

The Royal Academy of Dance

36 Battersea Square
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A secondary initial teacher training
Short inspection report
2007/08

Managing inspector
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Introduction

In 2007-2008 the Royal Academy of Dance worked in partnership with 31 schools, sixth form colleges and colleges of further education to provide secondary initial teacher training (ITT). It offers a postgraduate certificate of education in dance teaching. At the time of the inspection there were 20 trainees.

Context

The inspection was carried out by a team of inspectors in accordance with the *Ofsted Handbook for the Inspection of Initial Teacher Training (2005-2011)*.

This report draws on evidence from a short inspection of the provision and an inspection of the management and quality assurance arrangements.

Grades are awarded in accordance with the following scale

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Main inspection judgements

Management and quality assurance: Grade 2

The overall quality of training is at least good.

The next inspection of this provider will take place in accordance with the Initial Teacher Education Framework

Key strengths

- the effective and responsive management and leadership of the programme
- the quality of review and improvement planning and the commitment to continual improvement
- the rigour of the selection and audition processes
- the high level of commitment shown to trainees by all tutors
- the very good support for trainees' individual needs
- the good communication across the partnership.

Point for action

- ensuring that school-based tutors attend regular training for their role in line with the partnership agreement.

Points for consideration

- improving target setting to make it more focused on teaching and learning and less on class management
- considering how trainees might make better use of the reflective journal
- involving school-based tutors more in the development of trainees' subject knowledge needs and in the formal assessment of their progress.

The quality of training

1. The provider has used the recent revalidation process well to improve the structure of the programme which is carefully planned to ensure that trainees have ample opportunities to meet the Standards. There is now, for example, a longer first placement and this has helped trainees make sustained progress in their classroom practice.
2. The content of the central training is up-to-date and relevant to the age range for which the trainees are being prepared. There is an appropriate emphasis on Key Stage 3 to ensure that trainees also have a good understanding of how dance is taught in early secondary years in addition to comprehensive coverage of 14-19 issues. The expertise of school-based staff is used increasingly effectively to enhance the central training. Core central study days are used well to extend trainees' knowledge of set works and the provider has put on additional twilight sessions which are tailored carefully to trainees' needs. Well received sessions have dealt with teaching physical theatre and ballet history from the 1920s and 1930s. Assignments enhance the training as an opportunity to develop teaching resources and as a source of evidence of having met the Standards.
3. There is good coherence between what is covered centrally and school-based training. Since the previous inspection the provider has introduced discrete central professional studies sessions and these provide a solid foundation for work done by link tutors in schools and colleges. There are clear links between central subject training and the school-based dance activities which are also planned to be progressively challenging.
4. The school-based tutors are highly organised and ably support trainees. They take a lot of care in planning which classes trainees are to teach and make good use of the end of placement reports to ensure subsequent training experiences are appropriate. The vast majority of school-based tutors encourage trainees to try innovative approaches to teaching and they show a good awareness of the need to work to the strengths of trainees. An example of this is the trainee with particular expertise who taught a Year 12 techniques class from the start of her placement. The oral and written feedback given to trainees on their teaching is regular and detailed with a high level of subject specificity. Targets subsequently set by central tutors are precise and focus on how to improve the teaching and learning of dance. Not all school-based tutors, however, are as skilled in drawing out targets which will help trainees consider how their students' learning might be improved; they focus more on trainees' class management.
5. The very good support for trainees' individual needs is a strength of the programme. There is a highly effective initial individual needs analysis which informs a detailed action plan. These plans are written by the programme manager; this ensures consistency and enables her to have a very good overview of the strengths and areas for development of the trainees' subject knowledge. All central tutors then regularly review these plans and set new targets. Although the plan and subsequent

reviews are discussed by the trainee and the school-based tutor, the written plans themselves are not always shared with the school-based tutor. This is a missed opportunity to use this very good plan to involve the school-based tutors even more closely in the development of trainees' subject knowledge needs within the school or college context.

6. The introduction of the Standards early in the course ensures they are placed firmly at the centre of trainees' development throughout the programme. All tutors exhibit a very thorough knowledge and understanding of them. Trainees' progress is regularly monitored by central and school-based tutors and summative reviews and reports give trainees a clear indication of what they need to do to improve. The end of placement reports written by central tutors are thorough but not all school-based tutors are involved as fully and collaboratively in the writing of these reports as they might.

7. The newly introduced reflective journal is a well considered voluntary document. It is intended not just as a tool for self-evaluation but also as a vehicle for trainees to record achievement against the Standards. Some trainees are doing this well to help them to self-assess and improve but a minority lack the depth of reflection which would help them better to analyse their strengths and deal with their weaknesses.

Management and quality assurance

8. Recruitment and selection procedures are very effective in identifying highly qualified trainees from a very large field of applicants. The audition and selection process is rigorous and probes, through a good variety of activities, trainees' performance skills and their professional potential. The systems are carefully monitored by the programme manager to ensure consistency of approach by the interviewers. Paperwork supporting the selection process is meticulous and provides an early clear indication of the strengths and areas for development of those interviewed.

9. Targeted marketing has led to a trend of improvement in the recruitment of black and minority ethnic trainees and the provider has exceeded the targets set by the Training and Development Agency. The recruitment of men to the programme has been a priority and good marketing has led to an increase in the number recruited for the next cohort.

10. The management of the programme is effective. It is very well led by the programme manager and there is a high level of commitment by central and school-based staff to the trainees. The provider ensures that all school-based tutors are well qualified and judiciously matched to their trainees.

11. Communication is a strength of the provision and the easy accessibility of central trainers and managers is highly valued by school and college-based staff.

The provider has streamlined documentation in light of findings from the last inspection. This is now easier to manage but still comprehensively supports the work of those mentoring the trainees in schools and colleges. The management committee structure involves all partners. The two management groups have clearly understood remits, one at the strategic and one at the operational level. Schools and colleges are kept well informed of any decisions made.

12. The partnership agreement makes explicit the roles and responsibilities of all partners and these are reinforced by the central tutors when they visit schools and colleges. An additional quality assurance visit to new schools and colleges ensures that there are opportunities for link tutors to clarify expectations. Central tutors' visits are also used to monitor that trainees are receiving their entitlement in their placements.

13. It is a clear expectation that school-based tutors attend training at the Royal Academy of Dance. The most recent training sessions have been very appropriately focused on the assessment of trainees and on changes to the programme. Attendance at this training has, however, not been high. Whilst the provider has ensured that all non-attendees have received the critical information, the school-based tutors have not been able to benefit from the valuable development and networking opportunities these training sessions have offered. The provider is aware of the need to address this as a priority.

14. Quality assurance procedures are very appropriate and effectively co-ordinated by the quality assurance manager who has an Academy-wide remit. There are effective systems in place to moderate the assessment of trainees' performance. The second marking of assignments and the rigorous way the programme manager monitors central tutors' end of placement reports and their assessments of the portfolio of evidence ensure judgements in these areas are secure. Joint observation of trainees' teaching leads to moderated judgements on classroom practice. The joint observation is not used consistently, however, to improve the school-based tutors' work, for example in the setting of targets which refer to teaching and learning rather than classroom organisation.

15. In response to the previous inspection report the provider has raised the profile of both Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality. Policies are given prominence in documentation and schools and colleges are encouraged in the quality assurance visits to question their own policies and practices and consider how they might link them to those of the provider.

16. Schools' and colleges' views are listened and responded to. For example, school-based tutors heavily influenced the recent revision of the Midway and End of Placement Review forms. Trainees' views are regularly sought and improvements made to the training in response to their evaluations. Trainees' views are also used well by the provider as part of the evaluative data they employ when appraising the performance of their central tutors.

17. The provider shows a strong commitment to continual improvement. Managers respond positively, thoughtfully and in detail to all external evaluations and have made good use of external consultants to review many aspects of their provision. In addition, the provider is also proactive in the manner in which it evaluates its provision. A good range of data, much of which is benchmarked, is used in annual reviews. These reviews, in turn, lead to very good action plans which have specific targets and success criteria and are regularly reviewed at management meetings.