

Bodywork Company Performing Arts Cambridge

Dance and drama school

Inspection dates	13–14 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Teachers place high demands and expectations on students to adopt and maintain a professional approach to the course; students respond well to these challenges.
- Students develop high skill levels and confidence in dance techniques.
- Attendance, punctuality and retention rates are high, and all those students who complete the course achieve the diploma qualification.
- A high proportion of students succeed in gaining employment on completion of the course.
- Students have a good understanding of the importance and relevance of a healthy diet, physical conditioning, hydration and injury prevention.
- Staff have a broad range of expertise, both in the performing arts industry and in how to deliver effective teaching.
- Students develop their literacy and numeracy skills well as part of their course.
- Students enhance their experience, understanding and knowledge of the performing arts through attending a range of additional activities and visits as part of their course.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Not all music theatre students develop the full range of performance skills to a sufficiently high level, particularly their acting, speech and singing skills.
- Managers do not identify and use quality improvement action planning sufficiently to prioritise improvement activities.
- Managers do not use staff appraisal or lesson observations effectively to identify and disseminate best practice.
- Staff do not always provide suitably precise instruction and advice to individual students in lessons.
- Teachers' assessment and feedback on written work does not always contain a sufficient level of detail.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Bodywork Company Performing Arts Cambridge, previously known as Cambridge Performing Arts, provides specialist performing arts training for students from the age of 16. This inspection explored the provision for those students studying the Trinity diploma in dance and musical theatre, funded by the national dance and drama awards (DaDA) scheme.
- At the time of inspection there were a total of 119 students on the Trinity diploma, of which 71 were in receipt of DaDA funding from the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Consider how to strengthen governance arrangements to provide guidance, support and challenge to leaders and managers, to help steer the strategic direction of the provider and raise the quality of provision.
- Develop lesson observation, appraisal and staff development opportunities further to identify and disseminate best practice to those areas where the quality of provision is not as high.
- Ensure that teachers provide consistently detailed, accurate and informed verbal feedback in lessons and written feedback in response to students' written work.
- Extend the acting, speech and singing skills of all students undertaking the music theatre strand.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The Principal and senior management team promote high expectations among staff and students. A culture of respect, professionalism and camaraderie is evident across all the performance disciplines.
- Since the previous inspection, the Principal and senior managers have maintained standards and have ensured that the vast majority of students are successful in achieving their qualification and progressing to careers in the creative industries.
- Managers regularly review and adapt the curriculum to ensure that the programme provides a suitable cross-section of skills and prepares students for life in the industry. Recently managers have introduced GCSE mathematics, for those students who did not achieve it prior to starting at the college.
- Staff arrange a wide variety of additional activities and visits, which help develop students' physical expertise and cultural awareness. For example, many students attend the extensive range of evening community-based dance lessons and new initiatives such as early morning fitness lessons that increase their stamina. Students have also attended international trips that help inspire and motivate students and enable them to appreciate the historical context of performance.
- Managers' appraisal of staff and monitoring to improve the quality of teaching and assessment are not sufficiently thorough. While managers undertake lesson observations linked to teachers' performance and appraisal, they do not carry these out with sufficient frequency. As a result managers do not identify and share well enough the best practice that exists at the college.
- Managers use self-assessment processes effectively to identify priorities for improvement. Management actions since the previous inspection have led to a number of developments, for example improvements to the monitoring and follow-up of students' attendance. However, in quality improvement action plans, managers do not always identify accurately what they need to do to improve further, or what improvement activities to prioritise.
- Students gain good industry-related work experience through managers' well-established and wide-ranging partnerships. For example, a collaborative initiative with a local university enables students to develop their insight into multicultural dance techniques including Indian, Chinese and Bollywood dance styles. Through other strong partnerships, students have also had the experience of performing at the Royal Variety Show and at the opening of the London Olympics ceremony.
- Staff are well qualified, have very good subject knowledge and many work as practitioners in performing arts, bringing a wealth of experience and knowledge about the world of dance, drama and singing to their teaching. Managers support staff well to undertake professional development, including teaching and Masters qualifications.
- Teachers ensure that students have an excellent awareness of the diverse world in which they live. They encourage students to explore these themes through their performance. For example, in preparing for a girls-only production, students researched the role of women in musical theatre; second-year dance students produced a powerful dance exploring free speech, inspired by the Charlie Hebdo events in Paris.
- Managers' actions have successfully increased participation from under-represented groups. For example, a recent boys' summer workshop resulted in a significant increase in the enrolment of male students; however, males are still under-represented relative to female students on the course.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - The college does not currently have any formal governance arrangements. Senior leaders recognise the potential value that more comprehensive governance arrangements would provide. Plans to create an appropriate advisory board are in the early stages of development.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Students feel safe around the college. Comprehensive pastoral support enables students to understand how to keep themselves safe. Injury prevention and management forms a key component of the programme and teachers continually reinforce this in lessons. A few areas of safeguarding are less comprehensive, such as teachers' recording of incidents and ensuring that all relevant managers receive training on safer recruitment.
 - Managers have taken positive steps to implement the 'Prevent' duty. Themed tutorials and assemblies have given students a greater understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and reinforced the importance of British values.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations of students in lessons; they frequently emphasise the relevance of activities to the skills students will require to succeed in the industry. Teachers provide good advice and guidance to students, which enables them to focus on developing skills in those areas where they show the greatest potential.
- Staff ensure that students develop their knowledge and skills sequentially, helping them grow in confidence as they progress. From the second year, staff divide students into groups relative to their ability levels, thereby enabling all students to progress at a pace that best meets their needs. Staff encourage students to develop the confidence to ask questions if they are unclear about a topic, ensuring that they make good progress.
- Teachers make particularly good use of demonstration to help students understand what they are trying to achieve, thereby deepening their insight and understanding. In addition, they frequently use effective visualisation techniques, for example to help students understand the point of balance when performing a layout exercise in jazz.
- Teachers have good strategies to support individuals who are less confident or who are progressing more slowly. For example, in a GCSE mathematics lesson the teacher ensured that the students developed a thorough understanding of the working methodology before moving on to the next stage.
- Most staff plan lesson activities very carefully and effectively. They ensure that they pitch the lesson activities at an appropriate level to challenge and engage the students, and to make the activities relevant to their development and progression. For example, in one lesson exploring job-search skills, the teacher provided students with a series of highly relevant job advertisements from which they identified the job that best suited their expertise, and prepared an application. During the task the teacher also provided good literacy support where necessary.
- In a small minority of cases, staff pay insufficient attention to the differing needs of the group when planning their lessons. As a result, teachers do not adequately develop the skills of all students across all the performance disciplines.
- Staff regularly make good use of paired-learning and group work. Students work together to discuss and explore different subjects and share their ideas, thereby increasing their insight and understanding into the subject and taking responsibility for their own development. In a small number of lessons, teachers provide guidance that is too generic, with insufficiently detailed direction to enable individual students to identify weaknesses or fine-tune their skills.
- The quality of assessment and feedback on written work requires improvement. While many teachers provide excellent, detailed, targeted and insightful comments that enable students to understand areas of weakness and make improvements, in a minority of written assignments teachers' comments are superficial, and lack sufficient detail.
- The school's accommodation and resources are generally good, providing suitable learning environments. A few of the spaces are in need of minor repair and refurbishment to ensure the consistency of accommodation across all studios.
- In a few lessons, the sound level of recorded music in dance studios is much too high. This prevents staff being able to communicate clearly with the students, and tends to interfere with lesson activities in adjoining studios.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- Staff have very high expectations of the students with regard to attendance, punctuality, behaviour, dress code and presentation. Students respond well to this; they attend punctually and the significant majority adhere to the appropriate dress code and presentational standards. Staff challenge students if they deviate from these standards.
- Staff advise students thoroughly about the importance of issues such as healthy eating, hydration, physical conditioning, injury prevention and management. Staff support any students who pick up injuries, and where necessary guide them towards suitable medical practitioners to provide further specialist assistance. This helps ensure that students are able to maximise their time training and studying.
- Staff provide students with a good range of skills and knowledge in preparation for entering the profession, including where to look for different types of work, how to apply, and how to prepare for, and maximise chances at, auditions.

- Students benefit from frequent input from visiting professionals and careers guidance from staff to ensure that they develop a thorough understanding of the opportunities that exist in the industry. They understand how they can develop their evolving skills to enable them to secure work successfully on completion of the course.
- Teachers provide good support to students to help develop their literacy skills, for example by assisting them when considering how to write applications and curriculum vitae. In addition, any students who have not achieved GCSE mathematics have the opportunity to study for and take the qualification.
- Students spoke very positively about the good support they receive from staff in helping them develop their knowledge and skills and prepare for progression into the industry. They also indicated that they feel safe around the college, and speak knowledgeably about how teachers educate them to stay safe and to respect others and help prepare them to contribute to the wider society.

Outcomes for learners are good

- Students respond well to challenge and are highly committed, both to the theoretical and intensely physical aspects of the course. All students develop a high level of skill and confidence in dance techniques, particularly in jazz and contemporary. Students on the music theatre strand are less assured in their acting-related skills. For example, they lack confidence in using improvisation as a technique to explore and develop ideas. In addition, their vocal skills in both speech and singing are underdeveloped relative to their stage of the course. Following the appointment of a new singing teacher, students are now making better progress in this area.
- Over the past three years the proportion of students who complete the course is high, and all those students who complete the course achieve the Trinity diploma.
- A high proportion of students successfully progress into employment on completion of their diploma, securing contracts for example on cruise ships, in musicals, with a variety of dance companies and commercial dance jobs.

Provider details

Type of provider	Dance and drama school
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	120
Principal/CEO	Theresa Kerr
Website address	www.bodyworkcompany.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)							81	38
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Peter Nelson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Deborah Vaughan-Jenkins	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gail Graves	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the school's Principal, as nominee, and carried out the inspection at short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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