

# Millennium Performing Arts

Inspection of colleges participating in the Dance and Drama Award scheme

---

**Unique reference number:** 50013

**Name of lead inspector:** Joan Hewitt HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 14 March 2012

**Address:** 29 Thomas Street  
Woolwich  
London  
SE18 6HU

**Telephone number:** 0208 3018744

**Website:** [www.md2000.co.uk](http://www.md2000.co.uk)

## Information about the college

1. Millennium Performing Arts is an independent further education college for performing arts. It trains students aged 16 to 20 for employment in the performing arts industry. The college runs a three-year course in dance and musical theatre leading to the diploma in either professional dance or in musical theatre, awarded by Trinity College, London. The school is accredited by the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET).
2. The college is based in a purpose-converted arts centre and enrolls many students from across the United Kingdom. Currently 108 students are enrolled at the college, of whom 58 are in receipt of Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA) funded by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA).
3. The teaching staff is made up of four full-time staff, including the three directors, and freelance practitioners who generally teach at the college up to three times a week. This varies from time to time as teachers are working professionals.

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>

## Overall effectiveness

4. Millennium Performing Arts is a satisfactory college with satisfactory capacity to make further improvements. Outcomes for students are good. Staff and students share a commitment to secure a good range of skills to underpin students' future careers. Teachers offer careful tuition and training and because of this most students go on to secure regular employment within the performing arts industry. Students reach above average standards and make good and sometimes better progress. They are confident and respond well to the high expectations teachers and the directors have of them. Most students are positive about their experience at the college and feel secure in seeking support if they need it. The opportunities for them to contribute to reviewing the work of the college are under-developed. Students benefit from the college's commitment to deliver a strong set of core performance skills across a range of genres in each of the disciplines. Consequently students become versatile and skilled performers. This is valued highly by employers and learners.
5. However, the college overall is satisfactory because there are gaps in the procedures to ensure safeguarding requirements are met. Key members of staff have not had recent training at the appropriate level on matters of child

protection so the college's arrangements to safeguard students are inadequate. Staff are vigilant in observing students for indications of any physical or emotional difficulties as part of their skilled practice. Leaders regularly remind staff of the importance of maintaining this vigilance, and communication between staff is good. Many have attended training about child protection and safeguarding as part of their work at other institutions. However, the college's systems for collating information about staff training and rigorously implementing all of the practices outlined in the child protection policy are not systematic.

6. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The college relies too heavily on informal systems and this has led to safeguarding arrangements being inadequate. There are clear and rigorous systems to check on students' attendance and welfare. The information from these checks is analysed and used well to secure improvements in students' outcomes. The same rigour is not applied to gaining a clear oversight of essential staff training and qualifications. Nevertheless, there are many strong features. Leaders have been successful in tackling most of the points for consideration from the last inspection. Retention rates have improved and plans for staff to gain professional teaching qualifications are close to completion.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the preparation they get to prepare for auditions
- group counselling sessions
- the clarity of assessment feedback in acknowledging success and identifying the next steps they need to take to improve their skills
- teachers are practising professionals
- support to ensure they stay healthy and how to avoid injuries.
- availability of key staff
- teachers' high expectations.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- earlier opportunities for public performances
- cleaner premises
- more and smaller singing classes
- access to lockers.

### **Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What employers like:**

- the quality of the vocational training
- students' employability on completion of the course
- high standards of students' work.

### **What employers would like to see improved:**

- no areas for specific improvement were identified by employers.

## **Main inspection report**

### **Capacity to make and sustain improvement**

**Grade 3**

7. The outcomes for students are good and improving. The number of students securing employment in the performing arts is improving. Heads of disciplines work well together and this leads to improvements in teaching. The links between singing and dance, in particular, are strong. Directors review the work of the college regularly and improvements are effective. However, much of this collaboration is informal rather than planned and systematic. The college focuses quite rightly on improving outcomes for students. The systems for tracking students' progress are strong. However, this good attention to detail is not used with the same rigour in tracking staff development and skills, particularly in respect of child protection and safeguarding training. Communication between staff is good and they are an effective team.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**Grade 2**

8. Most students who complete the course secure appropriate employment within six months of graduating. This has improved in each of the last three years so that last year over 88% of students achieved this ambition. Typical professional jobs secured by students include work for cruise ship companies, film and television work. The college can also point to some striking examples of highly successful graduates. Almost all students who finish the course attain the Trinity College diploma in professional musical theatre or dance. Reports from Trinity College, London show the standard of performance is good in both musical theatre and dance. Recent reports commented on the strong technique, flexibility and control demonstrated by students in a Matt Mattox jazz session. Students have good vocal skills and harmony skills are refined. Students' acting is both sensitive and truthful, although occasionally students struggle to sustain believable characters. Inspection evidence demonstrates students are working at a high level and they maintain a high degree of concentration in lessons. They are resilient in seeking to improve their skills and have a clear sense of professional discipline.
9. Students are selected on the basis of competitive auditions. Students make good progress from this starting point. The college works hard to ensure auditions are fair, rigorous and realistic. Students agree that they are well informed about the demands the course places on their stamina and commitment. A few students say the college could do more to prepare them for the amount of dance involved. Retention rates for students with DaDA awards

rose to 90% in 2009/10. There was a slight dip last year but the average over the last three years is 89%.

10. Students feel safe and well cared for by staff. Most students say they can easily seek effective support from staff if they need it. They are well guided in securing accommodation. Students also have a good understanding of how to monitor their own health and well-being. Safe practices are learned routinely in lessons and this is supported very well by guidance on nutrition. Students are particularly appreciative of the group counselling which helps them to develop effective strategies to manage their emotional and mental well-being.
11. Students have good opportunities to contribute to charity events. Encouraged by the directors' deep and abiding commitment to promote equal opportunities, they help to promote events designed to encourage the engagement of different minority groups in the arts.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

12. Teaching and assessment to support learning are good. Teachers have established a strong rapport with their students and they enjoy a great measure of respect from learners. Teachers are working professionals with excellent subject knowledge. This benefits students as they have the advantage of being taught by skilled practitioners with a current view of developments within the industry. Students respond very well to teachers' consistent references to them as performers and this supports them in developing good employability skills. Teachers have high expectations of students. One of the main strengths in teaching is the high quality individual coaching points teachers routinely give. For example, in a ballet class the teacher guided a student to feel the difference in muscle tone in the back of the leg during barre work. As a result of detailed coaching the student quickly appreciated the subtleties and the movement improved. Occasionally opportunities to make teaching points to whole groups is missed when teachers make remarks such as, 'lovely, very good' without drawing out what is good and why.
13. Assessment is regular and well judged. External reports confirm this is thorough. There are clear assessment points during the year and students view these as rigorous and fair. Students have detailed feedback so that they are aware of how well they are doing and equally what they need to do to improve their work. There are regular opportunities for students to discuss their work with teachers. Written work is helpfully marked and gives students precise guidance on improvements. The college has introduced an initial diagnostic assessment for all students since the previous inspection. This has been used to provide support for students with specific learning needs. The college encourages students to use a wide range of media for assignments and this supports students who find writing more difficult to express their ideas more easily.
14. The curriculum meets learners' needs very well. The college offers training in ballet, jazz and contemporary dance along with singing and acting. This prepares students with the 'triple threat' set of skills needed for a successful

career in musical theatre. Since the last inspection acting has been reviewed and improved and this has engendered renewed enthusiasm from students. Courses such as acting through singing are developing well. Integrated professional studies are appreciated by students and this helps them to consider a wide range of issues from managing their own health and well-being to preparing audition strategies.

15. The college works well with a range of employers and exploits the professional networks and contacts of staff. This provides high quality opportunities for students to be very well prepared for employment. The content of workshops is reviewed regularly and it is highly responsive to students' needs and reflective of changing patterns in the industry.
16. The individual care and support for students are very strong. Students have regular access to a trained counsellor. Regular group sessions are held in which students discuss strategies to deal with important issues such as coping with rejection following unsuccessful auditions. Staff are acutely aware of any physical or emotional changes in students' behaviour because of the nature of the training. Injury support is good and students are observed in lessons following injury to ensure full recovery. There are systematic and rigorous processes to track and analyse attendance and injury patterns, enabling the college to take swift action when students need additional support. However, key staff have not undertaken the appropriate child protection training and so this element is satisfactory rather than good.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 3**

17. Leaders have a coherent and well-stated vision for the college. They have been successful in forging an effective team. Staff and students are committed and they have a clear understanding of the college's aims. Directors meet regularly with staff and hold frequent discussion about students' progress. However, the opportunity to ensure this is used systematically to contribute to developing the curriculum is not fully exploited.
18. There is a regular programme of lesson observations by directors and the heads of discipline. This is followed up by helpful written feedback to teachers. Discussions about improving teaching are detailed but written feedback often misses the opportunity to record agreed actions. The college is committed to giving teachers the opportunity to gain professional teaching qualifications and a course is due to be available to teachers from September 2012. The college's self-assessment has been used to secure improvements effectively; the clearest example of this is the number of students securing appropriate employment and the positive views employers have of the college.
19. The effectiveness of the college to promote safeguarding is inadequate because training for key staff is not current. Some members of staff have attended appropriate training through their work with other providers, sometimes to an advanced level, but leaders have not done enough to monitor this. Consequently, they do not have a clear picture of when training needs updating.

The college has an appropriate child protection policy but the good administrative processes it outlines are not routinely adopted. Nevertheless, the awareness needed to safeguard students is central to staff practices. In addition, communication about students' welfare is detailed and analytical. Students feel safe and are comfortable in approaching staff for support. The curriculum supports them in managing risks very well.

20. The promotion of equality and diversity in the college is good. The directors strive to attract students from under-represented groups through visits to schools. Staff and students are treated fairly and students say audition processes are equitable. The college is a cohesive community and students are encouraged to support charities and become involved in community projects. For example, students have become involved in preparations for the Olympic Games and one student is participating in the 'Winning Ways' documentary.

### **What does Millennium Performing Arts need to do to improve further?**

- Implement the practices outlined in the college's child protection policies and review these annually.
- Ensure all staff, but especially the person designated with responsibility for child protection, have appropriate and regular training.
- Review the procedures for pre-employment checks for teachers.
- Review the staff handbook to raise the profile of the child protection policy.
- Continue to improve retention rates.
- Accelerate plans to give staff the opportunity to train as qualified teachers.
- Further develop opportunities for students to contribute to reviewing the work of the college.

## **Information about the inspection**

21. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by one of the college's directors, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, reports by the qualification awarding body, Trinity, London, the previous inspection report, and data about students and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
22. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider, and observed lessons.



Record of main findings			
<b>Provider name</b>	<b>Millennium Performing Arts</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>	<b>385315</b>
<b>Learning types:16-18 learner responsive:</b> FE full-time and part-time courses			

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners at the time of inspection</b> Full-time learners Part-time learners	108
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	3
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2
How well do learners progress?	2
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2
How safe do learners feel?	3
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2
<b>Quality of provision</b>	
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	na
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	4
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3

\*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2012