



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

Inspection Report
The Arts Educational Schools London
Dance & Drama College

Date of inspection: October 2002

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Basic information about the college

Name of college:	The Arts Educational Schools London
Type of college:	Performing arts school
Principal:	Iain Reid
Address of college:	Cone Ripman House 14 Bath Road London W4 1LY
Telephone number:	0208 987 6666
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Name of reporting inspector:	Tony Davis ALI
Date of inspection:	October 2002

Part A: Summary

Information about the college

The Arts Educational Schools London, known as ArtsEd, is an independent provider of performing arts training, based in Chiswick, West London. The Cone School of Dancing, founded in 1919, and the Ripman School, founded in 1922, merged in 1939. They adopted their present name, ArtsEd London, in 2000, with branches in London and Tring, Hertfordshire. Actor training was subsequently developed in addition to dance and music. The London schools moved to their present location at Cone Ripman House in 1986, and separated from the Arts Educational School Tring Park in 1994. ArtsEd comprise a pupils' department for students aged eight to 18 specialising in expressive arts, and two vocational training schools for older students. The school of musical theatre offers a three-year national diploma in professional dance (musical theatre) for students aged 18 or over. The school of acting offers a one-year advanced certificate in professional acting, which has recently been validated as a Master of Arts (MA) in acting, and a three-year national diploma in professional acting, which has been validated as a Bachelor of Arts (BA) honours in acting. The school has also created a new post-diploma part-time course leading to a BA honours in acting. Acting students in receipt of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) dance and drama awards study for both the degree and diploma qualifications. The diplomas are awarded by Trinity College, London. The pupils' department was not within the scope of this inspection.

At the time of the inspection in October 2002, there were 238 students, 118 of whom were enrolled on the three-year professional musical theatre course, 99 on the three-year professional acting course and 21 on the one-year post-graduate course. On the three-year musical theatre course, 87 of the 118 were in receipt of the DfES dance and drama awards. Of the 99 three-year BA honours acting students, 63 were in receipt of the award and 10 of the 21 one-year post-graduate MA students were also in receipt of the award. The new post-diploma part-time BA honours in acting course was not inspected because none of the students were in receipt of the DfES award.

There are 13 full-time management, administration and maintenance staff. In the schools of acting and musical theatre, there are approximately 37 visiting specialist tutors and approximately 50 visiting professional directors, choreographers and musical directors. ArtsEd is a limited company with charitable status. The two schools of acting and musical theatre are each managed by a director, assisted by heads of section. The pupils' department is run by a headmaster. The directors and headmaster are accountable to the dean who has overall responsibility for strategic direction and the smooth running of the organisation. The dean is accountable to the council of management.

How effective is the college?***Key strengths***

- excellent teaching
- particularly well-qualified staff with extensive professional experience
- high standard of performance skills
- particularly high expectations of acting from musical theatre students
- rigorous assessment procedures
- good pastoral and learning support for students
- highly effective leadership
- active development work with external organisations
- a strong commitment to continuous improvement.

What should be improved?

- disturbance to classes from noise within the buildings and from outside
- insufficient access to the library and quiet study area
- insufficient formal appraisal and observation of teaching in the school of acting.

Further aspects of provision requiring improvement are identified in the sections on individual subjects and courses in the full report.

Students' views of the college

Students' views of the college were taken into account and are summarised below.

What students like about the college

- high standard of guidance from professional tutors
- the quality of the shows
- the good rapport with staff
- the friendly atmosphere
- the setting of demanding personal targets
- a safe environment in which to experiment
- the thorough preparation for all aspects of the entertainment business.

What they feel could be improved

- the size and opening hours of the library
- access to the canteen
- the amount of 'cool-down' time at the end of some dance classes
- the removal of the overall student ranking system in musical theatre
- the degree to which singing and movement are integrated with aspects of the acting curriculum.

Part B: The three-year professional acting course

Using the Common Inspection Framework, inspectors make overall judgements on curriculum areas and on the effectiveness of leadership and management using a five-point scale. The range of grades include: Outstanding (grade 1); good (2); satisfactory (3); unsatisfactory (4); and very poor (5).

Inspectors judged the provision to be **outstanding (Grade 1)**.

Inspectors observed 16 classes.

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Grade	Teaching	Learning
1	8	6
2	4	6
3	3	4
4	1	–
5	–	–
6	–	–
7	–	–

Key: The range of grades includes: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); and very poor (7).

Strengths

- excellent teaching
- excellent training for film and television
- particularly well-qualified staff with extensive professional experience
- rigorous assessment procedures
- excellent support for graduates entering the profession
- good pastoral and learning support for students.

Weaknesses

- disturbance to classes from noise within the buildings and from outside
- insufficient access to the library and quiet study area.

Scope of provision

1. The three-year acting course aims to train students for a professional life as a flexible actor with a variety of additional skills relevant to the entertainment industry. The course provides core subjects in voice, movement, acting, text and improvisation with supporting subjects in singing, dialect, Alexander technique, combat and contextual studies. Further options include stand-up comedy, clowning and circus skills. In the final year, students also receive guidance on finance and tax, and advice on career development.
2. In their final year, students present five public performances including a ten-minute film and a showcase production for agents, casting directors and potential employers. Students gain experience of theatre-in-education by touring with one of the productions to local schools and colleges. The school also offers a one-year MA course. This is aimed at mature students and provides training for actors with a university degree or a minimum of two years experience in the theatre or a related field. The core subjects are acting, voice, movement and singing. In their final term, students produce a show reel and a short film, which is shown to the public. They also perform two productions in a public London venue.

Achievements and standards

3. The school received 550 applicants for 57 places available on the three-year and one-year courses. Students in all years show an appropriate level of technical achievement in the core subjects. Third-year students who were preparing for their first public performance were working at a professional standard and were confidently improvising in character as part of the exploration of their play. Their approach was thoughtful and disciplined. They also demonstrated a high degree of professionalism when working on a ten-minute film project, which was being prepared for public showing. Retention rates have remained consistently good over the last three years. In 2001, two of the 37 students failed to complete the course and one student changed course. In 2002, all BA students gained first or second class honours together with the national diploma in professional acting. All one-year students achieved their qualification which, until September 2002, was the advanced certificate in professional acting.
4. In July 2002, 11 students were entered for the external British Academy of Dramatic Combat (BADC) fight proficiency examinations, one at basic-plus and the rest at level 2. All students passed. First destinations for the students who completed their studies in July 2002 include the Royal Shakespeare Company, Norway's Trondheim Theatre, the Almeida Theatre, Vienna's English Speaking Theatre, the Donmar Warehouse, and television productions of *The Bill* and *Eastenders*.

Quality of education and training

5. The three-year course is well designed. There is an emphasis on the core subjects throughout the first two years and on the development of professional performance practice in the third year. The first two terms of the one-year course concentrate on core subject development, with work towards public performances in the final term. By helping them to develop a wide range of diverse skills, the school aims to train actors who will compete well for jobs within the profession.
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6. Students have a strong training in technique within the core subjects. There is much supportive collaboration between core and project staff. Tutors responsible for the core subjects support the special demands that each production makes on actors' technique. Much of the teaching is highly imaginative. In a first-year class, a tutor used adverts from *Time Out* magazine's lonely hearts column as a stimulus for work on building a character. The students each wrote a character study inspired by their chosen advert. The group was then split into two. Each student discussed their character with the group after presenting their pieces. Students from each group were then paired up to go on a date, in character, with a view to finally creating a scripted scenario. The students were excited by the project and demonstrated imagination and insight with their creations and observations. Training for film and television is of a high standard. A third-year film project involving a short scene between two men in a car, was shot on location in a local street. When not acting, students worked on sound, continuity and the jobs of first and second assistant. This gave them valuable insight into the workings of a film crew and the demands made upon them. The experienced film director treated the students as professionals. Students' performances were confident, well judged and appropriate for television or film. The students demonstrated great awareness of their responsibilities within the team, even in relation to their polite controlling of passing traffic. In all classes, teachers provide encouragement to individuals and give constructive feedback. The school creates a secure atmosphere in which students can experiment and take risks with their work.

7. Assessment procedures are very thorough. There is a comprehensive capably administered marking system on the three-year course. Students fully understand the criteria by which they will be assessed and receive full and constructive feedback on their performance against the criteria. They are aware of their targets for improvement and the progress they are making, and keep a daily workbook in which they evaluate their own progress. Students are assessed at the end of each term or at the end of a project, as appropriate. Project and public performance grades are combined with grades for written assignments to produce a final grade for the course.

8. The audition process is thorough, fair and supportive. Applicants take part in voice, movement and improvisation group workshops. They present audition monologues and attend an interview. A panel of four assess each applicant against detailed criteria. Student representatives help to put applicants at their ease and their own views are taken into account in the panel's discussions.

9. Support for students is a strength within the organisation. As in musical theatre, first-year students act as mentors to applicants who have accepted places. The mentors contact the new students before they arrive to answer any questions and alleviate any concerns. New students value this early contact and cite it as a major factor in the development of an excellent working relationship across the different year groups. During the induction process, students are made aware of their rights and responsibilities, the resources available to them and the procedures for assessment. There is a rolling programme of individual tutorials which ensures that all students are seen on a regular basis. Those who require more immediate attention can request it at any time. Students are at ease when communicating with staff on academic or personal issues. Year tutors also lead weekly year-group meetings which are an effective forum for managing operational issues and provide the opportunity for students to raise concerns of any kind. The school provides effective

personal help and advice to students. A counsellor is also available one day a week to advise students who require confidential support. Examples of help from staff include extra support with text work, extra sessions for students recovering from protracted illnesses and extra Alexander sessions for a student with a restrictive physical problem. The school does not have a formal system for the initial assessment of additional learning support needs.

10. Close links have been developed with professional companies such as the Royal Court Theatre. The school organises a programme of visiting professionals to talk on a range of issues that will face the students when they become professional actors. Casting directors also visit the school to give advice and guidance on career development to graduating students. Links with the industry are further reinforced by professional guest directors who are invited to work with the students. The school also runs a casting advisory service which produces an excellent, high-quality brochure to promote graduating students and to help them to secure their first jobs. The advisory service works closely with casting agents and employers, and assists graduates when enquiries arise. The service is very supportive, particularly to those who leave the school without the representation of an agent.

11. The teaching staff are highly qualified, both as teachers and industry professionals. The teaching accommodation is suitable for the classes which are held in them. The studios are light and spacious, though the extraneous and internal noise disturbance provides an additional challenge during focused and concentrated work. There are two well-equipped theatres which are efficiently run by the head of production. The studio theatre is a flexible rectangular space seating up to 150 and the second theatre has a proscenium arch and thrust stage and seats 140. There is a licensed bar, a radio studio and a gym. A well-equipped film and television studio has been installed since the previous inspection and is run by a full-time technician. Students' film project work is efficiently supported by an experienced line-producer. The studio theatre and four of the rehearsal studios have recently been improved with the addition of air conditioning. The library is small and there is insufficient access to private study space. The opening hours do not currently coincide with students' independent study time. There are plans to address these areas of concern. The library stock has been increased substantially since the last inspection. Students have good access to computers and free access to the Internet. There is a student common room and refectory providing breakfast, lunch and evening snacks.

The three-year professional musical theatre course

Inspectors judged the provision to be **outstanding (Grade 1)**.

Inspectors observed 15 classes.

Summary of grades awarded to teaching and learning by inspectors

Grade	Teaching	Learning
1	8	5
2	5	6
3	2	3
4	–	1
5	–	–
6	–	–
7	–	–

Key: The range of grades includes: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); and very poor (7).

Strengths

- excellent teaching
- leading professional directors and choreographers as visiting teachers
- high standard of performance skills
- the insistence on professional standards
- particularly high expectations in acting for musical theatre students
- rigorous assessment procedures
- good pastoral and learning support for students.

Weaknesses

- disturbance to classes from noise within buildings and from outside
- insufficient access to the library and quiet study area.

Scope of provision

12. The three-year musical theatre course has a wide-ranging curriculum designed to produce the 'complete performer'. The core subjects are acting, music and dance. The dance subjects of jazz and ballet are supported by pas de deux, tap, street jazz and contemporary work, as well as movement, tumbling and physical theatre. The singing provision includes separate individual singing lessons for technique and repertoire development, choral singing and music theory. In acting, the lessons in technique are supported by classes in speech, voice and, from the second-year, classes in text. The disciplines are combined in weekly performance and song-and-dance classes. Health and safety issues, professional employment skills and contextual studies are also covered.

13. There are excellent opportunities for students to take part in performance work. First-year and second-year students give in-house song-and-dance presentations at the end of each half-term, and present their project performance work to tutors and fellow students at the end of each term. During the final year, at least six fully staged musicals are produced in one or the other of the two professionally managed theatres on site. There is also a graduate showcase presentation in a West End theatre.

Achievements and standards

14. The school received 341 applicants to the course last year and accepted 46 students. Audition procedures have been significantly tightened since the last inspection, resulting in a progressively stronger intake. The school produces students who are equally proficient in dance, singing and acting. Ballet is taught as a core dance subject, providing a solid technical base for the musical theatre dance disciplines. Although there are still weaknesses in the dance technique of some third-year students, there has been a marked improvement since the last inspection. Students' jazz dance technique is highly energetic and direct. The students display both style and a well-defined rhythmic awareness in tap. The standards of acting are very mature for a multi-disciplined course. Levels of concentration are impressive while students develop their separate scenarios within the class. Singing is accomplished, and the students display confidence and musicality in their ensemble and solo work. Overall, levels of performance reach high professional standards. By the end of the third year, students are well prepared for the profession. They are mature, thoughtful and accomplished performers with wide-ranging and diverse skills.

15. Most students find good employment soon after graduation. Of the most recent group of graduates, 72% are already working in the West End, on national tours or in the media. Retention rates have been of concern in recent years, but the trend shows significant improvement. Analysis has shown that the majority of students who leave do so in Year 1. Some 25% of students who began in 2000 have left the course, but, of those who started in 2001, the figure is now 10%. All graduating students passed the national diploma in professional dance (musical theatre).

Quality of education and training

16. Most teaching is very good or outstanding. Students have access to a wide range of professional expertise. Teachers have high expectations of their students and engage and motivate them effectively. Some classes, particularly in jazz dance, are at the standard of a visiting master class. A weakness highlighted in the last inspection was the 'wide range of abilities in some dance classes'. This has been successfully addressed by the initial assessment of students' skills and subsequent teaching in groups of matched abilities. There is a good mix of teaching techniques. In one class, students were asked to demonstrate their clear understanding of underlying concepts by teaching a dance sequence to a hypothetical non-dancer. Students have welcomed the appointment of the more experienced members of each group as 'dance captains'. They are available to students between lessons as an extra source of technical support. The teachers encourage and receive lively feedback from students. The atmosphere in class is exuberant although students always remain appropriately focused on their tasks. The standards expected by the acting staff are as high as would be found on an acting course. In one second-year class, the students used Laban based movement exercises to develop sophisticated and creative improvisations. The teaching of singing is of a very high standard with audition and assessment procedures firmly linked to professional West End practice. In an individual singing lesson, the tutor used the example of a child stretching a string of chewing gum to its limit to draw an extended phrase from the students. In a group singing lesson, the tutor discussed how the developing social sensitivities of each decade affected the language used in song lyrics, helping students to develop their understanding of phrasing and pronunciation. Final-year individual tutorials refine audition performances and lift them to a professional standard.

17. Students also benefit from the contributions of leading professional directors and choreographers who visit the college. These visiting professionals ensure that the final-year productions, in particular, are auditioned, directed, choreographed, rehearsed and produced to the standard of a professional West End musical. Their advice is much valued by the students who cite it as one of the main strengths of the organisation.

18. There are a number of suitably sized studios equipped with pianos and/or sound equipment. All dance studios have sprung floors, which are stripped and re-polished every six weeks. Air conditioning has been installed in four of the studios, addressing an area of weakness highlighted in the last inspection report. There is a well-equipped Pilates studio and gym. The two in-house theatres are of a high standard, effectively managed, and with good technical support. The studio theatre seats up to 150 in a variety of seating arrangements. The main theatre seats up to 140 and has a fly-tower, proscenium arch and forestage. There are appropriate changing and common room facilities for staff and students. Although the canteen caters for all staff and students within the organisation, the meal times allocated to students do not always coincide with their rehearsal schedules. Students regard this as an issue which needs addressing. The library is well run and appreciated by students, however, opening hours are not always scheduled to match students free study time. Access to computing facilities has been greatly improved and is now satisfactory.

19. Assessment procedures have been strengthened since the last inspection. During the summer term, subject tutors give an achievement grade for each discipline which reflects effort and attendance as well as level of accomplishment. A written report is then produced

for each student. There are also two project assessments each term and end-of-term performance assessments. Verbal feedback is given after all projects and after the mid-year reports. Progression to the next year is dependent upon students achieving pass grades in each discipline and each project. Third-year students are assessed solely on their public performances. The criteria used for assessments are appropriate and students understand them.

20. There is even weighting to disciplines within the course and the course is carefully planned to meet the needs of the industry. The song-and-dance classes and production projects in which elements of the course are brought together in rehearsals are particularly valuable for the students' development as multi-disciplined performers. There are occasional timetabling problems when an individual's singing lesson clashes with a group rehearsal. Also, the overrunning of rehearsals has caused some individual singing lessons to be cut short.

21. Auditions are fair and appropriately conducted by a panel which includes a senior member of staff. The new audition criteria are clear and detailed. The assessment is in two stages. To progress to the second stage, applicants need to demonstrate proficiency in dance and singing. Those invited to the second stage perform two contrasting songs and two monologues. They may also be asked to dance again. An interview with the senior member of staff is followed by an examination by a physiotherapist. The applicants must demonstrate proficiency in all three disciplines. Current students help to make the audition day run smoothly and are on hand to offer support and advice to applicants.

22. There is good pastoral and learning support for students. As in the acting school, first-year students are given the role of mentor to applicants who have accepted places. The mentors then contact the new students before they arrive to answer any questions and alleviate any concerns. Students value this early contact and cite this as a major factor in the development of an excellent working relationship across the different year groups. Weekly group tutorials with the head of student welfare ensure that students receive continuing support. Visiting professional practitioners lecture on topics such as nutrition, social health education, the healthy dancer, drugs, alcohol and stress management. Injury procedures are thorough and there is a weekly visit from a subsidised physiotherapist. The supporting studies of Pilates, Alexander technique and gym instruction complement the core techniques and help to prevent injuries. Students who sustain an injury are given written advice which they show to each of their class tutors to allow appropriate work to be set without causing further injury. The school is responsive to individual needs and offers various forms of individual support, as required. There is still no systematic initial assessment of additional learning support needs.

Part C: Leadership and management

Inspectors judged leadership and management to be **outstanding (Grade 1)**.

Strengths

- highly effective leadership
- active development work with external organisations
- effective management of the learning programmes
- a strong commitment to continuous improvement
- effective self-assessment.

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal observation of teaching and appraisal in the school of acting.

23. ArtsEd was last inspected in January 2001. In the period since the last inspection, the organisation has addressed many of the issues raised in the report. Improvements have been made in the quality of feedback to students and the guidance they receive in technique classes. In jazz-dance classes, students are taught in groups of matched abilities. The poor ventilation in some classes has been addressed by the installation of a new air-conditioning system. Whilst the size of the library continues to be a concern, a plan of action is now in progress to address this.

24. The leadership of the organisation is highly effective. The dean works closely with the directors of each school to develop a coherent strategy for the development of the organisation. Members of the senior management team present development ideas for consideration and approval by the council of management. The council, which is the organisation's governing body, is made up of professionals from a variety of backgrounds, including education and finance. It provides the dean with a unique advisory resource. The thorough five-year business plan gives a clear statement of the mission and objectives of the organisation. There are seven key objectives which cover all of the key questions in the *Common Inspection Framework*. These are broken down into specific appropriately demanding targets and accompanying actions. The business plan contains an analysis of the external factors which may have a negative influence on the future of the organisation.

25. There is strong emphasis on the cultivation and use of external links to develop both performing opportunities for the students and the reputation of the school. These include performance tours around local further education colleges and open days for secondary schools. ArtsEd participates in the 'Excellence in Cities' initiatives and works with the local Education Action Zone. The initiatives provide Year 10 and 11 students with the opportunities to take part in projects using ArtsEd resources and also for their specialist staff to work in participating schools. The organisation's head of development is the chair of Prospero, a European network for higher education institutions involved in theatre arts.

Together with the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA), Prospero is helping develop a European credit accumulation and transfer scheme to allow students to create degree programmes which are built around pan-European study.

26. Communications within the organisation are good and the learning programmes are effectively managed. Each school has its own procedures for communication and meetings. The senior management teams of the two schools meet independently each week to discuss operational and student-related issues, and these are detailed in minutes of the meetings. Both schools have formal mechanisms for the collection of students' views. In the school of acting, year tutors meet with their student groups each week to discuss issues and concerns. Student representatives are also elected to discuss issues directly with the heads of department. In the school of musical theatre, two student representatives from each group are elected to form a student council. They meet every six weeks to collate the views of their colleagues and communicate these to the heads of department. Amongst staff, there is also a great deal of emphasis on informal communications about the production requirements of performance work and the progress of individual students. Staff visit each others' classes regularly. The dean monitors the work of each school through his monthly meetings with all senior managers. There is a group meeting in which good practice is shared and cross-organisational issues are discussed, and also individual meetings to monitor managers' progress. Within each school, there are two full staff meetings per term, which the dean attends as necessary, meeting with the entire staff. The organisation produces an informative monthly bulletin, together with a regular newsletter which celebrates the success of the organisation's work. Job descriptions are in place for all full-time staff and lines of accountability are clear. The schools are capably administered.

27. In September 2002, the head of development co-ordinated the production of the second self-assessment report, which evaluates the organisation's provision against the *Common Inspection Framework*. The report accurately identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. Appropriate action is planned and monitored, though the lines of accountability for this are unclear and some actions lack specific deadlines or review dates. Each school produces its own self-assessment report taking full account of both students' and staff views. A separate report is produced for leadership and management.

28. ArtsEd is continually striving to improve their provision by responding to feedback from both staff and students. Students are confident that when issues are raised with staff their concerns are taken seriously and appropriate action is taken. Examples of improvements introduced in response to students' concerns include changes to the film and television curriculum, the introduction of stage combat to the MA course, the increased clarity of assessment criteria and written feedback, and the resolution of general health and safety issues. The musical theatre student council introduced the practice of first-year students acting as mentors to applicants who had accepted places. This good practice was then adopted by the acting school. In the school of musical theatre, there is a formal cycle of teaching observation and annual appraisal, which helps to identify the development needs of individual members of staff, and development needs related to the curriculum. In the school of acting, there has been insufficient attention to formal observation of teaching and appraisal. All staff, however, whether full-time or part-time, are encouraged to identify individual staff development needs. Recent development activities have included computer video editing, voice workshops and study for teaching qualifications. Whilst the commitment

to improvement is strong, there is no overall policy for quality assurance and no procedures which clearly set out how the whole organisation will address quality improvement systematically; for example, through an annual cycle of activities. Retention rates on the acting courses are high. On the musical theatre course, they are improving. However, the analysis of the reasons for students leaving their courses early is insufficiently detailed to allow the organisation to set priorities for taking effective action.

29. The schools have satisfactory policies and codes of practice for health and safety, equal opportunities, discipline and complaints. These are contained in the student handbook and staff code of practice. Both schools have a strict policy on punctuality and attendance. Whilst a summary of the organisation's commitment to equal opportunities does not appear in the prospectuses, a short disability statement signals a commitment to the appropriate treatment of applicants with disabilities. The ground floor of ArtsEd has been adapted to ensure access to performances for people in wheelchairs, however, the rest of the building remains inaccessible. The schools monitor the ethnicity of applicants, those called for audition and those enrolled. The success rate for applicants from minority ethnic backgrounds is high, however, the number of applicants from these backgrounds is low. Currently, 4.5% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The schools hope to raise the numbers of applicants from minority ethnic groups by staging their external auditions in cities with a high percentage of ethnic diversity.

30. The organisation manages its resources efficiently. Financial matters are monitored carefully by the financial controller who provides monthly reports of expenditure against budget to the heads of each department. The dean monitors all aspects of the accounts on a monthly basis and circulates copies to the council of management financial sub-committee. The accounts are also presented to the full council of management at their quarterly management meetings. Each school submits an annual budget request for approval by the dean. The overall budget is signed off by the council of management. The organisation has an operating surplus and a contingency fund for repairs and renewals. The accounts are audited annually. The external auditors also produce the annual accounts which are presented to the council of management. The schools seek to secure value for money when purchasing large items of equipment.

Notes