

Laine Theatre Arts

Dance and drama school

Inspection dates 27–28 January 2016

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	Good

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Outstanding leadership from the Principal and senior managers has helped establish clear strategic objectives and a strong sense of purpose among staff and students.
- Managers have successfully improved the overall effectiveness of provision since the last inspection.
- Staff consistently promote very high standards and a strong sense of professionalism among students.
- Students are ambitious, confident and self-assured and make excellent progress.
- Staff support students very well to become independent learners.
- Teachers help students develop an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles, injury prevention and management.
- Students develop a diverse range of high-quality performance skills which maximise their chances of securing good jobs.
- Teachers ensure that students develop the job search skills and audition techniques they require to find sustained employment on completing their course.
- Most students successfully progress to high-quality and relevant employment after graduating.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Laine Theatre Arts is a private performing arts college located in Epsom, Surrey. The inspection focused on the three-year level 6 diploma in professional dance and musical theatre validated by Trinity College, London. A number of students on the course are funded by the national dance and drama awards (DaDA) scheme. The college also offers a range of courses including children's and adults' classes, and a foundation course in musical theatre and dance, all of which lie outside the scope of this inspection. The college is accredited by the National Council for Dance Education and Training.
- At the time of inspection there were a total of 222 students on the Trinity diploma, of which 108 were in receipt of DaDA funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should continue with their plans to introduce more formal governance arrangements while they work to create an advisory board for the college. In establishing the terms of reference and membership of the panel, leaders should consider its function in helping to shape evolving strategic priorities, establishing a suitable long-term succession plan for the college, maintaining financial stability and helping to assure the quality of work across the college.
- Leaders and managers should strengthen the appraisal and lesson observation procedures to ensure that all staff have clear targets, and identify and create opportunities for staff to share best practice more widely across the teaching team.
- Teachers should identify suitable strategies to ensure that any student who cannot take an active part in practical activities due to injury is still fully engaged in learning.
- Teachers should moderate the sound levels of recorded music in dance lessons to enable students to hear instructions clearly and to avoid noise disturbance in adjoining studios.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- In response to very strong leadership from the Principal and senior managers, all staff clearly understand and actively promote the main objectives of the college: to train students to the highest standard; to promote artistic and vocational excellence; to prepare students to work in the performing arts industry and to give them the discipline, knowledge and skills they need to progress successfully into employment. At every stage of the course, staff foster a culture of respect and professionalism among the students, who respond enthusiastically and demonstrate complete commitment to their training.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have successfully raised the overall quality of provision. In particular, they have increased the capacity and expertise of the college leadership team, updated policies and procedures and put in place more effective quality-review and improvement strategies. Leaders and managers have made good use of the annual self-assessment process, analysing the overall quality of provision and identifying suitable actions to address any emerging weaknesses.
- Leaders continually analyse and adapt the curriculum to ensure it meets the ever-changing demands of the industry and developmental needs of the students. Leaders have recently updated the course guidance, which now provides staff with an improved overview of the course structure and makes assessment criteria clearer for teachers. Course leaders have amended programme content to ensure it meets students' needs better. For example, they have recently updated their approach to delivering jazz dance techniques and singing to help students maximise the progress they make in these disciplines.
- Communication between managers and staff is highly effective. Teachers and managers frequently discuss students' progress, course delivery, design and content, both formally in team meetings and informally in impromptu staff discussions. This clear communication helps teachers to monitor the progress of all students, and maintains the smooth running of the course.
- Leaders and managers do not make best use of lesson observations or performance reviews with staff. While regular informal discussions help managers to recognise the strengths and achievements of teachers and senior managers, the formal procedures do not always capture accurately their agreed objectives or priorities for continuous professional development.
- Teachers are highly experienced, with very good subject knowledge and excellent industry expertise. They use this insight skilfully to provide high-quality training, help students appreciate the rigours and challenges of working in the industry and keep them focused on successful progression into employment.
- Staff have very strong links with high-profile professionals from the industry, including casting directors, agents, choreographers, and musical and theatre directors. They make excellent use of these, for example to work on college productions with the students, to create invaluable short-term professional work experience opportunities for students and to help graduating students secure their first professional contract.
- Teachers and managers regularly promote and reinforce British values to students through instilling the shared values of the college, which focus on freedom of thought and expression, diversity, tolerance, and the responsibilities of students to the artistic, cultural and economic lives of different communities.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - Leaders are at the very early stages of establishing formal governance arrangements, as they work to create an advisory board for the college.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Students feel safe around the college. The Principal, senior leaders and parents of current students describe the college community as 'a family', which accurately reflects the individual care and very high levels of personal support and encouragement that all staff show towards the students. Staff reinforce the importance to students of a healthy lifestyle; they instruct students on how to stay safe online. Leaders follow safe recruitment practice. The college has suitable safeguarding policies and procedures and designated safeguarding staff in place. All staff receive appropriate training and regular updates on safeguarding. Students and staff are familiar with the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teachers accurately assess students' initial skills at the beginning of their course. They use this information well to plan lessons that provide sequential development of students' practical skills and theoretical knowledge.
- Teachers use a broad range of suitable teaching strategies to encourage and challenge students and to help them make excellent progress. Teachers use well-chosen, searching questions that make students think hard, reflect on their actions and relate their theoretical and technical knowledge to the objectives of the lesson. Staff provide students with the understanding to self-correct their posture and technique in lessons.
- Students regularly benefit from immediate, prompt and insightful feedback about their performance, both from teachers and from their peers. Staff provide detailed instruction to students following assessment activity, which actively supports further improvement. Skilful use of peer assessment enables students to develop essential critical analysis skills and extend their technical vocabulary and understanding. They respect each other's feedback and respond to it positively.
- Teachers ensure that dance classes are fast-paced and purposeful. Students regularly have the additional opportunity to work with visiting choreographers and directors to produce new works for public performance. Students rise to the challenges enthusiastically, and perform their newly acquired skills to a high standard.
- Students have regular performance opportunities, which help them gain the full range of skills across both dance and musical theatre, thereby enabling them to achieve their goals.
- Students' written work and reflective journals are of a high standard. Students present their work creatively in their own preferred style, and teachers support them to achieve good levels of literacy and numeracy. For example, in one assignment, students produced an accurately costed budget proposal for a stage show. Teachers' feedback is detailed and clearly tells students how to improve both their written work and their technical skills. Students value the feedback they receive and strive to develop their knowledge and skills further.
- Staff teach students how to manage any injury that they might develop. Should a student sustain an injury, they support the student; where necessary, they refer them on for suitable treatment and advise them on a staged return to classes. Teachers normally give injured students appropriate tasks to complete, such as peer assessment; however, on a few occasions, teachers do not fully integrate these students into class activities.
- The quality of studio spaces and resources is very good. However, at times the studios are slightly cramped relative to the large group sizes. Teachers generally manage this well, however, and make effective adjustments to enable students to perform fully. In a minority of jazz lessons, the music is too loud, making it difficult for students to hear instructions from the teacher and causing unnecessary sound intrusion in adjacent studios.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

- Students are confident and self-assured. They are earnest in their desire to improve their skills to professional standards. Students are punctual and attendance is high in most lessons. However, authorised absences to participate in additional performance work within the college occasionally disrupt attendance at lessons. Behaviour, tolerance, politeness and respect for both peers and staff are outstanding.
- Many students participate in valuable short-term professional performance work during their holidays, such as pantomimes over the Christmas period. This provides them with invaluable practical experience of the industry and helps increase their chances when applying for permanent posts on completion of their diploma.
- Staff provide students with the knowledge and insight they need to search for jobs and to maximise their chances of securing work, particularly at audition. For example, in a singing lesson, teachers created a realistic audition situation for students, where they had to make the maximum impact to an audition panel within the shortest period of time.
- As part of their course, some students also acquire additional qualifications in teaching dance, which

increases their longer-term career options.

- Students feel valued and very well supported by all staff. They are entirely at ease about discussing with their tutors any personal or course-related concerns they may have. Students know that staff will help identify appropriate solutions and provide support where required.
- Teachers constantly monitor the health and well-being of students and take appropriate action to ensure that they receive the specialist attention they need. Students understand the need to stay healthy, particularly in relation to their profession, and are diligent at monitoring their diets, nutrition and hydration. They know the importance of injury prevention and management, and always undertake the requisite physical and vocal warm-ups prior to lessons and rehearsals.

Outcomes for learners are outstanding

- Students work with great determination and enthusiasm. They make very good progress relative to their starting points. Male students in particular exhibit a strong commitment to the intensely physical nature of their training; as a result, they demonstrate exceptional progress.
- Student retention rates have remained consistently high. Managers provide very good and wide-ranging support to any students at risk of leaving the course prematurely. All those students who complete the programme successfully achieve the Trinity diploma.
- The quality of students' performance work is high, particularly in dance, where they exhibit excellent levels of confidence, skill and versatility across different dance genres. For example, in a showcase performance, students demonstrated significant aptitude as soloists, in unison and ensemble dances, and also in pas-de-deux sections across a range of different techniques. Their high levels of energy, enthusiasm and commitment, coupled with their versatile theatrical interpretations, resulted in excellent and convincing performances. The carefully choreographed, seamless segues between the different scenes also helped demonstrate the students' appreciation of the highest professional values in performance.
- On completion of their diplomas, the vast majority of students successfully progress into high-quality, sustained work in line with their career aspirations, for example in West End shows, with regional touring productions, on cruise ships or on film and television productions.

Provider details

Type of provider	Dance and drama school
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	220
Principal/CEO	Betty Laine (OBE)
Website address	www.laine-theatre-arts.co.uk

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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)							44	178
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Peter Nelson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tricia Collis	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Young	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the college's Vice Principal, 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 students, parents 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.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk



Employer View is a new website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too.

To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk

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 and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, 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.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

