

# Tring Park School for the Performing Arts

Dance and drama school

## Inspection dates

4–5 November 2015

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding provider

- The proportion of learners who complete their qualifications is consistently very high.
- Learners develop their performance skills in the third year of study to a professional standard and the proportion who gain employment within six months of completing their course is high.
- Learners gain a wide range of additional vocational and academic qualifications that help prepare them for employment.
- Teachers are highly skilled and enthusiastic and motivate all learners to work to high standards.
- Staff place a strong emphasis on developing each learner's independence and creativity. They know their learners well and provide excellent detailed and specific guidance so that they quickly develop their dance skills.
- Staff thoroughly assess each learner's abilities at the start of the course and provide effective support to those who need extra help to succeed.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers have very successfully maintained high standards of teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for learners, since the previous inspection.
- Governors and senior leaders have a strong vision for learners' training and future employment which they communicate highly effectively to all staff.
- Managers make exceptionally good use of feedback and suggestions from learners in order to ensure that the training meets their needs.
- Learners value highly the independence and choice they are given in selecting extra classes and qualifications to help them prepare for a career that is closely matched to their personal ambitions.
- Staff provide comprehensive guidance to help learners prepare for auditions and secure employment.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Tring Park School for the Performing Arts is a private residential and day school in Hertfordshire for learners aged 8 to 19. The school recruits learners from across the country and overseas. Alongside a broad academic curriculum, the school offers courses in dance, drama and musical theatre to learners up to the age of 16. For sixth form learners aged 16 to 19, the school offers courses in dance, musical theatre, commercial music and drama. The focus of this inspection was on the sixth form dance course, which is taught over three years and leads to a diploma in professional dance awarded by Trinity College, London.
- At the time of the inspection, there were 341 learners enrolled at the school, of whom 205 were boarders. There were 81 learners on the diploma in professional dance, of whom 26 were in receipt of Dance and Drama Award funding. Nineteen learners were funded through the Music and Dance Scheme for elite dancers.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- In ballet lessons, teachers should provide learners with guidance on how to reflect on their own and others' learning so that learners are more aware of how they execute specific aspects of technical skill.
- Managers should develop further the information and learning technology (ILT) resources so that teachers can use these to further reinforce learners' knowledge of dance theory and history.
- Senior managers should provide governors with more frequent reports on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that governors have a more comprehensive overview of teachers' skills.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Governors and senior leaders have a strong vision for the school, its staff and learners. All staff are thoroughly committed to ensuring that each individual learner is supported to develop their skills and abilities to be ready for a career in the performing arts industry.
- Governors and senior leaders have successfully maintained the outstanding standards of training and learners' achievements since the previous inspection.
- Governors, senior leaders and staff have a very healthy self-critical approach. They frequently and assiduously evaluate the impact of their actions on learners' experiences and achievements. They continually develop the curriculum so that it is closely matched to learners' needs and the changing demands of the performing arts industry.
- Managers have put in place outstanding arrangements for staff and learners to contribute to the management of the school. Managers use learners' insightful feedback and suggestions to bring about continuous improvements to learners' experiences.
- Managers ensure that the school plays a substantial role in the local community to promote dance, for example through teaching workshops in schools. They also make an important contribution to the wider dance community, for example in their work to increase the number of male learners who take up dance training.
- Managers have recently improved the process for observing teaching, learning and assessment, which links closely to staff appraisals, individual development plans and training. Managers have a comprehensive understanding of teachers' strengths and areas for improvement and provide robust support to help teachers develop their skills further.
- Staff use their links with a range of industry partners, including leading national dance companies, very well to broaden learners' experience of dance and to prepare them well for future employment. They also use their links with training organisations overseas to very good effect to provide learners with an experience of living and working in another country.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - Governors are suitably skilled to oversee all aspects of the school's work, and take a keen interest in the school and its learners. Governors provide excellent support to managers to ensure the continued improvement of the resources available, such as the excellent dance studios and recently opened health centre.
  - Governors monitor closely learners' vocational and academic performance. However, managers do not provide governors with sufficiently frequent or detailed information about the quality of teaching and learning in order for them to have a comprehensive overview of what teachers do well, and of the few areas for further improvement across the school's faculties.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - Managers are very diligent in ensuring that the school meets its statutory obligations. All staff, including governors, receive frequent training. Managers have put in place very effective arrangements to ensure that learners are safe on the campus, and their arrangements to ensure learners' health and well-being are excellent.
  - Senior managers have responded well to the new 'Prevent' duty. The designated safeguarding person has completed suitable training and appropriate information has been disseminated to all staff and learners.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers establish outstanding working relationships with learners and accompanists and all approach their work with professionalism and a commitment to excellence. Consequently, learners make rapid progress, develop high levels of practical skill and achieve their qualifications.
- Staff have substantial professional experience that they use well to plan and deliver high-quality learning. Teachers organise lessons with a considered and logical structure that builds and develops learners' core skills and competencies sequentially.

- Learners are highly enthusiastic and keen to learn, ask pertinent questions and respond exceptionally well to correction. Teachers adapt exercises so that all learners can work at a level in line with their abilities and are always challenged to do their best. For instance, in a yoga session, learners successfully executed a complex balance pose. As a further challenge, the teacher demonstrated several more complex variations that all learners attempted and the majority mastered.
- Learners are able to improve the quality of their work rapidly as a result of teachers' highly detailed, specific and clearly expressed feedback. For example, in ballet, the teacher's close observation of learners' hip orientation and leg placement ensured that learners improved their ability to recover from a complex pirouette sequence.
- Teachers give detailed verbal and written feedback to learners following assessment of their work. Learners also accurately and thoroughly assess their own work through watching video recordings and making developmental observations in journals and rehearsal logs. As a result, learners are clear about their strengths and areas for development, and how to achieve the improvements that will ensure excellent progress.
- Learners are aware and tolerant of other people's individual abilities and differences. They work with a range of learners from all over the world, both within the school and through foreign trips and cultural exchanges. Teachers work extremely well to understand each learner's abilities and ambitions, and to ensure that learners develop the technical skills, resilience and personality to succeed as dancers.
- Staff assess thoroughly the support needs of all learners and quickly provide extra help to those who need it. Learners who need extra help achieve as well as their peers.
- In a few ballet lessons, teachers do not provide sufficient time or guidance to enable learners to reflect critically on the skills they acquire in order to make further improvements. For instance, when waiting to perform travelling sequences in groups, those watching do not critically appraise their own work against the performance criteria.
- Teachers make limited use of ILT in lessons and for learning outside the classroom to further enhance learners' understanding of relevant theoretical and historical topics.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding**

- Staff are highly successful in fostering in learners a very strong ethos of independent learning. Learners have considerable choice in the skills workshops and additional vocational and academic qualifications that they study in addition to their main programme. Over the three-year programme, learners take on more responsibility for their own creative work, which culminates in their devising, organising, producing, rehearsing and performing their own high-quality show.
- Learners are versatile and creative dancers with skills that equip them well for employment. They gain confidence, self-reliance and perseverance as well as technical and creative dance skills.
- Through the final-year productions, learners acquire excellent professional experience and expertise. They gain a detailed insight into the performing arts industry through working with professional choreographers, rehearsing and performing on tour.
- Staff provide comprehensive guidance to learners so that they are able to identify and secure highly appropriate employment as a result of a clear understanding of their aptitudes and abilities. Teachers prepare learners thoroughly for auditions and learners know how to promote themselves in order to secure work.
- Teachers use their extensive knowledge of the industry and their wide-ranging contacts with the professional world to ensure that learners' talents are showcased to choreographers and other potential employers at prestigious venues.
- Learners make valuable contributions to the local community by participating in a wide range of activities, such as leading dance workshops in local schools and at evening and weekend classes. They take part in an impressive range of enrichment activities that improves their understanding and experience of the performing arts.
- Learners' standard of written English in their journals and portfolios is good, and teachers ensure that where errors occur learners know how to correct them. Learners make confident and eloquent contributions to class discussions and rehearsals. Teachers ensure that the few learners who have not achieved at least a grade C in GCSE English or mathematics at the start of the course do so in the first two years. Staff provide good support for learners for whom English is not a first language.

- Staff's attention to learners' safety is excellent. Learners are aware of how to keep themselves safe in classes, in the community and online. They know who they need to go to if they experience any issues and they feel safe on the campus. Staff provide excellent guidance to learners regarding their health and well-being and, for those learners who need guidance or support to overcome difficulties, a comprehensive range of services is available. All learners are aware of how to keep healthy through remaining hydrated and eating a nutritious and healthy diet.
- Teachers pay excellent attention to safe practice in all lessons and train learners very well in the prevention and care of injuries. Learners take part in outstanding Pilates and physical conditioning classes that underpin much of the practical work that they do. When necessary, learners take very good personal responsibility for the management of their injuries.
- Learners are prepared exceptionally well for life in modern Britain. Through frequent assemblies and a comprehensive tutorial curriculum, managers and staff provide exceptional guidance to learners on a wide range of issues, including the celebration of cultural diversity, appreciating different faiths and religions, and understanding current affairs issues.

## **Outcomes for learners**

**are outstanding**

- Over the past three years, the proportion of learners who have successfully completed the diploma in professional dance is very high.
- Managers have successfully implemented initiatives to help learners gain employment, such as their support for a professional dance company for graduates. The proportion of learners who are in work within six months of completing their training is high.
- Managers monitor the outcomes for different groups of learners closely, both in terms of qualification achievement and entry to employment. No significant variations exist in outcomes, for example between male and female learners or those of different ethnic backgrounds. Managers also monitor learners' applications to study at the school and through this process they have identified the need to increase the proportion of male applicants. Their successful strategies have resulted in an increase in male learners enrolling on the programme.
- Learners gain skills quickly and by the third year produce work to a professional standard. In public performances, final-year learners produce work that is confident, fluid and expressive. Learners master a wide range of skills in many genres and are highly competent in performing diverse and challenging choreography.
- Learners develop into skilful and versatile dancers. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons and participate with enthusiasm and commitment.

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Dance and drama college
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	25
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Stefan Anderson
<b>Website address</b>	<a href="http://www.tringpark.com">www.tringpark.com</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	13
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
<b>Number of learners aged 14–16</b>	0							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	None							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Rieks Drijver, lead inspector

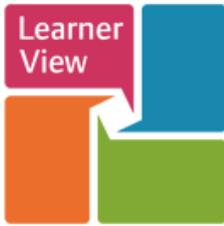
Sylvia Farrier

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the director of dance, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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