



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL

STANDARD INSPECTION

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

The Royal Ballet School

Full Name of School	The Royal Ballet School
DfE Number	318/6074
Registered Charity Number	214364
Address	The Royal Ballet School 46 Floral St Covent Garden London WC2E 9DA
Telephone Number	0207 836 8899
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Email Address	info@royalballetschool.co.uk
Director	Miss Gailene Stock AM
Chair of Governors	The Marchioness of Douro OBE
Age Range	11 to 19
Total Number of Pupils	218
Gender of Pupils	Mixed (111 boys; 107 girls)
Numbers by Age	11-19: 218
Number of Day Pupils	Total: 8
Number of Boarders	Total: 210
	Full: 210 Weekly: 0
Inspection dates	18 Oct 2011 to 19 Oct 2011 16 Nov 2011 to 18 Nov 2011

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the STANDARD *ISI schedule*. The inspection consists of two parts: an INITIAL two-day inspection of regulatory requirements followed by a three-day FINAL (team) inspection of the school's broader educational provision. The previous ISI inspection was in October 2005.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Government for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010*. The range of these Regulations is as follows.

- (a) Quality of education provided (curriculum)
- (b) Quality of education provided (teaching)
- (c) Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- (d) Welfare, health and safety of pupils
- (e) Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors
- (f) Premises and accommodation
- (g) Provision of information
- (h) Manner in which complaints are to be handled

*These Standards Regulations replace those first introduced on 1 September 2003.

Legislation additional to Part 3, Welfare, health and safety of pupils, is as follows.

- (i) The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA).
- (ii) Race, gender and sexual discrimination legislation.
- (iii) Corporal punishment.

The inspection was also carried out under the arrangements of the ISC Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership.

The inspection of boarding was not carried out in conjunction with the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), Children's Services and Skills, and the report does not contain specific judgements on the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools. It comments on the progress made by the school in meeting the recommendations set out in the most recent statutory boarding inspections and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to students' education and development in general. The full Ofsted reports refer to two inspections, one in April 2009 and the other in May 2009, which can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk under Children's social care/Boarding school.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Founded in 1926 as the Academy of Choreographic Art, the Royal Ballet School's mission is to train and educate outstanding classical ballet dancers for The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and other top international dance companies, and in doing so to set the standards in dance training, nationally and internationally. It aims to ensure that students have performing experience and close and practical access to The Royal Ballet companies.
- 1.2 The school operates on two sites, both of which have specialist ballet facilities. From eleven to sixteen years of age, students in the lower school live and work at White Lodge, a listed building that was once a royal hunting lodge, situated in Richmond Park. From sixteen to nineteen, upper school students are taught in a purpose-built building, adjoining the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden, and are accommodated in boarding houses or flats within a short travelling distance. The two sites operate separately on a day-to-day basis but the school is a single unit under the oversight of the director and a single governing body. Since the previous inspection there have been major building changes in the lower school and the construction of a completely new upper school. All upper school boarding students are now housed in school accommodation.
- 1.3 At the time of the inspection, there were 124 students in the lower school (62 boys and 62 girls) and 94 in the upper school (49 boys and 45 girls). The upper school includes a third senior year in which the focus is final preparation and audition for students' professional careers. The school is academically non-selective, all students before entry being auditioned and selected on the basis of their talent or potential as dancers. Students in the lower school demonstrate a fairly wide range of abilities but with the majority being of at least above average ability. Although there are no tests of ability for upper school students inspectors consider the ability range to be broadly similar to the national average. Students come from a very wide cross section of socio-economic groups, religious backgrounds and urban and rural settings across the UK and a variety of countries overseas. There are 34 students for whom English is an additional language (EAL), of whom 25 receive language support. There are 23 students identified as having learning difficulties because of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), of whom 17 receive additional support. No student has a statement of special educational needs. Most students are wholly or partly funded by the Department for Education's Music and Dance Scheme and 44 benefit from a range of awards offered by the school.
- 1.4 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups and reflects the practice in the lower school. The year group nomenclature used by the upper school and its National Curriculum (NC) equivalence are shown in the following table.

Upper School

School	NC name
First year	Year 12
Second year	Year 13
Third year	No NC equivalent

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 Student's achievements are excellent. They are outstanding in ballet and good in academic work. Students with SEND and those with EAL make as much progress as other students. Students respond to the challenge of the vocational dance courses with exemplary focus and commitment and they develop remarkable technical ability and a deep understanding of the art. In academic studies and at every stage the overall standard of literacy, numeracy, articulacy and proficiency in information and communication technology (ICT) is high. Students display secure knowledge, skills, and understanding of the subjects that they study. Their attitude to learning is impressive and clearly the self-disciplined approach of ballet is carried over into their academic lessons. They are supported by the rich diet of the ballet curriculum and an academic curriculum that meets their needs very well. The recommendations of more independent learning and more use of ICT raised in the previous inspection have been adopted. There is a rich vein of events and opportunities associated with dance which enriches the educational provision. The standard of ballet instruction is exceptional. Teaching is strongly supportive and encouraging as well as being extremely exacting. The overall quality of the teaching of academic subjects is excellent. Teachers are clearly keen to share their passion for their subject.
- 2.2 Students' personal development is excellent. Their spiritual development centres on their shared love for an art form which aims relentlessly at beauty and grace. The students have a strong sense of right and wrong and their social development is outstanding. This development is supported by excellent pastoral care and welfare arrangements and effective procedures for safeguarding and health and safety. Students in the upper school come from a large number of different countries and this diversity contributes to their cultural awareness. Students take advantage of the artistic and historical resources made accessible by the central London location.
- 2.3 The aims of the school are fulfilled and promoted by the governing body in an outstanding way. The impact of the governors is judged by the extent to which the school meets its own challenging goals and in particular the development and maintenance of the facilities, which in turn enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for the students. At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management are excellent and highly effective. Leadership is tireless and dynamic. Parents are unanimously satisfied with the governance and management of the school. The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent. All the regulatory requirements are met at a high standard with a good attention to detail by the senior staff and the school's bursarial staff. Critical comments of a very small minority of parents about opportunities to be involved in the life of the school were not substantiated by the inspection team. Parents wholeheartedly subscribe to the ethos and values of the school and are extremely pleased with all aspects of the education which their children are receiving.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

(The range of the Independent School Standards Regulations is given in the Preface)

- 2.4 At the time of the initial visit, the school met all the requirements of the Independent School Standards Regulations 2010.

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 The school is advised to make the following improvements.

1. Improve the availability of desk space for individual study in the Year 12 boarding house.
2. Increase, where possible, the extra-curricular opportunities in the upper school.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and their learning, attitudes and skills

- 3.1 The overall achievement of the students is excellent and successfully fulfils the school's ambitious aims both to train outstanding classical ballet dancers and to set the standards in dance training, nationally and internationally.
- 3.2 All the upper school students reach an artistic standard which gains entrance to ballet companies all over the world. The students are extremely flexible, expressive, skilful and gifted. They develop the ability to memorise very long sequences of exercises. They also acquire a very good understanding of what is being required of them, physically, emotionally and artistically. They develop remarkable technical ability and a deep understanding of the art. Students gain many international dance awards in both classical ballet and choreography and in the last five years all Year 14 students have secured posts with ballet companies.
- 3.3 The overall quality of students' academic achievement is good, with some excellent features. At every stage, the overall standard of literacy, numeracy, articulacy and proficiency in ICT is high. Throughout the school, the students display secure knowledge, skills and understanding of the material being covered in their lessons.
- 3.4 Students' extra-curricular activities are mostly associated with dance, the further development of their artistic skills and experience, and the exploration of different genres and styles of dance. They participate spiritedly in these activities, again achieving very high standards of knowledge, understanding and execution. In the lower school, those who learn musical instruments make good progress and achieve success in examinations, despite the time constraints.
- 3.5 The following analysis uses the national data for 2008 to 2010. These are the most recent three years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results of lower school students at GCSE level have been above the national average for maintained schools. On average students have gained seven GCSEs each with the overwhelming majority of grades between A* and C. These results are all the more noteworthy because, although the school has small classes, teaching of academic subjects occurs for only about two-thirds of the conventional school working day. The level of attainment indicates that students make good progress relative to the average for students of similar ability, as supported by standardised measures of progress. A-level results are broadly in line with the national average for maintained schools. This level of attainment and evidence from BTEC lessons, scrutiny of students' work and lesson observations indicate that appropriate progress is made in relation to students of similar ability. Again this is noteworthy given that teaching takes place in less time than is usual. Students with SEND and EAL make at least as much progress in academic work as other students. In 2010 students with EAL attained at a similar level to other students in BTEC work.
- 3.6 Throughout the school, the students have an excellent attitude to learning. In their expressive arts and BTEC lessons, they relish the freedom to explore their own interpretation of themes and they greatly enjoy the opportunity to respond to stimuli in their dance studies in a flexible way. In all of their ballet classes discipline is immaculate and they maintain sharply focused concentration. They bring much of this approach with them into academic lessons. They are very diligent and will apply themselves wholeheartedly to the set task for the required length of time. They are

keen to do well and eager to be challenged. Enthusiastic participants in their lessons, they are readily responsive, offering answers and opinions articulately and confidently. When working in pairs or groups, they co-operate very well. Students' books and files are very well organised, giving evidence of application and perseverance. Work is smartly presented, reflecting pride and care.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision (including community links of benefit to pupils)

- 3.7 Classical ballet is at the heart of the school and the curriculum. The ballet curriculum is excellent and it forms a rich and stimulating diet with an intensive programme of instruction and practice.
- 3.8 With a significant proportion of the working day being devoted to ballet, there is less time than there would normally be for the conventional academic curriculum. In the lower school, the academic provision is satisfactory, in that it covers all the required areas of learning and it is suitable for all ages, abilities and needs. Issues of insufficient independent work and insufficient use of ICT identified in the previous inspection have been overcome. The curriculum inevitably lacks the range of subjects and GCSE options available in larger schools and ones which can give more time to lessons. Parents are however satisfied that an appropriate range of subjects is offered and inspectors agree with this view. The personal, social and health education programme is well devised and appropriate. Students receive helpful careers guidance and advice.
- 3.9 In the upper school, the curriculum with its mix of A-level and BTEC courses meets students' needs very well. The BTEC leads to the award of a diploma in dance, which draws on the students' strengths and offers the opportunity for all to achieve a reputable academic qualification whatever their ability or entry point into the school. Students are offered an A-level subject although the choice of subjects is limited. The provision of flexible academic qualifications gives students the option to enter higher education or to diversify into an alternative career.
- 3.10 The school's awareness of and support for students with SEND is very good. In the lower school all students are screened and the special needs register makes clear distinctions. Students who need it are given individual specialist help, and liaison with SEND and other teachers is excellent. However, individual education plans for students with SEND, while diagnostically thorough, give insufficient practical advice to classroom teachers. Students with EAL in both parts of the school are given extra coaching and consequently make rapid progress in their mastery of English. The most able students in the lower school are given extension work, but the co-ordination of diagnosis and support would benefit from further review.
- 3.11 The lower school has a breadth of extra-curricular activities. Everyone is in the school choir. As well as participating in links with local schools and churches, students dance at charitable events in the locality and give demonstrations to visiting groups of various ages and composition. They enthusiastically undertake fund-raising initiatives, mainly in support of medical or children's charities.
- 3.12 The school day is necessarily long in the upper school, which in turn reduces the amount of additional time students are able to give to any additional activities. Notwithstanding this some students said they would like a continuation of lower school activities such as music, and others would welcome drama. Inspectors agreed that such additions would be helpful. Nevertheless beyond the normal

lessons, there is a wide variety of events and opportunities associated with dance, which deepens the educational provision. The physical link by bridge to the Royal Opera House facilitates the curriculum links to this institution and students take part in the Christmas production of *Nutcracker* by The Royal Ballet Company. Over the past year, students have been called for *Sylvia*, *Cinderella*, *Peter and the Wolf*, *Manon*, *Nutcracker*, *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*. Additionally, students tour internationally and many make a positive contribution to The Dance Partnership and Access Programme, which each year links the school with several maintained schools and gives students valuable access to very different school environments.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.13 The quality of teaching is excellent, making a central contribution to the students' progress and to the school's fulfilment of its aims.
- 3.14 For ballet teaching the school is fortunate to be able to draw on the expertise not only of its resident staff but also of the staff from The Royal Ballet, with the consequence that the standard of instruction is exceptional. Teaching is strongly supportive and encouraging as well as being extremely exacting. While the teaching is sympathetic and patient, teachers nonetheless expect the students to remember what they have been taught, so that the necessarily repetitive practice brings about constant improvement. The careful correction of the smallest movement or body position helps the students as they strive for perfection. The great deal of individual attention ensures that students remain focused on a continuous process of self-improvement. In the expressive arts lessons, teachers encourage individual students with advice, prompts and additional ideas as they develop their own interpretations of a given theme.
- 3.15 The overall quality of the teaching of academic subjects is excellent. Teachers are well qualified; their level of knowledge and expertise is high. With quiet, firm control, behaviour in the small classes is managed outstandingly well, to the benefit of effective learning. The teachers' rapport with their students is excellent. Teachers pay close attention to the needs of each individual student. They know who might struggle with a topic and are quick to help them if required.
- 3.16 Teachers are clearly keen to share their passion for their subject. Throughout the school the lessons are thoughtfully planned. At every stage, lessons observed were taken at a brisk pace, with varied and imaginative approaches to the work in hand. Exposition is clear and lively, often spiced with humour. Teachers stimulate a spirit of enquiry and meet a ready response from the students. Through inviting opinions or answers, the teaching maintains the interest and involvement of the whole class. In modern foreign language lessons, there is a good mixture of English and the language being studied. Versatile use of ICT was observed in expressive arts lessons. Expectations are high and students are urged to give of their best. In their questionnaire responses, the students acknowledged that they were encouraged to think for themselves and to work independently, and this was confirmed during the inspection.
- 3.17 Marking is, on the whole, thorough, regular and with many encouraging comments. Assessment data is used to track progress in the lower school, identify the need for remedial action and, in consultation with students, to set targets for future progress. In the upper school the very small classes adopted for A-level work allow for close individual tracking of progress.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.(a) The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

- 4.1 The overall quality of students' personal development is excellent.
- 4.2 Students' spiritual awareness and responsiveness are excellent. Their spiritual development centres on their shared love for an art form which aims relentlessly at beauty and grace. Development of technique, balance, strength, fitness and suppleness are all focused on expressing the human longing for something beyond. This underlies the daily work of the school and can be found in every corner of it. Conscious that they are inheritors of a great tradition, students are inspired by the example of those who have gone before them and by frequent exposure to live and recorded performances of great exponents of the art. They appreciate the privileged setting in which they are being trained. In the lower school students' spiritual awareness has a more overt religious dimension evident in the way they respond reverently and thoughtfully to the spiritual content of assemblies.
- 4.3 The students have a strong sense of right and wrong, which is reflected in their excellent general behaviour and in their care and consideration for each other. Students' moral development is evident in many areas of school life, such as assemblies, classroom discussions and by the example of the way in which the community as a whole conducts itself. The parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that the school promotes worthwhile attitudes and values.
- 4.4 An inevitable unstated sense of competition, which staff carefully downplay, does not prevent students looking out for each other. In EAL lessons, stronger speakers help beginners; in the upper school boarding houses new students are supported by old hands from the lower school, and Chinese New Year is celebrated, as is Thanksgiving.
- 4.5 The students' social development is outstanding. They understand what it is to be part of a close-knit community and they support one another very well. The exceptional expectations of good manners in all aspects of ballet are reflected in the way in which the students conduct themselves around the school. They are extremely polite and their behaviour is exemplary. Unselfconscious, the students are at ease with one another, with the staff and with visitors. Throughout the school, there is a culture of the older students looking after and taking care of the younger ones. Students take their mentoring, guiding and other responsibilities seriously. Female Year 8 guides give their Year 7 charges a decorated pointe shoe, which is still a highly prized possession in Year 11. The school forum or council gives students a formal voice which is listened to by senior management and, where appropriate and feasible, acted upon.
- 4.6 Students achieve a genuine appreciation of their own and others' cultures. In their academic studies they are introduced to world faiths and to other cultures' art and music. They are aware of other cultures from charitable fund-raising for international causes and from the fact that about a tenth of the students come from overseas. Most significantly, however, as students of this particular school, they are awakened to and constantly taught about the whole world and history of ballet, and this gives them a special, rich cultural perspective unique to boys and girls of this age. Older students illustrate their wider cultural interests by the way that they take advantage of the museums and galleries of central London.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety

- 4.7 The quality of pastoral care is excellent as are the arrangements for welfare, health and safety. The provision meets the school's aim of maintaining facilities which enhance teaching and learning opportunities.
- 4.8 The staff provide high-quality support and guidance for the students, on whom education necessarily makes considerable physical, intellectual and emotional demands. Relationships throughout the school, between staff and students and among the students themselves, are outstanding. Appropriate pastoral structures are in place and are monitored by senior management. Students say that there are many people to whom they can turn if they have personal concerns. Channels of communication are used effectively. The size of the school means that staff know their students very well, and frequent informal exchanges about their welfare complement formal arrangements such as the regular timetabled staff meetings. The close personal knowledge of each individual student means that their particular needs are addressed, thus contributing greatly to their personal development. At the ballet staff meetings, students' progress and physical condition are discussed in great detail. The students themselves feel secure and very well cared for. There is a strong sense of belonging and an intimate corporate identity. Students are clearly as happy as they say they are and a number of them separately characterised the school as 'one big family.'
- 4.9 The parents who responded to the questionnaire were unanimous in agreeing that the school achieved high standards of behaviour and this view was fully borne out during the period of the inspection. Accustomed to abiding by the etiquette of ballet, the students conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion. They are courteous, friendly and considerate. Students say that bullying is not an issue: they are confident that any instances would be resolved swiftly and fairly. Thanks to the general ethos and expectation of good behaviour, staff rarely have to take a firm stance over disciplinary matters.
- 4.10 The safeguarding policy is robust and implemented successfully. All staff receive regular child protection training. Arrangements for health and safety are effective. Appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk from fire and other hazards, and thorough risk assessments are carried out before school trips. The medical facilities provide very well for students who are injured or ill. A high proportion of the staff are qualified in first aid and are trained at the higher level. The school has a detailed plan further to improve educational access for those with disabilities.
- 4.11 Ballet gives students a busy daily regime of exercise. Lower school meals in the light, airy dining hall are civilised, congenial occasions. With menus carefully compiled, the food is extremely nutritious and there is plenty of choice. In the upper school, students have the freedom of going off-site and lunching in the Royal Opera House canteen. The importance of nutrition as part of dance training is underlined throughout the school.
- 4.12 The admission and attendance registers are properly maintained and correctly stored.

4.(c) The quality of boarding education

- 4.13 The quality of the boarding experience is excellent in the lower school and it is a strong factor in promoting the overall personal development of the students. It also contributes very effectively and valuably to the school's published aim to provide a caring environment. The upper school experience is good and it is a strong factor in helping the students prepare for life and in giving them easy access to the ballet facilities.
- 4.14 The quality of the boarding accommodation has been radically improved since the previous ISI inspection. In the lower school a number of factors contribute to the homely atmosphere. The dormitories for Years 7 and 8, in the elegant rooms of the main building, are mostly divided into smaller areas for two or three students. Decoration and bedding are bright and colourful. Students decorate their own spaces with personal items and collages of photographs. The common rooms are comfortable places in which to relax, and there is plenty of provision for indoor recreational activities. The same ambience pervades the upper school accommodation although the amount of space is more limited. For these students the accommodation is presented as a series of small houses with two-person bedrooms. All of the boarding facilities are clean and well presented. Not all rooms in the Year 12 boarding house have sufficient desks for individual study.
- 4.15 There is a real sense of community among the boarders. Students get on very well with one another and with the boarding staff. They say that they enjoy the boarding experience and feel that it helps their personal development. The standard of care exercised by the staff is extremely high. Parents' views of boarding at the lower school are overwhelmingly positive. All aspects of the boarding are run efficiently and the administrative structures are very good.
- 4.16 Students are not concerned about the provision of facilities and activities on weekday evenings: they say that after a busy day of lessons, dance and homework, they are happy to socialise, watch the television and then go to bed. A variety of activities and outings is offered every weekend and students say that they are satisfied with this provision.
- 4.17 Boarding makes a striking contribution to the experience of students at the upper school. In their first year, the tube travel and the shopping and cooking for themselves, help to establish their independence right at the start. Supervision is encouraging, supportive but applied with as light a touch as is consistent with establishing basic rules of living together. Despite, in many cases, having local parents or guardians, many students stay in flats at weekends, because they enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and freedom of life in the boarding house.
- 4.18 The two Ofsted boarding inspections identified shortcomings in the provision. Inspectors considered the progress made by the school in meeting the Ofsted recommendations and judged that these had all been fully implemented.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 Governance is excellent. Its impact is judged by the extent to which the school meets its own challenging goals and in particular the development and maintenance of the facilities which in turn enhance the teaching and learning opportunities for the students.
- 5.2 The governing body has a very effective committee structure which enables it to provide effective oversight of the school. It has eleven committees to oversee the main ongoing academic, staffing, financial and accommodation responsibilities but also to enable the governing body to plan strategically for the future. Meetings are carefully planned and minuted. The governing body pays particular attention to its composition through a nominations committee and has been very successful in attracting and appointing an outstandingly strong membership with professional expertise in dance, education, business, financial management and law.
- 5.3 The governors have a very good insight into the working of the school. The nature of the school is such that there are frequent ballet events which governors visit and as a result governors know the school and its students well. Key members of staff attend committees to provide information and advice. Governors give valued support to the senior management, with whom they have frequent informal communication in addition to the formal meetings. Attendance is good. An example of the governing body's pro-activity is its work in devising strategic financial options for the school in the light of potential changes in the grant aiding of students. The governors closely scrutinise the academic performance of the school in the academic and pastoral committee. One governor attends health and safety meetings and two others are specifically and respectively responsible for the oversight of child protection and boarding.
- 5.4 The governing body monitors school policies very carefully and draws on legal and professional advice in order to meet its responsibilities for child protection, safeguarding, welfare, health and safety throughout the school. An example of its effectiveness is the way it has responded promptly and positively to the recommendations made in the 2009 Ofsted boarding inspections.
- 5.5 From time to time the governing body periodically carries out a self-review in which it examines its operations and sets in place changes in the remit of its committees.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management

- 5.6 At all levels of responsibility, leadership and management are excellent and highly effective in furthering the aims of the school in terms of character and achievement. Leadership is tireless and dynamic. It is also a calm, steady influence, inspiring trust and reconciling competing demands in a crowded schedule. The clarity of educational direction provided by leadership is reflected in the high quality of the students' education and their personal development.
- 5.7 The leadership sets high standards and management is based on trust, teamwork and the confidence that all are committed to the same goals. This confidence is amply justified in the commitment and dedication of the staff. The school is extremely well run. The ordered daily pattern is flexible enough to accommodate the

many demands made by ballet. Administration and organisation are exceptionally efficient. The daily ballet programme, including any special arrangements, is published in meticulous detail. A sense of busy, friendly purposefulness characterises school life. The success of the school's management may be attributed in large measure to a happy mixture of the formal and the informal. All those in senior positions are easily approachable and accessible. Staff meet one another frequently during the course of the day and are consequently able to discuss matters of interest or concern at a very early stage. Staff are given the opportunity for open discussion and for raising any issues regarding students.

- 5.8 The school's arrangements for the selection and appointment of staff are thorough, and, together with the central single register of checks conducted, conform to requirements. The school is successful in recruiting and retaining high-quality staff. All staff are suitably trained and aware of the importance of their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety. Their professional development is promoted by a system of annual appraisal, involving self-evaluation, classroom observation and target-setting; it is linked to the school's development plan and it incorporates a scheduled check to ensure that targets are being achieved. Parents are unanimously satisfied with the management of the school.

5.(c) The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.9 The quality of links with parents, carers and guardians is excellent.
- 5.10 The school has long had very good links with parents, carers and guardians. It continues to provide comprehensive information for parents. In the lower school the use of a regular parental publication, date reminders, email, texting, parent surveys, bulletins and changes to reporting have strengthened parent-school communication. The website is very informative. The school makes every effort to keep in touch with parents based overseas. On the morning of half term there are not only academic and ballet meetings with parents, but also the chance for them to see their sons/daughters in performance and consequently keep up-to-date with their actual progress as dancers.
- 5.11 There is a committed and very active parent-teacher association (PTA). Its vibrancy is shown by its fundraising for all-weather staging for outdoor performances, the subsidy of graduation ceremonies, the purchase of games and audio/visual systems for boarding houses and the funding of costumes for end-of-year performances. Each year group has a representative on the PTA committee who feeds back issues and matters of concern to staff at the school.
- 5.12 The parental questionnaire had a satisfactory response rate and the responses were nearly all very positive. The only significantly negative response was of a very small minority of respondents who did not agree that the school encouraged them to be involved in its life and work. Inspectors did not support this view.
- 5.13 Parents of students and prospective students are provided with the required information about the school. The reports to parents are very clear and helpful. They are encouraging with enough detail to foster improvement. Targets are set and achievement recognised and celebrated.
- 5.14 There are no issues concerning the school's complaints handling procedures, all of which meet regulatory requirements.

- 5.15 Parents wholeheartedly subscribe to the ethos and values of the school and are extremely pleased with all aspects of the education which their children are receiving.

What the school should do to improve is given at the beginning of the report in section 2.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the facilities for sick or injured students. The responses of parents and students to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

Inspectors

Dr Stephen Grounds

Mr Paul Spillane

Mrs Elaine Brook

Mr John Tolputt

Mr David Williams

Reporting Inspector

Assistant Reporting Inspector

Former Headmistress, SHMIS school

Former Headmaster, HMC school

Headmaster, IAPS school