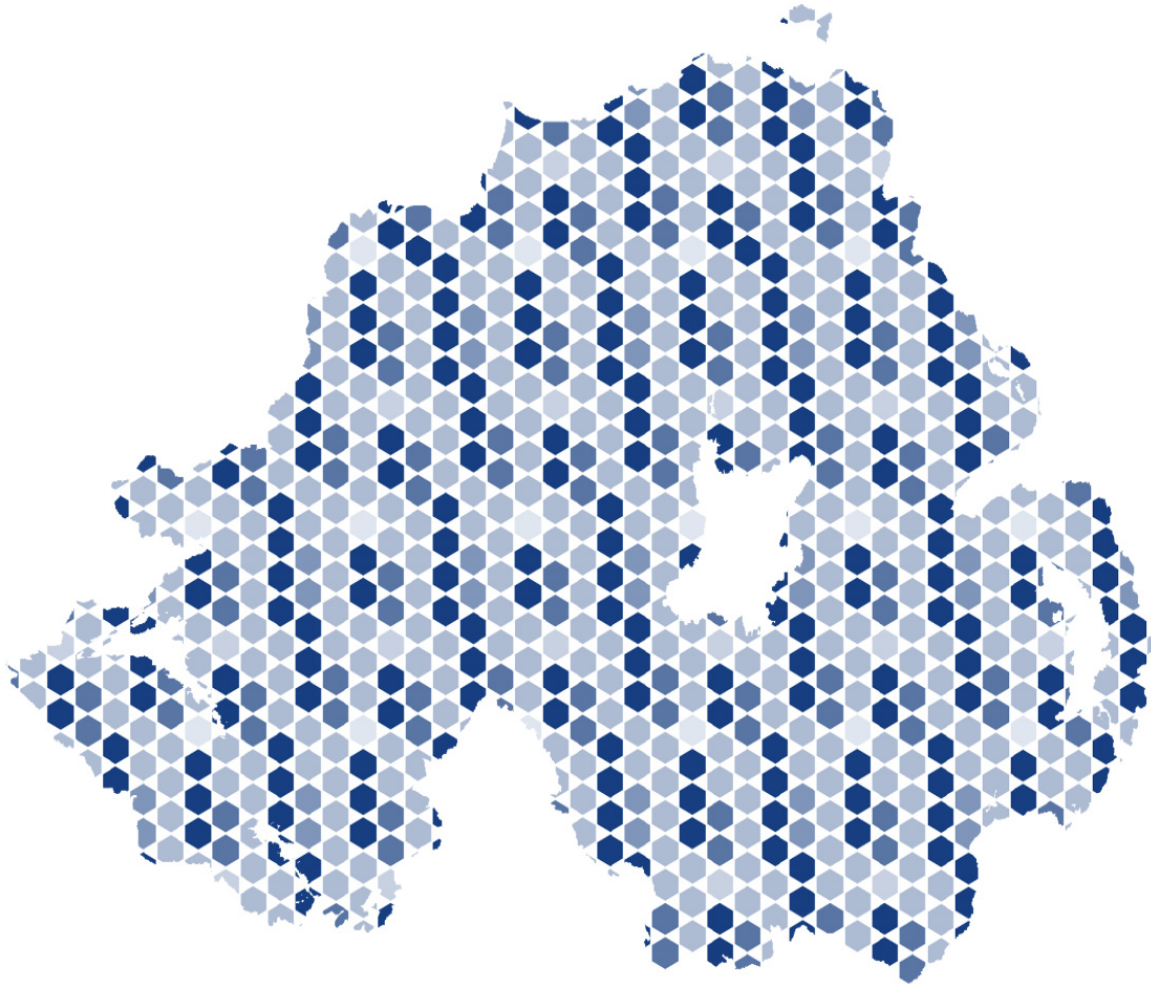


# POST-PRIMARY INSPECTION



Education and Training  
Inspectorate

Lurgan College, Craigavon

Report of an Inspection  
in January 2011

## CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION	1
3. THE VIEWS OF PUPILS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL	2
4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION	3
5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	6
6. CONCLUSION	6
APPENDICES	

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

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 SCHOOL CONTEXT

Lurgan College is a 14-18 co-educational, controlled grammar school within the 'two tier' system of post-primary education in Craigavon. It is situated on the edge of the town of Lurgan and most of the pupils transfer from the local non-selective 11-14 junior high school. The enrolment has increased from 418 in 2005/6 and stands currently at 438; approximately 6% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school has identified eight pupils requiring additional support with their learning. The school is part of the review of the post-primary accommodation within Lurgan being undertaken by the Southern Education and Library Board.

### 1.2 FOCUS<sup>1</sup>

The inspection focused on:

- achievements and standards;
- learning and teaching;
- curriculum provision across a wide range of subjects with a particular focus in English, mathematics, technology and design and the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum; and
- leadership and management at all levels across the school.

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; progress towards the Entitlement Framework, the provision for careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG), and the approach to promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The views of the pupils, parents, teachers, support staff and Board of Governors (governors) were also taken into account.

## 2. OVERALL FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION

In the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

### 2.1 The main strengths of the school include the:

- friendly, welcoming ethos;
- excellent behaviour of the pupils during the inspection;
- quality of the teaching, which was good or better in most of the lessons observed; in two-fifths of the lessons it was very good or better;
- very good quality of provision in CEIAG and the good quality of provision in English and mathematics;

---

<sup>1</sup> The key questions and quality indicators which guide inspection and self-evaluation in post-primary schools 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>

- effective use of ICT across the curriculum to support learning and teaching; and
- hard work and commitment of the Principal, Vice-principals and staff to continuous improvement.

2.2 The main areas for improvement are the need:

- to address the variation in results in public examinations through ensuring appropriate progression and greater challenge in the pupils' learning; and
- to enhance the strategic role of the senior leadership team (SLT) in the more effective leadership and management of the curriculum and pastoral provision.

A summary of the main findings for the specialist subject areas under focus can be found in Appendix 1.

### 3. THE VIEWS OF PUPILS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SUPPORT STAFF AND GOVERNORS OF THE SCHOOL

3.1 The arrangements for the inspection included the opportunity for the parents, teaching and support staff to complete a confidential questionnaire prior to the inspection, as well as meetings by inspectors with representatives from the governors and groups of pupils from years 12, 14 and the School Council.<sup>2</sup>

3.2 The responses from the parental questionnaires indicated that they appreciate the positive ethos and working relationships between staff and pupils; the efforts made by the staff to ensure that the pupils are happy and well cared for at school; and the reputation of the school in the local community.

3.3 A small number of parents expressed concerns about the unsuitable quality of the school building.

3.4 All of the teachers and the support staff who responded, reported that they like working in the school and the majority feel valued by the Principal and management. The majority of the teachers report that they have benefited from staff development in the past three years. A significant minority of teachers, however, expressed concerns about the about the impact of their workload on their welfare and a minority of teachers do not consider the communication with the SLT to be effective. A significant minority of staff highlighted the unsuitable quality of the accommodation.

3.5 The governors expressed their strong support for the work of the school. In particular, they value the hard work and dedication of the Principal, Vice-principals, teachers and support staff, the focus on continuous improvement and the high esteem in which the school is held in the community. They reported that they were well-informed of the work of the school, including the priorities for improvement identified and the school's current financial situation.

---

<sup>2</sup> The number of questionnaires issued and returned, and the number containing comments are shown in Appendix 2.

3.6 In the discussions held with the pupils, they reported that they felt safe and secure in school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns regarding their safety and well-being. They talked positively about the caring ethos and community spirit in the school, and in particular, the efforts of staff to help them both academically and pastorally. Most felt very well supported in making informed career choices. The pupils expressed some concerns about the cramped school building and the lack of sports facilities, while still describing the many aspects of school life from which they benefit, including the good range of extra-curricular activities.

3.7 The Education and Training Inspectorate (Inspectorate) has reported to the Principal, and representatives of the governors, the areas of concern emerging from the questionnaires and the discussions most of which are dealt with in the body of the report.

#### **4. KEY FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION**

##### **4.1 ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS**

The pupils' behaviour during the inspection was excellent. They are highly motivated, show a pride in their performance and co-operate well with their teachers and each other. When given the opportunity, they can work effectively in pairs and in groups, and, for the most part, the presentation of their work is very good. In a minority of lessons, the pupils demonstrated very good critical and creative thinking skills; they could express their opinions confidently and respond with maturity to the ideas of others. It is appropriate, however, that the school has identified the need to develop and apply the pupils' oral skills more effectively across all subjects.

Overall, the standards attained by the pupils in public examinations are satisfactory.

At General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) the pupils' achievement in grades A\*-C in at least seven subjects including English and mathematics was above the Northern Ireland (NI) average for similar selective schools in two out of the past three years; there was a significant drop in 2009 to well below the average. Over the corresponding period, eleven subjects remained more than five percentage points below the NI average at grades A\*-B; in contrast, six subjects were more than five percentage points above the respective NI average. The SLT has recognised the need to address the variation in attainment and the inspection findings endorse this as a key priority. The pupils with additional learning needs attain well in GCSE examinations.

The percentage of pupils achieving grade A\*-C in three or more A Levels has shown improvement over the past three years, however, in two of the three years, this was below the average for similar selective schools. Most subjects are more than five percentage points above the respective NI average at General Certificate of Education (GCE) grades A\*-C.

More information about the results achieved in public examinations is given in Appendix 4.

##### **4.2 PROVISION FOR LEARNING**

The quality of the learning, teaching and assessment in the provision observed, is good.

#### 4.2.1 STANDARDS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding; in most of the lessons it was good or better and in two-fifths of the lessons it was very good or better. In the best practice, the teachers have high expectations, use effective questioning to challenge the pupils' thinking and provide excellent learning guidance through positive and motivational support; they share appropriate learning intentions with the pupils, plan for differentiation, recap on the pupils' prior learning and use innovative strategies to engage the pupils. In addition, they provide the pupils with opportunities to acquire higher-level skills, such as critical analysis, to give presentations with feedback from peers and to develop study and information-handling skills.

In the less effective practice, in approximately one-fifth of the lessons observed, the pace was too slow and the level of challenge for the pupils was low. There was over-reliance on teacher direction, work booklets, closed questioning and only limited opportunities for the pupils to engage in effective paired and group work.

There is good use of ICT by the majority of the subject teachers to enrich and enhance learning and teaching, including a good range of examples of the innovative and effective use of ICT as an aid to the pupils' learning, inside and outside of school, through the school's virtual learning environment.

The heads of department meet with the staff from the contributory junior high school and there are some good examples of liaison. The school, however, needs to develop this liaison much further to ensure there is a greater and more effective focus on building upon the pupils' prior learning.

#### 4.2.2 CURRICULUM PROVISION

While the school has made some progress in widening the curriculum available to the pupils, much remains to be done to broaden further the curriculum offered at both key stage 4 and post-16, where the choice of applied subjects is limited, to achieve a better balance between applied and general pathways. The school has recently begun to collaborate with another grammar school in the area, and although this is working to very good effect, it benefits only a small number of pupils in one subject area. The arrangements for curriculum development within the school are not sufficiently proactive or outward-looking and need to be reviewed in order to better meet the needs of all of the pupils. Collaborative links with the local area-based further education college are at an early, under-exploited stage.

#### 4.2.3 PASTORAL CARE

The quality of the arrangements for pastoral care in the school is satisfactory. The staff are hard-working and are highly committed to the pupils' welfare and best interests. The quality of working relationships between staff and pupils is very good. The pupils are courteous, respectful and well-mannered. The Vice-principal and her pastoral team are dedicated to meeting the needs of all of the pupils, and they work well together in the interests of the pupils, within the existing pastoral structures in the school. While there is a strong commitment within the school to working with a range of other agencies and professionals, and parents, in order to support vulnerable pupils and to reduce or remove barriers to their learning, the roles and responsibilities of the heads of house, year teachers and house teachers are unclear and do not provide these staff with sufficient time to get to know the needs of the pupils better or address any pastoral concerns.

Furthermore, the pupils need more timetabled opportunities for their personal development in order to develop the strategies and the resilience to respond appropriately to situations affecting their welfare. In order to enhance the provision further there is a need to review aspects of the pastoral structures and to update all the policies and procedures relating to the pastoral provision within the school, to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met more effectively.

A good start has been made in developing a School Council and enabling the pupils on the Council to become more actively involved in making decisions about aspects of school life which directly affect them.

#### 4.2.4 SAFEGUARDING

The school has satisfactory arrangements in place for safeguarding pupils. These arrangements reflect the guidance issued by the Department of Education. The school needs, however, to:

- review and update the child protection policy to take better account of the new safeguarding legislation and to ensure that the procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff and volunteers are stated more clearly; and
- ensure that information on child protection procedures are made readily available for all substitute teachers.

#### 4.2.5 CAREERS EDUCATION, INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

The quality of provision for CEIAG is very good. The careers co-ordinator provides very effective leadership, is supported well by the careers team and together they are highly committed to providing careers advice and guidance to meet the individual needs of all of the pupils. They have developed effective links with the local junior high school to support pupils with their career planning at the transition from junior to senior school. The taught careers programme from years 12 to 14 is well-planned to enable the pupils to identify and develop the skills and qualities necessary for effective career planning. The pupils develop sound employability skills through a good range of work-related learning opportunities and the work experience programme in year 13 helps to inform their career decisions. The pupils make effective use of a wide range of resources and up-to-date information, and show a very good understanding of the education and training opportunities available to them. The work of the careers department is complemented well through the support of a Department for Employment and Learning careers adviser. The co-ordinator, through rigorous monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning, has identified appropriate priorities to develop further the pupils' access to high quality CEIAG within the school.

#### 4.2.6 HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The school gives satisfactory attention to developing aspects of healthy eating. The School Council has been active in addressing improvements in the canteen provision and pupils participate in a good range of sporting opportunities both during and after the school day. An area for improvement is the need to develop a programme of healthy eating activities, which is supported by external agencies and the wider community.



## **5. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

5.1 The Principal has been in post for five years and is highly committed to the work and life of the school. He has a clear vision for improvement and under his leadership the Vice-principals and staff have worked hard to take forward important priorities. These include widening the membership of the SLT, the good start to self-evaluation, the effective use of ICT, promoting learning and teaching strategies which make use of assessment for learning, the very good staff development programme, the recent collaboration with another school and the introduction of a system to track the pupils' progress. The strategic role of the SLT, however, is under-developed and the distribution of individual responsibilities and workload is unequal. The SLT needs to review its role in order to provide clearer strategic leadership and management of learning and teaching interlinked more coherently with the provision for care, guidance and support throughout the school.

5.2 The school's school development plan (SDP) identifies a range of priorities based upon consultation with the pupils, the parents, the teachers and the governors. In order that the SDP meets fully the requirements of the School Development Plans Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, the associated action plans need to identify more specific and measurable targets based on the evidence gathered from the good start to self-evaluation within the school. Although there are good examples of departmental development planning, the quality and effectiveness of the planning for improvement at all levels is inconsistent. Furthermore, there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the quality of learning and teaching provided by the substitute teachers.

5.3 The governors provide good support for the Principal and play an important role in supporting the continuous improvement within the school.

5.4 The school makes effective use of available resources to support learning and teaching. In particular, the high priority given by the Principal to the resourcing of the ICT provision has been effective in enriching the quality of learning and teaching. In order to ensure that the pupils access a suitably broad and balanced curriculum, it will be important that the school's financial plan is aligned with the areas identified for improvement.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In most of the areas inspected, the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory; the strengths outweigh areas for improvement. The inspection has identified areas for improvement in standards, learning and teaching and leadership and management which need to be addressed if the needs of all the learners are to be met more effectively. The Inspectorate will monitor and report on the school's progress in addressing the areas for improvement.

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

### English

The quality of provision in the English department is good.

The strengths of the work include the:

- quality of teaching, all of which was at least good and a majority of which was very good;
- good standards of writing in many of the classes;
- quality of marking for improvement;
- department's self-evaluation, promoted by the head of department, which identifies appropriate areas for development; and
- good leadership provided by the head of department, particularly with regard to the creation of schemes of work.

The area for improvement is the need to:

- raise the standards achieved by all of the pupils in external examinations and in particular in English Literature.

### Mathematics

The quality of provision in mathematics is good.

The strengths of the mathematics provision include the:

- good working relationships between the pupils and teachers;
- commitment and hard work of the teachers in supporting the pupils;
- thoroughness of the teachers' preparation for the lessons;
- quality of teaching, which was very good or better in more than half of the lessons observed;
- start made to encouraging pupils to evaluate their own work; and
- commitment and management of the head of department.

The area of improvement includes the need:

- to raise standards through ensuring appropriate progression and challenge in the pupils' learning, including the review of the exam entry policy at GCSE.

## **Technology and Design**

The provision in Technology and Design is satisfactory.

The strengths of the work include the:

- good working relationships at all levels;
- well-ordered learning environment and the strong emphasis on the health and safety of all pupils;
- very good behaviour and high levels of motivation displayed by all of the pupils;
- willingness of the pupils to respond enthusiastically and apply their technology and design knowledge and skills, when given the opportunity;
- commitment of the head of the department to the review and improvement of classroom practice; and
- good start made to using quantitative and qualitative data to track the progress of individual pupils and inform planning.

The area of improvement includes the need:

- to develop the strategies for self-evaluation in order to improve further the quality of learning and teaching and the standards achieved by all of the pupils.

## **Information and Communication Technology**

The quality of the provision for cross-curricular ICT and specialist teaching in ICT is good.

The strengths of the work include the:

- very good levels of achievement by the pupils in specialist examinations in ICT at GCSE and GCE Advanced level;
- good opportunities for the majority of the pupils to extend their skills in ICT, including the use of web 2.0 tools;
- good range of examples of the innovative and effective use of ICT as an aid to the pupils' learning, inside and outside of school;
- good use of ICT by many of the subject teachers to enrich and enhance learning and teaching;
- high priority afforded to the whole-school development of ICT, underpinned by a significant investment in equipment and staff development; and
- very good, supportive and inclusive leadership of cross-curricular and examination course ICT.

The main area for improvement is:

- a sharper focus on the extent and consistency of the opportunities for all of the pupils to acquire, apply and progress their ICT skills, including more effective arrangements to determine the pupils' ICT competences when they enter the school.

## APPENDIX 2

	<b>Number of questionnaires issued</b>	<b>Number of questionnaires returned</b>	<b>Percentage returned</b>	<b>Number of written comments</b>
<b>Parents</b>	108	47	44%	28
<b>Teachers</b>	29	22	80%	9
<b>Support staff</b>	13	10	77%	3

## APPENDIX 3

### STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 i. School: Lurgan College  
 ii. School Reference Number: 541-0057  
 iii. Age Range: 14-18  
 iv. Status: Controlled  
 v. Date of Inspection: W/C 31/01/11  
 vi. Area of Study: Standard Inspection

#### 1.2 Intake/Enrolment

School Year	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Year 8 Intake	0	0	0	0	
Total enrolment	422	430	434	432	438

#### 1.3 Attendance

Year 20098/10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Average 2009/10	NI Average 2008/09
% Attendance	0	0	0	92.8	92.8	94.6	93.4	93	95

- 1.4 i. Total Number of Teachers: 30      iii. Contact ratio (percentage of timetabled time in direct class contact): 0.79
- ii. PTR (Pupil/Teacher Ratio): 14.53

Year 2010/11	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	TOTAL
Enrolment: Boys	0	0	0	60	42	51	40	193
Enrolment: Girls	0	0	0	57	74	59	55	245
Enrolment: Total	0	0	0	117	116	110	95	438
PTR	0	0	0	16.273	16.185	14.161	11.864	

#### 1.5 Leavers' Destinations

2008/09	Year 12	NI%	Year 13/14	NI%
Total Number of Leavers	30		100	
Another School	0%	24.1	0%	1.3
Employment	0%	3	1%	3.4
Full-time Further Education	97%	58.9	6%	9.5
Full-time Higher Education	N/A	N/A	92%	82.8
Full-time Training	3%	6.4	0%	0.4
Seeking Employment/Unemployed	0%	1.7	1%	1
Unknown/Long Term Sick/Pregnant	0%	5.9	0%	1.6

1.6 NAME OF SCHOOL: Lurgan College, Craigavon

SCHOOL YEAR: 2010/2011

<b>GCSE</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Year 12 taking GCSE & Equivalents in at least 5 subjects	100	100	99.13
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects	100	96.49	99.13
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 5 subjects including English and Mathematics	99.12	86.84	94.78
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects	100	89.47	97.39
Percentage of Year 12 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 7 subjects including English and Mathematics	99.12	83.33	93.91
<b>GCE A2 Level or equivalent</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades C or above in at least 3 A levels	63.54	72.92	85.3
Percentage of Year 14 obtaining Grades E or above in at least 3 A levels	95.83	98.96	98.04

## EXAMINATION RESULTS

Table 1 showing the GCSE subject results over the previous three years ending in June 2010, in comparison with respective Northern Ireland (NI) averages

	More than 10 percentage points above	Between 5 and 10 percentage points above	Within 5 percentage points	Between 5 and 10 percentage points below	More than 10 percentage points below
<b>GCSE A*-B</b>	Art & Design Business Studies* Geography Learning for Life and Work	History Information Technology	Chemistry French Home Economics Music*	Biology English German Mathematics Physics Religious Studies	Additional Mathematics Design and Technology English Literature Spanish Sport (PE) Studies*
<b>GCSE A*-C</b>	Business Studies*	Geography Learning for Life and Work	Art & design Biology Chemistry Design and technology English English Literature French German History Home Economics Information technology Mathematics Music* Physics Religious Studies Spanish		Additional Mathematics Sport (PE) Studies*
<b>GCE A*-C</b>	Business Studies Home Economics Information Technology Music* Sport (PE) Studies*	Art & Design* French* History Politics Religious Studies	Biology Chemistry English Literature Geography Mathematics Spanish*	Design and Technology	German* Physics

\*Denotes subject which had a total entry of less than 30 over 3 years



**Table 2 showing the spread of the NI subject averages which have been used in the determination of Table 1**

	<b>100%-96%</b>	<b>95%-86%</b>	<b>85%-76%</b>	<b>75%-66%</b>	<b>65%-0%</b>
<b>GCSE A*-B</b>		Information Technology Music	Additional Mathematics Art & Design English English Literature History Home Economics Learning for Life & Work Mathematics Religious Studies Sport (PE) Studies	Biology Chemistry Design & Technology Geography Physics Science Double Award Science Single Award Spanish	Business Studies French Spanish
<b>GCSE A*-C</b>	Art & Design English Home Economics Mathematics Music	Additional Mathematics Biology Chemistry Design and Technology English Literature Geography History Information Technology Learning for Life & Work Physics Religious Studies Science Double Award Science Single Award Spanish Sport (PE) Studies	Business Studies French German		
<b>GCE A*-C</b>		Art & design Business Studies English Literature French Geography German History Home Economics Mathematics Music Politics Religious Studies Spanish	Biology Chemistry Design and Technology Information technology Physics	Sport (PE) Studies	

## **APPENDIX 5**

### **ACCOMMODATION**

- There are significant shortcomings in the quality of the accommodation, in particular, the facilities for art and design, music, physical education, home economics and the canteen.
- There is no accommodation for drama, a sixth form study area and there is insufficient disability access.
- The heating, windows and dozed pipe work need replaced.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- Four classrooms have significant health and safety issues.

**© CROWN COPYRIGHT 2011**

**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](http://www.etini.gov.uk)**

