

# Inspection of Laine Theatre Arts Limited

Inspection dates:

17 to 19 October 2023

## Overall effectiveness

**Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Information about this provider

Laine Theatre Arts is an independent performing arts college based in Epsom, Surrey. The college specialises in training students to enter the musical theatre and dance industries and is accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre.

Laine Theatre Arts offers a number of qualifications, including the three-year, level 6 Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre, validated by Trinity College London, which was in scope for this inspection. At the time of inspection, there were 274 learners studying for the diploma, of whom 134 were in receipt of Dance and Drama Award funding.

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

Learners enjoy their learning. They value the opportunity to learn at the college and understand well how dedicating themselves to their studies will help them achieve their career goals. As a result, the large majority of learners have high attendance, are punctual, and actively seek out spaces to rehearse and hone their skills in their own time.

Learners learn in an inclusive and supportive environment where they are encouraged to ask questions, share their views and respect the opinions of others. They value the support and encouragement they receive from senior staff and teachers and quickly develop professional behaviours, which they consistently demonstrate in lessons.

During their course, learners successfully develop the core knowledge, skills and behaviours that they will need to pursue a career in musical theatre. Learners study a curriculum of dance, singing and acting, supported by contextual studies. They are taught by professionals who remain active in the industry alongside their teaching.

Learners develop their resilience, confidence and ability to manage setbacks, particularly in an industry context. For example, they develop an understanding of the audition and selection process, how to cope with being unsuccessful following an audition, and how to mentally prepare for their next audition.

Learners feel safe. They understand their rights and responsibilities as learners and know where to go to seek help should they need it. However, too few learners are well enough supported to understand the risks associated with the areas where they live, or those in the industry they aspire to enter.

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

Following the appointment of a new principal in January 2023, senior staff have begun to restructure leadership roles. Leaders articulate a clear rationale for the curriculum they offer and rightly recognise the need to enhance it further to meet the needs of the evolving industry. To achieve this, they have recently created a forum to consult with industry professionals to bring about the changes needed. However, as this work is in its infancy, any impact on the curriculum cannot yet be seen.

Teachers support learners well to build and develop their practical skills towards mastery throughout their studies. For example, in dance lessons, teachers sequence the development of technical skills carefully. They teach learners to carry out safe warm-up exercises that support them to execute accurate technique with the correct alignment. They then move on to develop their competency in new and more complex repertoire. Consequently, learners in dance sessions develop good technique in core dance genres. They learn to apply the professional standards

required in rehearsal and of working in ensembles before moving on to developing the skills needed to perform as solo and lead artists.

Teachers are highly skilled professionals. Many work in the industry alongside their roles as teachers and use this professional vocational knowledge well in their teaching. They frequently provide learners with up-to-date, real-life examples of their learning in professional practice. However, not all teachers are well supported to develop their teaching skills. Leaders have recently implemented a professional development programme to enhance the teaching skills of teachers. However, as this programme is new, the impact on the quality of teaching and on learners' experience cannot yet be seen.

Not all teachers use the results from auditions or assessments to plan their teaching or measure what learners can now do because of their teaching. A few teachers do not always plan sufficiently varied activities to help learners develop or correct their technique. In such cases, exercises are too often devised for a whole group rather than targeting individual learners' needs. As a result, some learners' needs are unmet, and their pace of learning is slowed.

Most teachers use effective techniques to help learners remember, practise and apply new practical skills. For example, they use repetition, deconstruction, slow tempo, side-by-side or line rotation to help learners understand and practise new techniques. As a result, learners quickly demonstrate mastery of new techniques.

Teachers use professional vocabulary well and support learners to develop fluency in using professional terms. For example, learners quickly learn to understand and use ballet and jazz terms describing postures and movements so they can discuss the artistry of work or understand what choreographers or musical directors are asking for. Consequently, learners understand the industry-specific language they will need to use in their careers.

Too few learners are supported to develop a deep enough understanding of life in modern Britain. Learners lack an understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and in particular, the risks in the areas where they live and may work. For example, learners are not routinely supported to develop an understanding of the risks of working in a predominantly night-time, city-based industry or of recognising and protecting themselves from predatory behaviours.

Leaders ensure that learners receive helpful information on their possible next steps in the industry and into further learning opportunities. However, staff do not support all learners to understand the broader opportunities available to them in musical theatre, such as non-performance roles.

Leaders have recently taken steps to realign governance from an advisory role to a formal governance structure. Those responsible for governance are well qualified and experienced to be able to hold leaders to account. They possess a wealth of professional, educational and creative industry experience. As these arrangements are new, governors recognise that there is still work to do to ensure that they

receive sufficiently detailed information that will allow them to better support leaders. Consequently, the impact of this new governance structure is yet to be seen.

Teachers make sure that most learners are performance-ready and equipped with the necessary performance skills and behaviours to compete in professional auditions and secure roles. Learners become confident, independent performers and are ready to tackle the challenges of the industry. However, in a few cases, learners' vocal skills are less secure or well prepared than their movement and acting practice.

The significant majority of learners achieve their qualifications, and a large majority secure work quickly upon completing their learning. Many learners go on to positive destinations and secure professional contracts in high-quality roles, such as stage shows, television and entertainment settings.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Provide all learners with information on life in modern Britain and develop their understanding of the potential risks they may face, both professionally and personally.
- Ensure that the curriculum is aligned with employer needs and emerging industry demands.
- Use the information gathered during assessments to plan teaching that meets the needs of individual learners.
- Provide teachers with the support and professional development they need to improve their teaching practice.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50012
<b>Address</b>	The Studios East Street KT17 1HH
<b>Contact number</b>	01372 724648
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.laine-theatre-arts.co.uk">www.laine-theatre-arts.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Matt Cole
<b>Provider type</b>	Dance and drama college
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	27 and 28 January 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal – head of dance, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider’s most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. 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

Stuart Collett, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
Christina Christou	Ofsted Inspector
Rachel Lane	Ofsted Inspector

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