

Millennium Performing Arts Ltd

Dance and drama school

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2019

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

Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have improved the quality of the provision and the outcomes for students since the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers have established an ethos of developing individuals to excel in their chosen performance skills.
- Teachers make effective use of their extensive experience and expertise in their performance disciplines to ensure that the training meets the expectations of employers.
- Almost all students achieve their diplomas in dance or musical theatre, and a high proportion gain employment in the performing arts industry.
- Teachers employ a wide range of effective teaching techniques so that students develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they need.
- Students work hard and are committed to achieving high standards in their practical skills. These attributes prepare them well for employment in the performing arts industry.
- Students feel safe at college and trust leaders and staff to deal swiftly and effectively with any concerns raised.
- Students are assured, self-confident and unfailingly courteous to peers, teachers and visitors.
- Students receive effective careers guidance and have a comprehensive understanding of the demands of different types of employment.
- Leaders and managers have not yet implemented the new quality improvement processes to enhance students' experiences.
- Students have limited opportunities to gain additional qualifications or skills to increase their employment prospects.
- Teachers do not always give detailed and timely feedback to students on their written work.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Millennium Performing Arts Ltd (MPA) is a private performing arts college. It is accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre. The college runs a three-year diploma in professional dance and one in professional musical theatre, both at level 6, awarded by Trinity College. It also offers a range of further and higher education courses.
- The college is based in Woolwich in south-east London and attracts students from across the country and internationally. At the time of inspection, 26 students were enrolled on either the diploma in professional musical theatre or professional dance. Of these students, nine were in receipt of Dance and Drama Award funding.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should develop the curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities for students to include exposure to a more diverse range of skills and techniques, such as aerial skills, acrobatics and opportunities to acquire additional qualifications.
- Teachers should ensure that they give the same detailed and timely feedback to students on their written work as they give on their practical work, so that students can develop their written skills as effectively as they develop their practical skills.
- In implementing their quality improvement actions, leaders and managers should:
 - include all staff in the process for evaluating the quality of employees' work
 - ensure that in their evaluation of teaching and learning they focus on assessing the progress students make in developing new skills and knowledge
 - include more precise success measures to judge the effectiveness of their improvement actions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Directors and leaders are highly committed to MPA's vision and purpose to provide high-quality vocational training that leads to work in the performing arts industry. They have established an ethos at the college for developing individuals to excel in performance skills and become effective company members. This aim is well understood by staff and students, and underpins all aspects of the training, from audition to final performance.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have set out to rectify the weaknesses identified. In particular, they have improved the way that they assure and enhance the quality of teaching and learning. As a result of the revised processes for observations of teaching and annual reviews of the programme, managers now have a good understanding of what needs to be improved.
- Leaders and managers have sharpened their focus on the impact of their actions on students' experiences. They make effective use of student representatives to ensure that students' views are taken for important changes, including in relation to the curriculum and to policies directly affecting students.
- Leaders and managers provide good support to teachers to improve their practice. In this, they involve all staff, including those on sessional contracts. They receive in-house training on teaching strategies, support for students and safeguarding. Teachers have also been supported to complete external and accredited training, such as postgraduate degrees and teaching qualifications.
- Leaders have recruited staff who have extensive experience and expertise in the performing arts disciplines they teach. They also make effective use of sessional staff to bring in additional expertise, so that current industry practice is reflected in the training students receive.
- Students receive good careers advice and guidance. This starts early in their programmes, so that they have a comprehensive understanding of different employment contracts and the demands of being self-employed. Through their partnerships with industry professionals, and their own continued professional practice, staff ensure that students are ready for auditions and helped to gain work.
- Managers have not yet implemented all the quality improvement processes. The new scheme for appraising the quality of employees' work does not cover all staff. In their observations of teaching and learning, managers do not evaluate precisely enough the impact of teaching on students' progress in developing performance skills.
- Leaders and managers have made little change to the curriculum and focus on the same skill areas for dance and musical theatre. They have introduced workshops to meet emerging trends in the workplace, such as performing in front of camera or gaining skills in aerial or acrobatic work. However, they have not done enough to provide students with the skills or confidence that they need in these areas. Staff do not offer additional qualifications that would increase students' job options.

The governance of the provider

- Within the past two years, directors have established an advisory body of three trustees in recognition of the fact that they needed extra support to develop the college. Trustees have considerable expertise in education and in the performing arts industry.
- Trustees are well informed about what is going well and what needs to be improved at the college. Trustees provide effective guidance and challenge to the directors and leadership team and understand their role in supporting the ethos and vision of the college.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place and have created a very positive culture around safeguarding students. They ensure that when recruited, all staff are safe to work with their students and that they receive frequent training in safeguarding. Those with enhanced responsibilities for safeguarding have completed relevant training at level 3.
- Leaders and managers comply with their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty. They have a suitable risk assessment and action plan. They make very effective use of their links with outside agencies, including the police, to understand and inform students about local threats. Students receive good guidance on how to remain safe in their neighbourhoods. They also know how to stay safe online and how to maintain a positive social media presence.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers accurately assess the starting points of students, their prior experience and level of skill. Teachers know their students well and understand their personal strengths and the areas on which they need to work. As a result, teachers monitor effectively their progress over time.
- Teachers employ a wide range of teaching techniques which support students well in developing the skills, knowledge and understanding they need for the industry. Teachers make very good use of visual imagery, vocal and percussive cues or anecdotes to support students to develop their musicality and performance skills.
- Students work hard to consolidate and perfect sequences of movement and build their physical and mental stamina to master more complex dance phrases. As a result, students can execute phrases with increasing technical accuracy. For example, in a Matt Mattox jazz dance class, students worked hard to ensure that their weight and alignment were accurate to execute the phrase with the exacting placement and precision required.
- Students demonstrate a commitment to achieving high standards in their practical classes. Students ask appropriate questions to help them develop their personal areas for improvement and they apply these corrections to their work.
- Teachers have high expectations of their students. They draw effectively on their

extensive industry experience to motivate students and model the high standards of professionalism and discipline required to be a successful performer. Students work in a disciplined and committed way. Students increasingly integrate the different forms of performance as they progress through the course, and are prepared well for the world of work.

- Teachers frequently review the progress students make in their practical work, and quickly identify if a student is at risk of falling behind. Where a student is at risk, effective interventions and support are put in place to keep them on track. As a result, students make good progress and produce practical work of a good standard.
- The majority of students make good use of their journals to record the personal corrections, notes and feedback they receive from teachers in most of their practical classes. Students use these notes and corrections effectively as the basis for their written evaluative and reflective work. Although most students use their journals well in voice and acting classes, and very well in ballet classes, not all students make effective use of them in all their dance classes.
- Teachers provide instant, detailed and specific feedback and corrections to students in practical classes that lead to immediate improvements. Students respond positively to the feedback they receive and apply it to their work, using practice and repetition effectively to improve the standard and accuracy of their execution. As a result, students are clear about what they need to do to improve, and most can demonstrate improvements quickly. However, students do not always receive feedback on their written work that is as detailed or timely. As a result, they are not always as clear about what they need to do to improve this work.
- Teachers identify effectively and accurately when a student requires additional support with either their practical or academic studies. Good individual and group support is in place for students with additional learning needs to ensure that they make progress in line with their peers.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students take pride in their work. They arrive promptly, are prepared for lessons in both attitude and appearance, and are keen to get started. Since the previous inspection, attendance and punctuality have much improved and are now good. Students are assured, self-confident and unfailingly courteous to peers, teachers and visitors.
- Students understand how important their personal reputation is in the industry. They place great value on being recognised as conscientious, reliable and professional artists. They understand the competitive demands of the industry and can respond accordingly.
- Students develop good literacy and numeracy skills that enable them to present themselves well in potential employment situations. For example, students write curricula vitae and letters of application to a good standard and can present themselves confidently at auditions.
- Careers advice and guidance are good. Students are constantly kept up to date on issues that will have an impact on them as industry professionals. They receive valuable and relevant advice about tax, budgeting, employment contracts, invoicing, marketing

and promotion, and union membership, as appropriate. As a result, students are well prepared to enter the world of work.

- Teachers make highly effective use of their current industry experience and contacts. They are assiduous in cascading relevant information concerning employment opportunities to students who are about to complete their programmes. Students benefit greatly from the advice and guidance they receive, as they help to focus them on the most appropriate auditions and casting calls to attend. Teachers make good use of simulated auditions to prepare students for the rigours and expectations of industry practice.
- Students are knowledgeable about safeguarding and know whom to speak to if they have any concerns or issues, whether in college or outside. Students are both aware of and able to talk about the risks associated with radicalisation and of being drawn into extremism. Students are aware of their rights and responsibilities and of British values and how these relate to them now and in the future.
- Students understand and appreciate the need to follow a healthy lifestyle to be successful in the industry, including maintaining a healthy mind as well as body. Staff provide comprehensive support for students on health, well-being, fitness and nutrition. Students have good access to services, including physiotherapy, osteopathy, counselling and nutritional advice. Staff are very aware of issues that can affect performing arts trainees, such as undereating or poor body image, and provide timely support whenever needed.
- Students work in a supportive environment that allows them to make mistakes and learn from them. Students are happy to ask for support and are confident that if they raised any concerns regarding bullying or discrimination, then these would be dealt with effectively. Students and teachers have an excellent rapport and work professionally together.
- Students are not sufficiently exposed to a broad enough range of enrichment activities to enable them to develop additional skills and gain additional qualifications that might enhance their employment prospects on graduation.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of students who complete their programmes achieve relevant work within six months of leaving MPA. Jobs include performing in shows in the West End of London and touring musical theatre productions, on cruise ships and in other entertainment settings, and other commercial work. Of the students who have not found jobs, most have continued to further study.
- Almost all students who complete the diploma programmes in both dance and musical theatre achieve their qualifications.
- Students' work is of a good standard. They demonstrate good technique in lessons and attain the competencies expected of them within each year of study. Their work meets the standards required by the profession.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50013
Type of provider	Dance and drama school
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	23
Directors	Ikky Maas and Donald McLennan
Telephone number	020 8301 8744
Website	www.mpacollege.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	22
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of academic quality and curriculum, as nominee. 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 learners 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.

Inspection team

Judy Lye-Forster, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Christopher Young	Ofsted Inspector
Rieks Drijver	Her Majesty's Inspector

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