



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Short inspection report**  
**English National Ballet School**

Dates of inspection: 15–16 June 2004

© Crown copyright 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspects dance and drama colleges in receipt of awards allocated by the Department for Education and Skills.

Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

Reference:

## **Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Basic information about the college</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Part A: Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Part B: Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Basic information about the college**

Name of college:	English National Ballet School
Type of college:	Ballet school
Director:	Kathryn Wade
Address of college:	Carlyle Building Hortensia Road London SW10 0QS
Telephone number:	020 7376 7076
Fax number:	020 7376 3404
Name of reporting inspector:	David Hornbrook HMI
Dates of inspection:	15–16 June 2004

**Part A: Summary**

The English National Ballet School is a small independent ballet school offering an intensive two-year training course in classical ballet for students aged 16 to 19. In 1995, the school moved to its own premises, located in the same building as Kensington and Chelsea College, not far from the English National Ballet Company. The school has a close relationship with the company and students benefit from this, but it is governed, managed and financed separately. The school has a board of seven governors and is a registered charity, limited by guarantee.

At the time of inspection in June 2004, there were 48 students on the course, 24 in the first year and 24 in the second year. Of these, eleven were male and 22 were from overseas, including 18 from outside the European Union. Some 28 students were in receipt of Department of Education and Skills (DfES) dance and drama awards.

The emphasis of the training is on classical ballet, with supporting studies. The school aims to prepare students for employment with the English National Ballet Company and other companies in this country and abroad. In its mission statement, the school refers to setting the highest standards, offering a coherent style of teaching, and encouraging a dynamic and creative culture.

The school is led by the director who is also the chief executive. The senior management team includes a general manager and a development director. The school has eight full-time staff: the director; three ballet teachers; two pianists; and two administrative staff. There are eight part-time teaching staff and a number of part-time support staff.

The last full inspection of the English National Ballet School took place in November 2002, when achievement and standards, and the quality of education and training were graded outstanding. The report may be downloaded from the OFSTED website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

On the basis of this short inspection, inspectors are satisfied that the outstanding standards reported after the last inspection have been maintained.

## **Part B: Leadership and management**

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

### **Strengths**

- strong leadership and effective management
- good strategic planning
- commitment to high standards
- effective quality assurance procedures
- productive links with the dance profession nationally and internationally
- thoughtfully targeted and well-devised policies and codes of practice
- a reflective and accurate self-assessment report.

### **Weaknesses**

- no strategy for improving recruitment from under-represented groups.

1. The course and the school are still efficiently organised and well managed. The director provides strong and effective leadership, closely supported by a new general manager in a post created since the last inspection. Although the director continues to be closely involved in all aspects of management, the addition of the general manager position enables her to become more engaged in the creative and educational work of the school, including teaching. Teachers and administrators work closely, and very effectively, as a team. They have a shared purpose and have been very successful in maintaining high standards.

2. Communication among the small group of staff is very good. Roles and lines of communication are clearly understood. Weekly meetings between the director and other managers enable them to monitor progress and to plan the activities of the school; similar meetings between the director and full-time ballet staff help to ensure consistency of standards in the dance programme and the monitoring of individual students' progress. Part-time staff attend these meetings when possible and are made aware by telephone and e-mail of important decisions. Formal staff meetings are held twice a term. The views of students are gathered informally through close daily contact with staff, and formally through annual questionnaires. For example, a small working party of students is helping to inform the design of the new prospectus. Responses to questionnaires are taken seriously by teaching staff in their annual review of the curriculum.

---

3. The board of governors is very active in pursuing the interests of the school. Members attend many of the performances, give their expert advice on strategic matters and support fundraising. Governors are well informed about the day-to-day operation of the school and are fully involved in issues relating to its future development. The range of expertise on the board has been largely maintained since the last inspection and the school is actively seeking to recruit where gaps in skills have been identified. The director, general manager and development director report formally to governors three times a year and present the school's recent activities, details of retention, pass rates and performance. Strategic planning is very thorough. Recently, an away day for senior staff considered fundamental issues relating to the direction and purpose of the school and there are plans to extend this reflective process to all staff.

4. The school has developed thoughtfully targeted and well-devised policies and codes of practice for both staff and students. For students these include: school rules; guidance on health and safety; information on support services, including those provided by the doctor and the counsellor; equal opportunities and disability statements; policies on anti-bullying; and alternative careers advice. Students receive all this information in the form of handouts, allowing staff to talk through the content at the appropriate time during induction and the rest of the year. The staff handbook is informative. Policies have been adapted or extended to reflect the needs of staff; for example, there are statements on equal opportunities for employees and bullying in addition to the usual information on conditions of service and grievance procedures. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in the planning of teaching, and in class review and evaluation. Teaching staff are given detailed guidance, are effective in applying the school's policy in class and have attended training in disability awareness. However, the monitoring of the effectiveness of the school's equal opportunities policies is underdeveloped. An appropriate action plan has been prepared in response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001. The ethnicity of all applicants, many of whom are from abroad, is recorded, but the analysis of trends in recruitment is underdeveloped and there is no formal strategy for broadening the ethnic background of the UK cohort.

5. Detailed job descriptions, many of which have been updated since the last inspection, are in place for all staff. Staff are informally appraised and procedures for a more formal process are being developed for 2004/05; a system of recorded class observation will form part of this. Development opportunities taken up by staff include first aid training, conferences related to dance training, pastoral care and support for dyslexia, and the school is exploring the possibility of further education (FE) teacher training.

6. Extensive contacts with national and international ballet companies and schools are highly beneficial for students and staff. The school has close relationship with, for example, the Paris Opéra Ballet School, the Royal Danish Ballet and La Scala, Milan. Eminent guest teachers are invited regularly to visit the school, providing teaching staff with valuable opportunities to exchange ideas about current practice and standards. Auditions for new students are held each year in London and Europe.

---

7. Since the last inspection, progress continues to be made on quality assurance procedures. The approach is systematic and the school is effective in monitoring progress towards planned objectives. Targets have been introduced for retention and pass rates for each year of the course. Improvements have been made in response to students' requests; for example, a fitness expert from a local football club has been brought in to work with the male dancers. The self-assessment report is thorough, thoughtful and accurate. It draws on extensive, well-documented sources of evidence and was prepared using the headings in the Common Inspection Framework. The chair of governors was involved in the process. Strengths and weakness are clearly identified and the action plan has appropriate measures for assessing progress and promoting further improvements. However, the self-assessment report does not yet sufficiently involve teaching staff nor explicitly inform development planning.

8. The school manages its resources efficiently. Finances are monitored carefully by the director, the general manager and members of the governors' finance committee, who receive monthly reports from the general manager. The school budget is managed by the general manager. The school continues to ensure that it secures value for money in purchasing resources.



**Notes**