

Young Dancers Academy

25 Bulwer Street, Shepherds Bush, London W12 8AR

Inspection dates

13–15 June 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- School leaders have a clear vision for their school. Leaders ensure that pupils experience the highest quality teaching. This enables them to make excellent progress and attain the highest possible standards. All the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders and the financial trustees are committed to ensuring that talented pupils are not held back and can take up places at the school regardless of a pupil's individual circumstances. Fundraising is a high priority and ensures that the school's commitment to equal opportunities becomes a reality for young dancers.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding because of strong leadership. Teachers are passionate about their subjects. Teachers' questioning is a particular strength and ensures that pupils develop their learning and make excellent progress.
- The curriculum is well thought out. Ballet is carefully balanced with academic subjects and extra-curricular opportunities to prepare pupils for adult life.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are confident and articulate and delight in pushing themselves to achieve their best.
- Leaders and staff provide a high level of care. This is combined with the discipline of ballet and the vision and high expectations of the proprietors to ensure that pupils achieve success.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. There is no disruption in classes and pupils listen and concentrate well. Their conduct is exemplary.
- Pupils make excellent progress in ballet, other dance and academic subjects. This is because of consistently high-quality teaching.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils progress to the ballet schools in a range of ballet companies in the United Kingdom and abroad. A few pupils take up places to study A levels and progress to universities. Outcomes could be further improved by extending the curriculum to include more science practical work and individual ballet tuition.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that pupils have opportunities for:
 - individual ballet tuition throughout the curriculum
 - a greater range of practical work in science.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The executive director, artistic director and the headteacher have ensured that the school is thriving and that all the independent school standards are met.
- The proprietors have an inspiring and ambitious vision that no talented young person should be prevented from taking up a place at their school because of lack of funds. The artistic director together with the financial trustees have fundraising as a clear priority to ensure that the school is able to offer financial support to pupils. Because of this dedicated and extensive work, the proprietors have ensured that as many pupils as possible, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can benefit from this expert ballet training and academic learning environment.
- The curriculum is highly effective and enables pupils to progress onto dance or academic studies when they leave at the end of Year 11. The curriculum builds on the vision of the proprietors to provide a balance of dance and academic success for pupils, ensuring that the vision becomes a reality. A range of visits to museums, galleries, concerts and dance performances supports the taught curriculum. Additional classes are available to supplement and extend the dance curriculum.
- The executive director and headteacher have ensured that staff morale is high and that everyone works together to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. The leadership of teaching is strong, so there is a high degree of consistency and collaborative working across subjects and teachers.
- Senior leaders undertake regular learning walks and check pupils' work. They evaluate teaching against the teaching standards. They feed back to staff, who say that they are well supported to improve their teaching and have access to professional training to support the new curriculum and new GCSEs. Leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate.
- School leaders and staff prepare their pupils well for life in modern Britain. There is a strong commitment to removing barriers to learning and ensuring respect and tolerance for people of different faiths, background and lifestyles. The school provides a range of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

Governance

- The proprietors and the financial trustees share a common vision and are highly ambitious for the school. The financial trustees are focused on making sure the school is financially secure and able to offer scholarships and bursaries for eligible pupils. The trustees are successful in large-scale fundraising and the search for individual sponsors for pupils so that as many pupils as possible can benefit. The proprietors, with the support of the trustees, have developed a robust appraisal process for staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy on its website, which meets requirements. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are well

trained and understand their responsibilities. Leaders respond immediately to any concerns raised by staff. Leaders are trained for safer recruitment and the record of checks on staff is rigorously maintained.

- The school's work with pupils so that they can learn to keep themselves safe is a high priority. The school has robust policies and educates pupils to make sure that they understand the dangers and do not, for example, share pictures of themselves in dance wear.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- All teachers are passionate about their subjects, keen to share their expertise with pupils and determined that they should have only the very best outcomes.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is excellent. They plan and deliver a range of activities for pupils that have a high level of challenge to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Ballet and dance teachers are expert at showing pupils how a particular position or movement should look. Dance and academic staff work closely together, so this feature of teaching, showing pupils how to do an activity, is also prevalent in academic subjects. For example, in mathematics the teacher showed pupils how to hold and use drawing instruments to complete an enlargement. This enables pupils to learn more quickly and make rapid progress.
- Pupils' have positive attitudes to learning. They listen and concentrate well to teachers and to each other. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong. This creates an encouraging learning environment in the dance studios and classrooms. Pupils develop great confidence that enhances their learning further.
- Teachers' questioning is excellent. Teachers ask a range of different types of questions to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning further. Likewise, pupils are curious and ask questions to check their own understanding or raise new lines of enquiry. For example in a Year 8 history class, pupils studying Napoleon and the battle of Waterloo were able to develop a nuanced insight into Napoleon's motives and thinking through the teacher's expert questioning.
- Teachers develop pupils' speaking and extended writing skills across the range of subjects, as well as in English. There is a high degree of consistency of approach so that pupils are able to transfer their skills in writing into different subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident, disciplined and ambitious young people. They have excellent attitudes to school. Pupils speak powerfully and eloquently about the school, and the impact it has had on their lives. One pupil said, 'They make you believe in yourself.' Pupils are proud of their school.

- The level of care for pupils is high. Pupils are clear that they are able to go to any member of staff if they need support or help. The school advises pupils on nutrition to keep themselves healthy and ensures that only food and drink deemed suitable is available for pupils.
- Pupils have highly effective support to ensure that they are safe. They have been taught how to keep themselves safe on the internet and in using a mobile phone. Policies are strictly enforced and pupils understand this. The school's work on preventing radicalisation and extremism has had a positive impact on pupils. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils are confident it is always dealt with.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around the building and with staff and visitors is exemplary. The focus on manners and etiquette in ballet classes has a strong impact on pupils overall demeanour. They are consistently polite and courteous and behave in a mature manner.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes in dance and academic subjects is excellent. There is no disruption and pupils can fully focus on their studies.
- Pupils' attendance is excellent and is well above average. They are determined not to miss a day of their dance studies.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils' progress and attainment in ballet is outstanding because of expert teaching. School leaders have ensured that pupils have a wide range of dance experience. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' freedom of expression, choreographic and performance skills rather than graded ballet examinations. School leaders are keen to extend this further so that pupils can benefit from individual as well as class tuition.
- Pupils' progress and attainment across the broader performance arts is also outstanding. All pupils study music and musical theatre. They attain well in graded music theory examinations and a range of specialist music and performance qualifications in all year groups, not just at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in academic subjects is equally strong. In 2016, pupils' attainment was well above the national average. Pupils' attainment at the higher grades was particularly strong in history and English. The most able pupils make excellent progress and attain well.
- Pupils currently in the school make strong progress from their starting points across the range of subjects. This is shown by the work in pupils' books. Pupils who need to catch up are given individual support in class to ensure that any misconceptions are tackled immediately. Pupils' learning in science would benefit from a greater range of practical work.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively to make progress in academic subjects. Pupils' individual education plans are written and reviewed effectively. They give detailed advice to teachers about supporting pupils and all teachers act on this information. As a result, this group makes strong progress in

academic subjects.

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and training. In all year groups, pupils have experience of preparing themselves for auditions and performance. They develop resilience and self-reflection, so, by Year 11, pupils take potentially stressful auditions in their stride and achieve success.
- After Year 11, pupils take up places at ballet schools linked to the best ballet companies in the country and internationally, eventually graduating into these ballet companies as dancers or into theatre. Occasionally, pupils decide that a future in dance is not for them. However, the school's equal focus on academic subjects enables pupils to move to a school or sixth form college to study A levels. These pupils go on to take up places at university, including Russell Group universities.

School details

Unique reference number	135729
DfE registration number	205/6200
Inspection number	10012783

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	51
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietors	Kerry Williams and Anna Du Boisson
Headteachers	Kerry Williams (Executive Director) and Kate Blakeburn (Academic Principal)
Annual fees (day pupils)	£11,655
Telephone number	020 8743 3856
Website	www.youngdancersacademy.com
Email address	youngdancersc@aol.com
Date of previous inspection	4–6 June 2013

Information about this school

- Young Dancers Academy is an independent school in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham. The school offers a ballet and academic curriculum.
- The executive principal and the artistic director are also the joint proprietors. The proprietors' vision is for pupils to excel in both ballet and academic subjects so that pupils can become ballet dancers but also have the option of a broader range of career paths.
- The school is supported by a charity, the Du Boisson Foundation, which also provides a range of bursaries and scholarships for eligible pupils.
- The school has financial trustees but does not have governors.
- The school occupies several buildings that have been converted for dance and educational

use on two sides of a residential street in Shepherd Bush.

- The school admits pupils through dance auditions.
- The school website meets requirements.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school was last inspected in June 2013.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in Year 7 to 10 in ballet and a range of academic subjects. Almost all visits to classes were made jointly with the executive principal or the artistic director.
- Four groups of pupils, including Year 11, spoke to the inspector about their views of the school.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work in books and folders to see how well they are learning.
- Inspectors met with the proprietors and the headteacher of the academic subjects. A group of subject teachers also met with the inspector to discuss the impact of their work.
- The inspector held a telephone conversation with a financial trustee and met with another trustee.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school's performance, policies, safeguarding records and records of pupils' progress and attainment.
- Inspectors took account of the nine responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

Inspection team

Janet Hallett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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