

Inspection of CAPA College

Inspection dates:

25–27 January 2022

Overall effectiveness**Outstanding**

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Education programmes for young people

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

CAPA College is a 16 to 19 free school which is part of Enhance Academy Trust. The college specialises in providing courses in creative and performing arts. It opened in September 2018 and is currently operating from temporary accommodation. At the time of the inspection, there were 276 students, with 140 in Year 12 and 136 in Year 13. Students study programmes which include both vocational qualifications and A levels.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students display exemplary attitudes to their studies. They are polite, motivated and well organised, and they attend regularly. Students understand the importance of punctuality and they move between their classes seamlessly, immediately ready to learn when they arrive at their next lesson. They are highly attentive in lessons and thoroughly enjoy their time at CAPA College.

Leaders, managers and teachers do not tolerate any inappropriate behaviours and have very high expectations of the conduct of their students. As a result, students uphold the high standards set by staff and appreciate the very professional environment in which they work.

Teachers are highly experienced and use their extensive industry knowledge and links very well. The energy and passion that staff have for their subjects is infectious and creates a unique and special learning environment for all students to learn and thrive in.

Students take great pride in their work and use the very helpful feedback that they receive from teachers to improve their practice further. They make rapid progress, achieve well and move on to their chosen universities and performing arts conservatoires. A high proportion of alumni very regularly secure roles in high profile shows in the theatres of the West End of London.

Students are exceptionally safe, nurtured and cared for. Staff thoughtfully explore the potential risks of work in the performing arts industry with students. Teachers discuss inappropriate situations that students may encounter and help them to feel confident to speak out should they find themselves in such a situation in the future.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and staff have an extremely clear vision for CAPA College to provide specialist education that enables talented young performers and students in creative production to access a high-quality performing arts education.

Trustees and governors take an active role in holding college leaders to account to ensure they maintain very high standards of education. Leaders have a relentless focus on providing the best teaching, support and outcomes for their students. They ensured that students continued to receive an extensive teaching programme throughout the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and as a result students continued to make very good progress during this time.

Leaders recruit students from a diverse range of educational backgrounds. Through an audition and helpful induction process, teachers identify any gaps in students' knowledge and skills. They use this information to provide very effective support for those students who need more time to develop their skills and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Leaders have constructed an ambitious curriculum and set high expectations for students to enable them to develop exceptional performance or production skills. Students benefit from a range of opportunities that allow them to explore their interests fully. Students studying creative production and media benefit greatly from being able to stage-manage large-scale productions in the college. Students on performance courses benefit from participating in regional and national competitions and working with external organisations such as the National Theatre.

Teachers ensure that students increase their technical performance and production skills so that they become more fluent in movement, singing, acting and production over time. Musical theatre and dance teachers use core sessions to develop students' muscle memory, which makes them faster and more precise in their performance skills. Singing teachers rehearse singing techniques using a range of training methods so that students have a secure and confident grasp of their higher register range.

Teachers participate in masterclass workshops for their own development as industry professionals, and they use this experience to inform their teaching. Consequently, students gain a better and up-to-date understanding of the performing arts industry and benefit from working with experienced choreographers, musicians, actors, technicians and stage managers.

Teachers carefully encourage students to become fluent in the technical language that they need to use in their work. Students can recall important terms quickly when rehearsing or producing creative works. Teachers use assessment very well in lessons to identify misunderstandings and are quick to correct errors. For example, ballet teachers direct questions to students about French terms used in ballet and this ensures that students use these terms accurately in lessons and in their work.

Students benefit from an excellent programme of careers guidance throughout their two years at the college. This supports them well to progress to prestigious universities and performing arts conservatoires and develops their awareness of alternative opportunities available to them, including employment and apprenticeships. Staff ensure that students hear from external speakers who provide them with very good insights into the creative and performing arts industries, the varied range of opportunities available to them, and how to prepare for these future roles.

Staff teach students very well how to stay physically and mentally safe. For example, during core activities at the start of each day, staff teach students the importance of adequate warm up before engaging in practical performance classes. Students learn how to maintain healthy relationships with their peers and how to respect personal and physical boundaries.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have a very clear oversight of safeguarding. They use their processes and systems to identify, monitor and support students who are vulnerable and those they identify as at risk. The designated safeguarding leader and safeguarding team follow rigorous processes when investigating concerns, and staff are highly attentive to students' well-being.

Leaders and staff create an exceptionally safe and welcoming culture where poor behaviour of any kind is not tolerated. When problems are identified, staff take swift and appropriate action.

Leaders, managers and college staff ensure that students understand how to keep themselves safe from harm and exploitation in the performing arts industry. They inform students fully about their rights in the world of work and about performance companies' responsibilities to ensure that performers are safe.

Provider details

Unique reference number	145869
Address	Unity Hall Westgate Wakefield WF1 1EP
Contact number	01924 583737
Website	www.capacollege.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Claire Nicholson
Provider type	16 to 19 free school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Hayley Lomas, lead inspector

Chloe Rendall

Rhys Davies

Her Majesty's Inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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