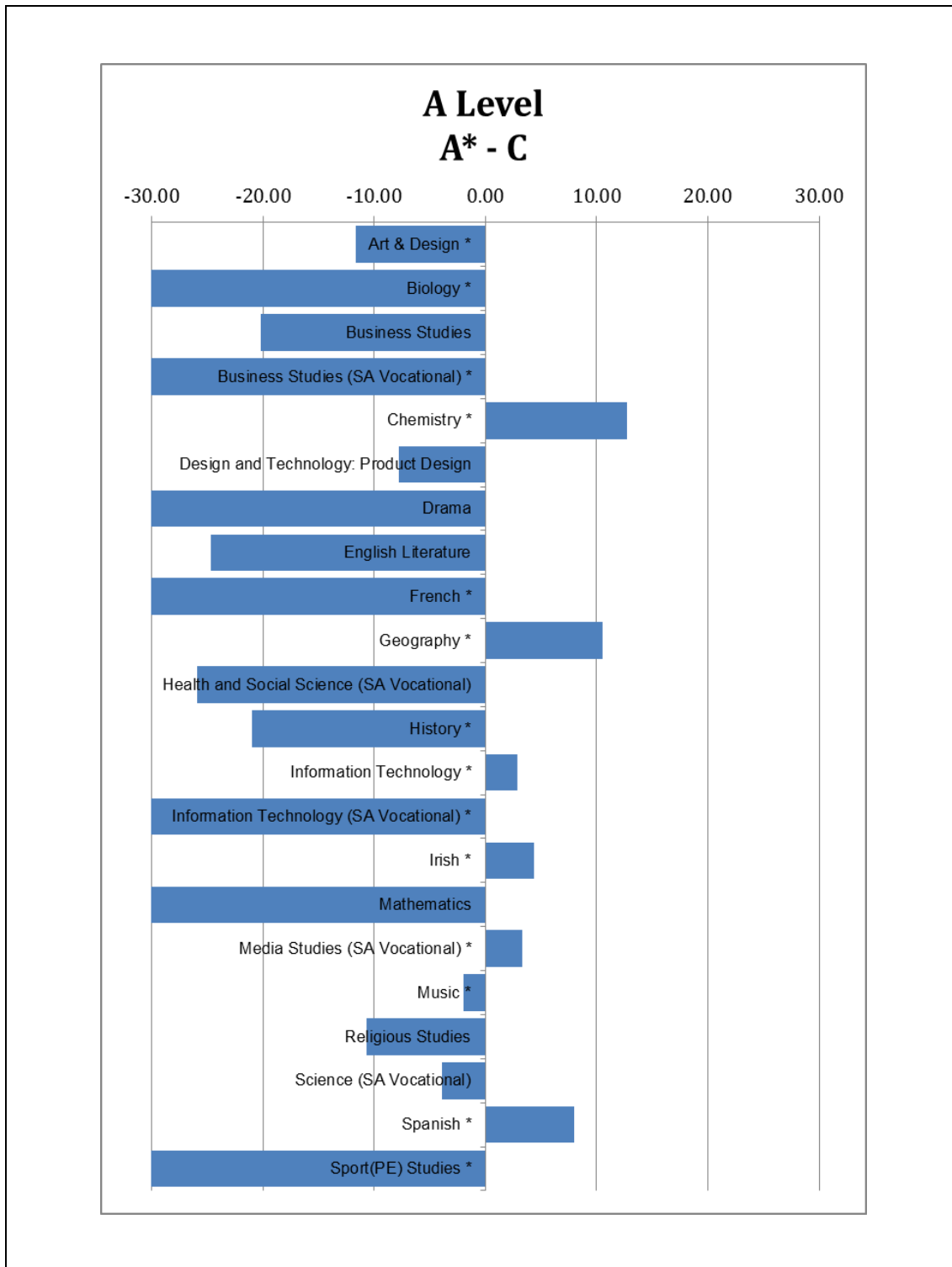
Other [level 3] courses taken in at least two of the last three years.

Level 3	2013	2014	2015	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
CoPE	12 100%	38 100%	N/A	50
BTEC Dance	* 100%	11 100%	5 100%	20
BTEC Hospitality	19 95%	9 89%	14 100%	42
Cambridge Vocational ICT	31 100%	14 100%	30 100%	75
BTEC Travel & Tourism	16 87.5%	18 100%	15 100%	49

*fewer than 5 pupils

Attainment of pupils in individual subjects at GCE A level at grades A* to C from 2012-13 to 2014-15

Based on data held by the school in SIMS and verified with the ETI, the average over three years of the percentage of pupils achieving at GCE level at grades A* to C in individual subjects in St Cecilia's College is compared with the three-year NI average for similar schools. 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.



*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 this school 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 DE for the most recent year for which data is available.

2014-15	NI Average	School
% Yr 12 staying on to Yr 13	52.9%	85.5%
% Yr 13 staying on to Yr 14	79.5%	93%

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 St Cecilia's College who leave school to enter further education, higher education or employment, or are seeking employment compared with the average for non-selective schools.

	2013/14 NI %	2013/14 School %	2013/14 School Nos.
Total number of leavers			103
Employment	9.2	0	0
Further Education	44.2	53	55
Higher Education	19.9	37	38
Training	18.9	0	0
Unemployed	5.1	0	0
Unknown	2.7	10	10

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