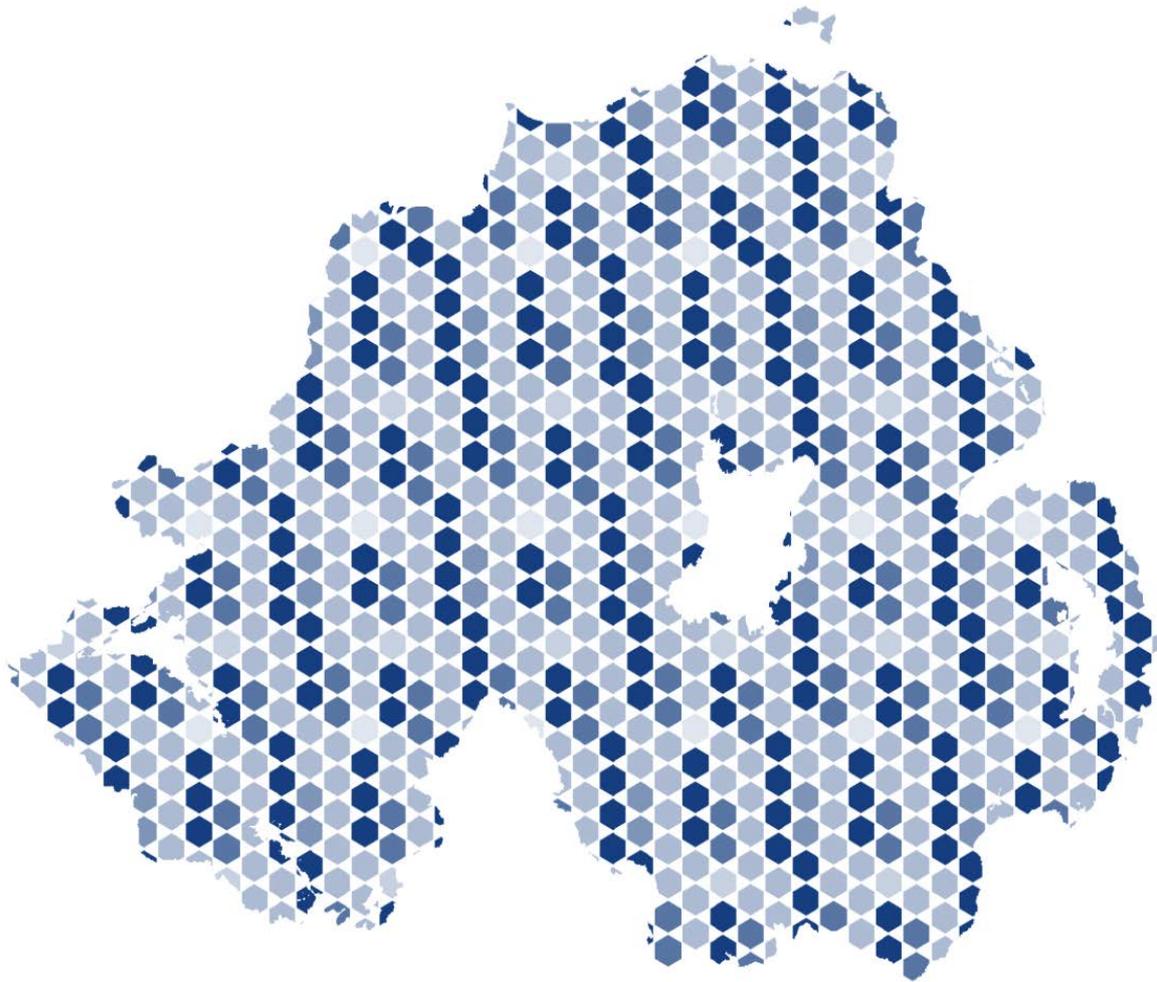


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

## Our Lady of Lourdes High School, Ballymoney

Maintained, co-educational, 11-16 non-selective school

Report of an Inspection in  
September 2015

*eti*

*The Education and Training Inspectorate -  
Promoting Improvement*

Providing Inspection Services for

Department of Education  
Department for Employment and Learning  
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure

CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE



## 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.

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## **1. Inspection method and evidence base**

The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation of post-primary schools, which were applied to this inspection, are available in the ETI publication *Together Towards Improvement: a process for self evaluation* at: <http://www.etini.gov.uk/index/together-towards-improvement/together-towards-improvement-post-primary.htm>.

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

The arrangements for this inspection included a meeting with three representatives from the governors and the opportunity for all parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire.

Thirty-two percent (59) of parents and seventy-two percent (33) of staff responded to the questionnaires. All the staff who responded reported very positively on the respectful, inclusive atmosphere in the school. Almost all of the parents who responded were very affirmative of the work of the school. In particular, they reported on the supportive learning environment where the pupils were valued. The few issues raised in the questionnaires were discussed with the principal and governors.

## **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 history in this inspection.

## **3. Context**

Our Lady of Lourdes High School is a maintained, co-educational, 11-16 non-selective school, located in Ballymoney. The school attracts its pupils from the town and the surrounding area, which is largely rural. Enrolment remains steady with 227 pupils enrolled at the time of the inspection.

Approximately two-fifths of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and around two-fifths of the pupils enter the school with the appropriate levels of literacy and numeracy. The school has identified almost three-fifths of its pupils as being in need of additional support with some aspects of their learning. A learning resource centre is located in the school which provides for just over forty pupils with moderate or other learning difficulties. There are ten newcomer pupils.

The school is an active participant of the Ballymoney Learning Community and demonstrates a commitment to purposeful shared education in the interests of all the pupils across the community.

<b>Our Lady of Lourdes School</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>	<b>2014/15</b>	<b>2015/16</b>
Year 8 Intake	40	44	40	36
Enrolment	238	236	227	227
% Attendance (NI Average for non-selective)	94.4% (91.3%)	94.6% (92.0%)	94.8% (N/A)	N/A (N/A)
FSME Percentage <sup>1</sup>	29.0	30.1	42.3	40.53
% and (Number) of pupils on SEN register	60.80% (143)	58.05% (137)	60.79% (138)	57.08% (129)
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the mainstream school	*	6	10	15
No. of pupils with statements of educational needs in the Learning Support Centre	40	42	43	41
No. of newcomers	21	12	10	10
<i>Intake<sup>2</sup>:</i>				
% of Y8 pupils with L5 English	5	4.55	2.5	0.0
% of Y8 pupils with L5 mathematics	7.5	4.55	0.0	2.7
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in English	50.0	50.0	50.0	37.14
% of Y8 pupils with L4 and above in mathematics	42.5	47.3	52.5	37.14
<i>Source: data as held by the school.</i>				

\* fewer than 5

#### 4. Overall findings of the inspection

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	High level of capacity for sustained improvement
<b>Achievements and standards</b>	Very good
<b>Provision for learning</b>	Very good
<b>Leadership and management</b>	Very good

#### 5. Achievement and standards

- Most pupils are well-motivated and engage purposefully in lessons. They present for school in an exemplary manner, are friendly and welcoming and take pride in their work. In class, when given appropriate opportunities, pupils offer confident oral and written responses to challenging tasks, demonstrating an understanding of content along with the application of appropriate transferrable skills. The majority of them can think critically and creatively, whether working independently or in small groups. By year 12, the majority of pupils are well-prepared for the next stage of their education and life. When matched against their entry profile, most achieve high outcomes, which reflects the significant added-value provided by the school.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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

- There are good levels of pupil participation and achievement in the wide range of sporting, cultural and charitable opportunities which the school provides. Of note, is the significant contribution made by pupils and teachers to fund-raising.
- Over the past three years, the school's performance in GCSE English language, history and mathematics at grades A\*-C has been significantly above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar schools. The standards achieved by the pupils in GCSE English language are outstanding, and in GCSE mathematics and GCSE history, they are very good.
- The results in public examinations<sup>3</sup> at key stage (KS) 4 are a significant strength of the work of the school. 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 meal band. When English and mathematics are included, the percentage of pupils attaining grades A\* to C at GCSE or equivalent is similarly significantly above the NI average for similar schools. Over the past three years, the school's examination outcomes are in the top 5%, when compared with similar schools.
- Over the past three years, the attainment by pupils entitled to free school meals of five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C, including English and mathematics, is just under 50%, which is well above the NI average.
- The pupils with special educational needs achieve exceptionally well and follow suitable careers pathways that enable them to progress to further education, training or employment.
- Over four-fifths of the leavers access courses in further education, which is significantly above the NI average.

## **6. Provision for learning**

- Planning, teaching and assessment are effective at promoting learning in most of the lessons observed. Just over four-fifths of the lessons were good or better, with just over one-third of these lessons being very good. The more effective lessons are characterised by learning that has appropriate challenge, pace and pupil engagement, with effective teacher guidance and support. The pupils make very good progress because of enabling activities, supportive interventions and informative and effective assessment processes.
- In the less effective practice (important areas for improvement), in just under one-fifth of the lessons observed, the pupils were passive, did not have sufficient opportunities to develop and apply transferrable skills, and the lesson planning was not matched sufficiently to the needs of all the pupils. Planning for learning varies in quality across the school, particularly at KS 4, and can improve with teachers focusing on differentiating learning to individual and group need and being less reliant on examination specifications.

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<sup>3</sup> The examination data and an analysis of trends in examination standards over the past three years are given in the appendix.

- The promotion of literacy is prioritised appropriately. The literacy policy is clear and coherent, providing guidance for all staff in raising the standard of talking and listening and reading and writing within their own subjects. The outworking of the policy shows clearly that most departments are developing their provision for literacy. Consequently, the pupils benefit from the extended integration of talking, listening, reading and writing across the curriculum. A minority of the subjects promote literacy very effectively.
- Whilst there are strengths in the provision for mathematics, there is too much variation in the quality of the pupils' learning experiences. Going forward, there is a need, particularly at KS 3, for the teachers to develop further the pupils' voice in mathematics lessons and to extend their problem-solving skills.
- The numeracy focus in recent years has been the assessment of using mathematics at KS 3 across a small number of subjects, including mathematics. This approach is too narrow and the numeracy co-ordinator needs to lead a more purposeful and targeted whole-school approach to the teaching of numeracy and the further development of the pupils' numeracy skills.
- The very good provision for history is characterised by well planned, engaging and enjoyable learning activities which develop well the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. A particular strength of the provision is the strong emphasis placed on using history to help pupils understand the local and global world in which they live.
- The quality of the arrangements for care and support in the school are very good, with pastoral care being a significant strength. Within this warm and inclusive culture, pupils are empowered to believe in themselves, enabled to achieve their full potential and the school's mission statement of '*Caring, Sharing, Learning together to meet the future*' is borne out in practice. Consequently, there is a purposeful fusion of the pastoral and academic priorities in the school.
- There are excellent working relationships at all levels and the distinctive pupil-centred ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Very effective use is made of pupil consultation, including through the school council, to inform and enrich the learning experiences and other aspects of the school's provision. The school community is highly committed to supporting fully the personal, social, moral, spiritual and academic development of each pupil and to do so in a flexible manner, informed by the pupils' individual strengths, needs and circumstances. Consequently, the pastoral care and learning support provided is highly effective in contributing to the pupils' learning experiences and underpins their achievements.
- A particular strength of the school's provision is the learning support centre. Bespoke individual timetables, accredited courses and tailored support meets very effectively the needs and aspirations of individual pupils. As a result, the pupils develop purposeful life skills and benefit from clear and appropriate destination pathways. Mainstream provision, whilst effective, would benefit further by refining the individual education plans and differentiation practices within the classroom, through learning from the most effective practices in the learning support centre.

- The pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum which is effectively tailored to meet their individual needs. The curriculum planning process is strategic, aligned with labour market information and informed appropriately by rigorous, continuous review. As a result, the curriculum provision is innovative and relevant; it effectively meets the pupils changing needs and provides them with the core skills and capabilities to meet the demands of the next phase of education, training or the world of work. The school is meeting the requirements of the Entitlement Framework.
- The provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) enhances the pupils' understanding of career options available to them, enabling them to make informed choices. The newly formed careers team have identified important priorities to develop further the CEIAG provision, including raising the quality and effectiveness of the contribution of individual subjects to promoting CEIAG across the curriculum.

## **7. Leadership and management**

- The school development plan<sup>4</sup> is in the final year of a three year cycle. It is informed by extensive consultation with all stakeholders and has a strong focus on self-evaluation. The associated action plans inform and guide well the school improvement process and are central to the work of the school.
- The senior leadership promotes to good effect a culture of care and support for all in the school. The senior leadership team high expectations of, and for, the achievements of both staff and pupils. They lead strategically, effecting improvement across their areas of responsibility. The work of the senior leadership team is characterised by rigorous monitoring, evaluation and review, whilst prioritising high quality learning and teaching and supporting this through the continuing professional development of staff in order to raise capacity further.
- The governors are very well informed and engage actively in the life and work of the school. While fully supportive of the principal they take seriously their challenge function and; are insightful and pro-active with regard to the challenges and opportunities facing the school. Based on the evidence presented at the time of inspection, the ETI evaluation is that there can be a high degree of confidence in the aspects of governance evaluated.
- While the middle managers provide effective curricular leadership and plan well for improvement within their areas of responsibility, the school has appropriately identified the need to build further their capacity by disseminating the most effective practice that exists in the school.
- On the basis of the evidence available at the time of the inspection the school has comprehensive arrangements in place for safeguarding young people. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The pupils report that they feel safe in school and that their concerns are dealt with promptly. They are aware of what to do if they have any concerns about their safety or well-being.

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<sup>4</sup> The school development plan meets the requirements of the School Development Planning Regulations (NI) 2010.

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

## **8. Overall effectiveness**

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.

## 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 SIMS<sup>5</sup> and verified with ETI, the table below compares the percentage of year 12 pupils in Our Lady of Lourdes High 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 category<sup>6</sup>.

Data on Year 12 (Key Stage 4) performance (**non-selective school**):

<b>GCSE and GCSE equivalent subjects - *following permitted exclusions</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
*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	94.1	97.7	97.4
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category<sup>7</sup></i>	<i>61.2</i>	<i>74.1</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics	58.8	70.5	57.89
<i>The NI average for similar schools in the same free school meals category</i>	<i>33.8</i>	<i>44.4</i>	N/A
*Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 5 subjects	100	100	100
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)	50.0	72.7	25.0

<sup>5</sup> SIMS: School Information Management System

<sup>6</sup> See benchmarking data and guidance contained in the annual DE Circulars on: '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 ETI, the tables 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 boards for the subjects in these tables to facilitate comparison.

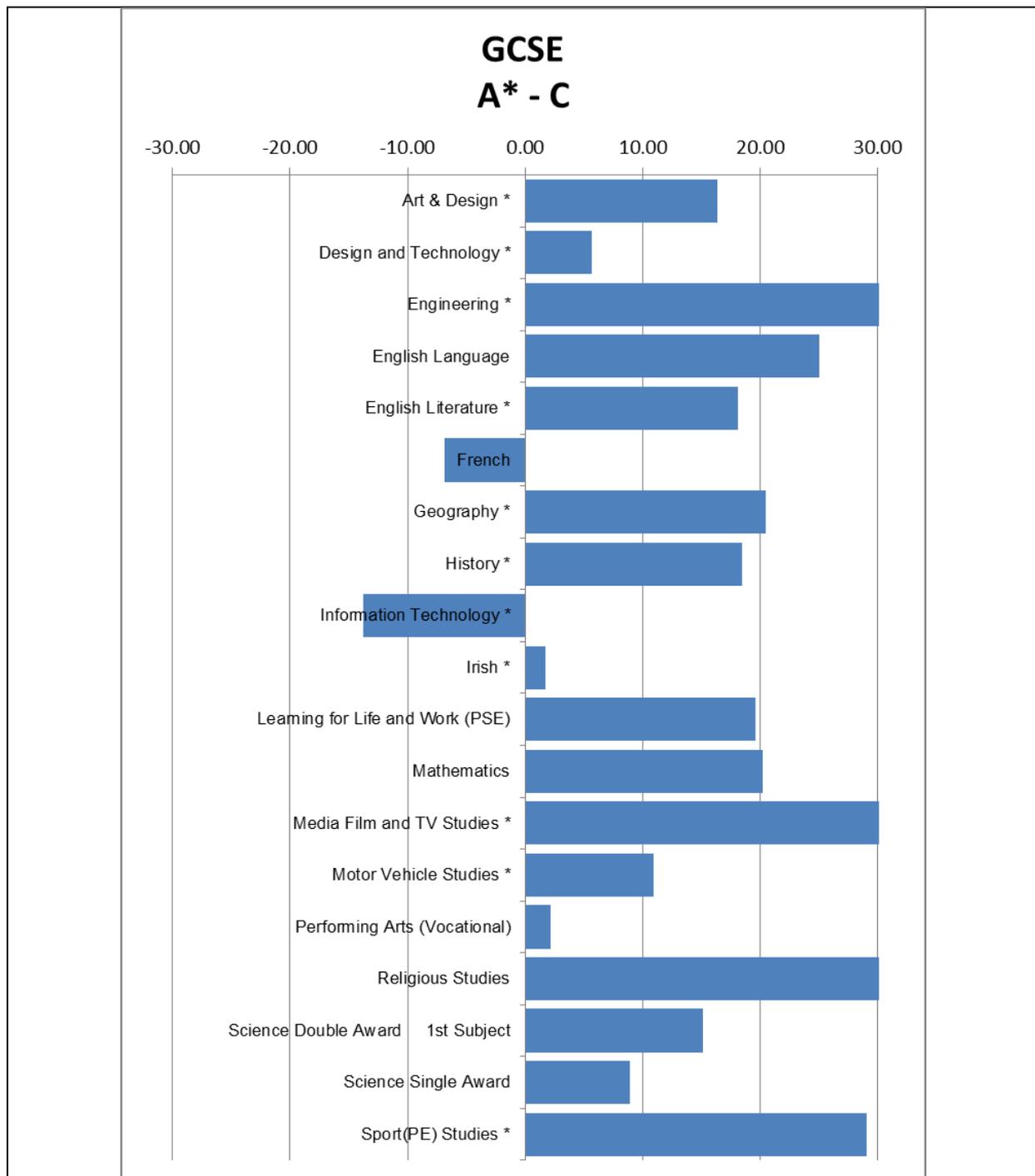
*Other courses taken in at least two of the last three years.*

GCSE Subject	2013		2014		2015		Total entry over 3 years
	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	% A*-C	% A*-E	
BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Agriculture	100	100	100	100	100	100	8
BTEC Level 2 Extended Certificate in Creative Media	-	-	100	100	100	100	33
ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness	100	100	100	100	100	100	44

Level 2	2013	2014	2015	Total entry over 3 years
	% pass	% pass	% pass	
CEEA QCF Performance Skills	100	100	100	25
CCEA Occupational Studies	89	90	87	73

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

The bar chart below illustrates, based on data held by the school and verified with ETI, the performance of each GCSE subject at grades A\* to C, in all exam boards, compared with the three-year average for pupils in non-selective schools in Northern Ireland. A positive value (to the right) shows that the average individual subject performance is above average. As the number of entries to each subject may vary considerably, comparisons should be treated with caution.



\*indicates fewer than 30 entries over 3 year

### Leavers' destinations

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

	<b>2013/14 NI %</b>	<b>2013/14 School %</b>	<b>2013/14 School Nos.</b>
Total number of leavers			53
Employment	8.8	3.8	2
Further Education	46.0	92.5	49
Higher Education	21.2	0.0	0
Training	16.9	3.8	2
Unemployed	3.6	0.0	0
Unknown	3.6	0.0	0

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