

Additional guidance for the inspection of dance and drama colleges

This additional guidance is specifically for the inspection of colleges participating in the Dance and Drama Awards scheme (DaDA). It puts into context the circumstances and differences inspectors need to consider on a DaDA inspection.

It should be used in conjunction with the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills* from September 2012: www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This guidance supplements the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*.¹ It provides specific guidance on the key differences on inspection of those colleges participating in the Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA) scheme and the implementation of the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework.²

DaDA Colleges should familiarise themselves with both parts of the revised *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills from September 2012*,³ part one 'Conducting further education and skills inspections' and part two, 'Evaluation schedule for the inspection of further education and skills'.

Inspectors will use the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills from September 2012* and, where applicable, they will take into account the following contextual guidance.

Context

The Dance and Drama Awards scheme was introduced in 1999. The scheme uses a system of scholarships to support students who are successful at audition for places on dance and drama courses at a number of independent, specialist dance or drama colleges. (The term 'college' is used throughout this document, although many institutions retain the term 'school' in their titles). The administration of the awards is currently the responsibility of the Education Funding Agency.⁴

Dance and Drama Awards colleges are monitored by Trinity College London, which validates the specialist Level 5 and 6 professional national diplomas only available to these colleges. The qualifications will be one or more of the following.

- Level 5 National Diploma in Professional Dance (ballet or contemporary dance)
- Level 6 National Diploma in Professional Dance
- Level 6 National Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre
- Level 5 National Diploma in Professional Acting
- Level 6 National Diploma in Professional Acting

¹ *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Ofsted, Sept 2012 reference no 120061 www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012.

² *Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills 2012*. Ofsted, September 2012; reference no 120062 www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/common-inspection-framework-for-further-education-and-skills-2012.

³ *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills from September 2012* (120061), Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120061.

⁴ www.EFA.gov.uk

All these qualifications are accredited at levels 5 or 6 in the National Qualifications Framework.

Reports available to inspectors

Trinity undertakes a number of monitoring and moderation activities, the reports of which contribute usefully to inspectors' judgements about students' standards of work. Trinity College makes available to Ofsted its schedule of visits and the reports are available for scrutiny as part of the inspection. As part of the commitment to combine the different monitoring arrangements that apply to the colleges, Ofsted will continue to draw on the evidence that is apparent from these reports, and from those produced for accreditation purposes by the Council for Dance Education and Training and Drama UK. Reference may be made to this evidence in Ofsted reports, but it will not be quoted directly. Ofsted inspectors will arrive at their own independent judgements after a full and proper consideration of all other direct evidence.

Interpreting the 'Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012' and how it applies to DaDA provision

Short notice

Colleges will receive up to two working days' notice of inspection. They will need to make available to inspectors the following:

- any update to your annual self-assessment report and development plan
- retention data
- the number of students registered for and number of students gaining the Trinity award
- information about destinations to related employment over the last three years.

Colleges may find it useful to prepare this information in advance and update it on a regular basis. Ofsted has published a preparation document – *What the provider needs to prepare in advance for short notice inspection* – for this purpose although only parts of this document will be relevant for DaDA provision. This may be seen at:

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/what-provider-needs-prepare-advance-for-short-notice-inspection

The inspection visit

Inspections will be led over two days by one HMI, accompanied for one day by another HMI or by an inspector appointed and managed by one of Ofsted's contracted inspection service providers. In the case of colleges that are running more

than one distinct course for which Dance and Drama Awards are given, the inspections of each course will run consecutively: a day will be devoted to each course, and one additional day will be allowed for common themes/issues and to bring some of the findings together. So, if there are two courses, the lead inspector will be on site for three days and additional inspector(s) for two; if there are three courses, the lead inspector will be on site for four days and additional inspector(s) for three. The inspection team will need the secure use of a room for the duration of their visit and another room may need to be made available for meetings with staff and students.

Inspection documentation

On site, the lead inspector will need access to some or all of the following DaDA documentation in addition to those documents that are relevant and requested in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*:

- the college's prospectus or brochure and any published information about welfare and guidance
- any more detailed information on students' retention, achievement and progression for the previous three years (that is, further information underlying the summary that will be in the self-assessment report)
- recent validation and assessment reports from Trinity and from moderators or assessors from Drama UK or the Council for Dance Education and Training
- audition procedures and code of practice
- any other documents the college wishes the lead inspector to consider.

Interpreting the Evaluation schedule

For each of the aspects inspected – outcomes for learners; quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and leadership and management – inspectors will consider the main purpose of a particular type of provision. The aspect in DaDA where the key contextual differences apply is evident in outcomes for learners. Inspectors should use the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012* to ascertain how these specific DaDA nuances below apply to the key criteria when making judgements about outcomes. For the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the effectiveness of leadership and management inspectors should reference the handbook. Inspectors will also find the Trinity College documents useful listed below.

Outcomes for learners

Some or all of the following specific characteristics may apply when inspecting outcomes for learners:

- Because the Dance and Drama Awards scheme is designed to support gifted and talented students training for professional careers in acting, dance and

musical theatre, inspectors will pay very close attention to the employment patterns of graduates.

- Inspectors will look at data for students who completed their programmes in the last three years. Records of periods of employment, if available, will also be taken into account.
- Appropriate account will be taken of the different patterns of employment that apply to the different professional disciplines within the performing arts.
- Inspectors will judge the extent to which the quality and extent of graduated students' employment fulfils the requirements of the awards.
- Inspectors will take into account the assessment of standards of work reported by Trinity College London, Drama UK and the Council for Dance Education and Training during their accreditation and assessment visits.
- Retention and attainment (how many students stay and complete the course, and how many of those are awarded the Trinity qualification).

Key Trinity College documents are:

Report	Key points for inspectors to note
Annual moderation of internal assessments, one for each year of the course	Key contribution to inspector's judgement of achievement. External assessor's moderation of college's grading of students' performances. Strong and weak students may be identified; this would be useful to have in mind when speaking to students.
Final-year assessments for final-year performances	Key contribution to inspector's judgement of achievement. External assessor's judgements about the quality of students' performances. Strong and weak students identified; may be useful to have in mind when speaking to students.
Annual moderation of contextual studies	Key contribution to inspector's judgement of achievement. Commentary on the quality of work in files, assignments, etc., across all years of the course. Strong and weak students identified; may be useful to have in mind when speaking to students. Also, comments on the teaching and management of contextual studies which may help to inform leadership and management judgements.
Course revalidation report (every six years)	Very useful overall report on the course and the college, incorporating past Ofsted judgements. Useful contextual summary.
List of graduating students for previous year	Confirms pass rate of Trinity qualifications. Useful comments on failing or non-completing students which may temper judgements on retention.

Example of a Dance and Drama Award inspection report

The Exquisite Performance Company

Dance and Drama Awards college

Inspection dates		2–3 December 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Outstanding-1
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Outstanding-1
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Outstanding-1
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is outstanding because:

- Students make excellent progress and reach very high standards.
- Almost all students complete their course successfully. Most secure their first employment in musical theatre soon after leaving.
- Teaching is highly stimulating. It is technically very accomplished and enables almost all students to reach their full potential
- Support and guidance are excellent, and students' welfare is of paramount importance during their time at the school
- Students' learning that they gain from being in the school equips them admirably for their future lives.
- The school is highly effectively led and managed. The impact on outcomes for learners and learning is demonstrable
- This school matches the high aspirations of parents and students

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the tracking of graduates' professional destinations over time.
- Continue to explore the opportunity for more teachers to gain teaching qualifications as part of their own professional development.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Outstanding
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- Learners achieve a range of highly valuable skills on courses at the Exquisite School. Retention rates are good, averaging around 80% over the last three cohorts, although the school's flexible admissions policy, whereby students occasionally join the course in the second year or half way through a year, makes annual comparisons by this measure difficult.
- Of those students who completed their course over the last three years, all passed their respective qualification. Punctuality and attendance are outstanding, and the school instils in its students a very strong sense of personal discipline and responsibility.
- Attendance is excellent and accommodation is used very well by students outside of workshops and lessons. Students feel exceptionally safe and well nurtured over and above their technical training: their understanding of health and welfare is excellent, as are the injury tuition and treatment they receive.
- Students' core strength and stamina are developed to exceptional levels. Students acquire a realistic grasp of the professional environment in which they seek to work, although their awareness of wider society is too narrow. They contribute significantly to the community of their own school and many are very involved in a range of activities in the local area as practitioners and advocates of their art.
- Recent reports produced by Trinity College London show that the standard of dance and singing in classes and performances is outstanding. The recent (2010) re-validation report judges the school to be 'an exemplary provider' of the Trinity certificate and diploma, with several outstanding students in every cohort. Inspection evidence shows that students develop a particularly strong base in their classical technique and acquire a natural sense of performance which enables them to interpret and express work with apparent ease. They demonstrate an impressively mature technique and highly polished discipline in all that they do. Physical dynamism combines with an elegant clarity of line and a truthful portrayal of emotion to produce work that has both technical solidity and aesthetic flair.
- The outstanding progress and general development is noticeable in all students, no matter what their starting points. Students are accepted onto the course because they display exceptional potential to become professional performers; a high number attain this goal and transcend seamlessly into professional arts companies and professional performances.
- The school sets a high target of 85% of graduating diploma students to gain related employment within six months of leaving; it exceeded that target for those who left in the last two years. Last year, four (out of 21 leavers) have secured contracts with the Musico Teatro Company, with whom the school enjoys particularly strong links. Records of the most recent graduates are good, but the school acknowledges that it needs to try and improve the longer-term tracking of graduates' destinations.
- Typically, former students find work with national and international musical theatre and theatre companies, with contemporary dance companies. For example, recent graduates have worked with Rambert Dance, a world tour of West Side Story, We Will Rock You, Mamma Mia! and the Lion King.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding and reflect outcomes generally at the school.
- Students respond with vigour to the very high expectations that teachers have of them, and appreciate the balance of demanding challenge and personal support they each receive. They also enjoy the fact that they are taught regularly by a small core team of teachers who get to know them and their work very well.
- The teaching reflects the dynamic and exploratory nature of the very best of the artistic profession: the school now successfully elicits from its students a stronger sense of their own creative contribution to their development without compromising the highest technical standards. Students say they are encouraged to draw from their individual personalities in their dancing, singing for example, and teachers say that they are able to focus on nurturing the individual artistry of fully rounded, versatile performers. Opportunities to perform and to choreograph are very good, subtly matched to students' burgeoning artistic confidence and sense of adventure.
- Teachers' industry experience and academic qualifications are of the highest order. Almost all have worked in the arts industry as actors, musicians or dancers and hold at least post-graduate qualifications. They devise stimulating and challenging workshops that combine all the necessary learning opportunities for students to compete in the performing arts job market. Students are tested weekly on what they have learnt and are required to show how they are developing their performance skills to their peers. Teachers are conscious of and reinforce safe practices during teaching sessions.
- In one technical workshop, for example, students were working on the score from West Side Story. The teacher had broken down the parts and worked on the interpretation of rhythm, melody movement and delivery. Students were asked to perform pieces in a range of circumstances and styles, which really helped them to learn the pieces thoroughly. They had to work hard; they were given melodic ranges, for example, that took them out of their comfort zone. They worked hard on interpreting movement and extending technique and use of space.
- Assessment is rigorous, clear, fair and consistent. Individual development goals are agreed with students and closely monitored. Students feel very secure with this system and have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve. During workshops insightful and well directed questioning is used to pinpoint weaknesses in students' technique. This is followed expertly by verbal coaching or visual demonstration that provides very clear guidance of what the student has to do to improve. Improving the students' knowledge, understanding and skills is central to very well-designed and thought-through exercises and assignment briefs, and the gain in all three is evident.
- As the course proceeds, students are exposed more to incoming guest teachers who require that they become adaptable to different physical and stylistic demands. They develop artistic versatility and professional resilience on top of a well-grounded technique.
- Support and guidance are outstanding. Tutors offer students a very good blend of support and challenge, particularly in the third year when students are increasingly exposed to the demands of independent learning, of self-management and self-criticism as incipient professional artistes, and to the abrasions of the profession.
- Additional support is extensive and much appreciated by students. Those with particular learning needs, such as dyslexia, or foreign students who need additional English lessons, receive supportive teaching by specialist staff from the neighbouring further education college, and there is a fully integrated health team who serve students' needs. An innovative international student programme was started last year to help the significant

numbers of foreign students integrate more effectively into the local community. Students feel very secure and happy in a school that has their all-round welfare as its first priority.

- The general ethos around the school and on the courses is harmonious and highly supportive. Teachers and students conduct sessions in an atmosphere of mutual respect. An obvious sense of team work pervades in every session and students are proud and enjoy being part of the school.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
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- The school is highly effectively led and managed. It has gone through significant change since the last inspection. The vision and its impact of learning are evident throughout the school. The Principal has introduced changes that in practice have yet to be applied consistently by all teachers. The senior staff in the school bring a strong educational dimension to its work, and there is a growing discussion among teachers of how students learn most effectively.
- The senior management team has a strong performance management culture and collaborative team ethos. All core teachers are good recent appointments since September 2010 and disputes in management have been resolved. The director, who took over the school in 2010, has moved the ethos of the school from one which was hierarchical in structure and style to one which is genuinely collaborative. Teaching observations are routine, insightful and effective. This approach creates a self-reflective environment in which teachers re-examine how students' best learn. Peer observation is about to be introduced to disseminate the best practice and further invigorate the debate about learning.
- Quality assurance and self-assessment are thorough and effective. The annual self-assessment report is particularly good at identifying aspects of the provision that have improved. The process is inclusive throughout the college and views of students and parents are taken into consideration when determining key strengths and areas for improvement.
- The curriculum is highly responsive to changing professional practice and market competition. As the previous two-year course has grown into a three-year course, so opportunities for performance, work placements, choreography and outreach work have all increased to enrich students' experience and enhance their employment prospects. Contemporary dance and some non-traditional applications of world music and dance earned a place in the school's curriculum, expanding employment opportunities. Professional and support studies have become much more closely aligned with the widening performance repertoire through a series of in-house courses such as 'dance through time' and 'dance on screen'. Singing tuition and voice and acting workshops have been introduced to extend students' performance capabilities.
- Resources are generally very good, with the school's own studios and studio theatre being supported by regular use of professional venues to give students diverse performance experience. The college library stock is supported by the learning resources of the neighbouring further education college, but some specialist books remain hard to procure. Students say they would appreciate more access to studio space to do their own work as both dancers and choreographers.
- The school is involved in considerable outreach work, and actively promotes its equal opportunities and diversity policy to try and attract more applicants from under-represented ethnic and class groups. For example, the school has started an 'associates' programme for aspiring applicants from more deprived backgrounds to try and ensure they get an opportunity to develop their skills to the required level for auditioning for the diploma course. It remains the case, however, that almost all students are White British, and their own awareness of the wider society in which they might perform their work is limited.

- Staff and students speak highly of the close family atmosphere in the school, and general communications are excellent. Students' opinions are valued, and, in addition to course reviews, their concerns are addressed through a system of elected representatives who meet fortnightly. The 'buddy' system and international student programme were both developed as a result of what students said. Excellent arrangements exist to try and ensure the utmost safety and well-being of students. Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

Record of main findings (RMF)

The Exquisite Performance Company									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 learning programmes	16-18 learning programmes	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning	Employability	Foundation learning	Community learning
Outcomes for learners	1		1						
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	1		1						
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1		1						

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Performing arts	1

Provider details

Provider name	
Type of provider	Dance and Drama College
Age range of learners	16-18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 42
	Part-time: N/A
Principal/CEO	Ms Lockhart
Date of previous inspection	May 2011
Website address	www.theexquisiteperformanceco.com

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)								
Full-time							46	
Part-time								
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency (EFA)							

At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:

- N/A
-

Additional socio-economic information

The Exquisite Performance School is a privately owned company that teaches musical theatre to younger children and trains performing arts students aged 16-18 for jobs in the arts industry. It is owned and run by a Principal, who employs a Director of Studies and Bursar as her most senior colleagues. The school employs four full-time teaching staff and a large number of part-time staff, some on an occasional basis, who are responsible for teaching the courses and for the care, guidance and support that students receive.

The two-year National Certificate and three-year National Diploma in musical theatre are both validated by the Trinity College London. Students are selected by audition and interview on the basis of their potential to benefit from the professional training on offer. The training aims to equip all students to be able to secure employment in musical theatre in a highly competitive international profession. Around half the students that follow the courses come from all over England; they stay in residential accommodation recommended by the school's student welfare department. Students come from a range of social backgrounds and cultural heritages.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Paul Adeyaji HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Additional Inspector, assisted by the Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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