



INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

**INTEGRATED INSPECTION
THE ROYAL BALLET SCHOOL**

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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 London WC2E 9DA England
Telephone Number	0207 845 7087
Fax Number	07837 895211
Email Address	enquiries@royalballetschool.org.uk
Head	Mr Christopher Powney
Chair of Governors	The Duchess of Wellington OBE
Age Range	11 to 19
Total Number of Students	217
Gender of Students	Mixed (114 boys; 103 girls)
Numbers by Age	11-16: 131 17-19: 86
Number of Day Students	Total: 5
Number of Boarders	Total: 212 Full: 212 Weekly: 0
Inspection Dates	3 to 6 November 2015

PREFACE

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014. The range of these Regulations can be viewed on the website www.legislation.gov.uk. Additionally, inspections will consider the school's accessibility plan under Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and the ban on corporal punishment introduced by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule*. The inspection on which the report is based took place over a period of four continuous days in the school.

The previous ISI boarding intermediate inspection was in January 2013 and the previous ISI standard inspection was in November 2011. A further inspection of the school and boarding was undertaken by Ofsted in September 2014.

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

This inspection contains 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 inspection and evaluates the quality of the boarding experience and its contribution to students' education, personal development and welfare.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors 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.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

Both Ofsted and ISI inspect and report on the Independent School Standards Regulations. However, they apply different frameworks and have different criteria for judging school quality that are suited to the different types of schools they inspect. Both use a four point scale when making judgements of quality but, whilst the ISI terminology reflects quality judgements that are at least equivalent to those used by Ofsted, they also reflect the differences in approach. ISI reports do not provide a single overarching judgement for the school but instead give a clear judgement on each aspect of the school's work at the beginning of each section. **These headline statements must include one of the ISI descriptors 'excellent', 'good', 'sound' or 'unsatisfactory', and where Achievement is 'exceptional' that term may be used for the top grade.** Elsewhere in the report, inspectors may use a range of different adjectives to make judgements. **For EYFS registered provision (for children aged under two), reports are required to use the same terminology ('outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate') as Ofsted reports.**

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 co-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

Mrs Pamela Leech	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Ruth McFarlane	Assistant Reporting Inspector
Miss Jenny Butler	Team Inspector (Former Deputy Head, GSA school)
Mr Michael Jacob	Team Inspector (Former Vice Principal, HMC school)
Mrs Jean Gray	Co-ordinating Inspector for Boarding
The Revd Graeme Rainey	Team Inspector for Boarding (Assistant Head Pastoral, HMC school)

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1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 The Royal Ballet School aims to be the centre of excellence for the education and training of outstanding classical ballet dancers for The Royal Ballet, Birmingham Royal Ballet and other top international companies. Alongside seeking to provide world-class artistic training, the school aspires to ensure the highest standards of academic education.
- 1.2 Founded in 1926 as the Academy of Choreographic Art, The Royal Ballet School is based on two sites, although it operates and is managed as a single school. Both sites have specialist ballet facilities and academic classrooms together with physiotherapy and healthcare provision. Students aged from 11 to 16 are housed and educated in White Lodge in Richmond Park, Surrey. The Upper School, for students aged 16 to 19, is located in Floral Street, Covent Garden, and includes a third year of study preparing graduate students for transition into a professional dance company. The school is overseen by a governing body of 17 members, including governors with educational and other expertise together with prominent figures from the world of ballet. Since the previous inspection, a new senior management team has been appointed and major areas of provision have undergone an organisational restructuring.
- 1.3 There are currently 217 students who attend the school, of whom 212 are boarders and five are day students. White Lodge houses 130 students. Students in Years 7 and 8 live in the main school building; Years 9 and 10 occupy purpose-built accommodation nearby. Day students are catered for within the main building. All Upper School students are boarders. Those in Year 12 live in Wolf House, a short distance from the Upper School, while Year 13 students occupy Jebson House in Covent Garden. Graduate students in their final year, move into commercially rented flats nearby.
- 1.4 The school is academically non-selective and accepts a broad range of abilities. Entrance is solely through audition to determine a student's potential in ballet. Most students are supported financially, either wholly or in part, by the Department for Education's *Music and Dance Scheme*, or through individual sponsorship or donations, and represent a wide range of social backgrounds. Approximately three quarters of all students are from the United Kingdom with the remaining students from up to 20 different countries.
- 1.5 The ability profile of the students is above the national average. The school has identified 13 students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), 8 of whom are provided with appropriate learning support. No students have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan. Forty-five students who speak English as an additional language (EAL) receive support in line with their English language ability. Approximately three-quarters of students are from the UK, the rest coming from some 20 other countries,
- 1.6 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school and its NC equivalence are shown in the following table.

Upper School

School	NC name
1 st Year	Year 12
2 nd Year	Year 13
3 rd Year	Year 14

2. THE SUCCESS OF THE SCHOOL

2.(a) Main findings

- 2.1 The Royal Ballet School is highly successful in training and educating its students in achieving the highest standards of proficiency in ballet supported by a strong educational experience. Throughout the school its students, all of whom have particular gifts and talents, achieve exceptional skills in their dance and develop excellent academic habits. Students undertake their studies with diligence and maturity. They apply their knowledge confidently and achieve extremely well academically. Supported by professional ballet and dance teachers, together with excellent academic teaching, students embrace opportunities to perform and approach independent and co-operative learning with enthusiasm. The excellent curriculum and the extra-curricular programme enhance the learning opportunities for students. Expectations within lessons are high and students with SEND, EAL and the more able are extremely well supported. Students take great pride in their performance in ballet and in the presentation of their academic work. They value the opportunities the school offers them to develop links with the community.
- 2.2 The quality of students' personal development is excellent and is well supported by the good pastoral care they receive. They learn to live with tolerance and respect in the highly competitive arena of professional dance, and achieve an excellent standard of personal development. Students undertake positions of responsibility with enjoyment and are kind and considerate towards each other. They are confident in the support of the staff who look after them. The quality of boarding is sound. Boarders feel safe and appreciate the welcoming atmosphere of their houses. Adequate provision of working spaces has been made, meeting the recommendation in the previous inspection of boarding. Most boarders value the activities organised for them at the weekends; older boarders in White Lodge do not have enough opportunities to share these activities. Boarding staff currently lack formal opportunities to review their practice, although these are provided for in the school's recently developed appraisal system. Pastoral care is good. Excellent relationships between staff and students prepare students well for the demands of their intended professional life and the school provides specialist support for the students' physical well-being. The welfare, health and safety arrangements are unsatisfactory. Some policies and other documents did not reflect the most recent requirements; by the end of the inspection, they did so. The school's arrangements for checks when appointing staff, and the recording of the results, did not meet requirements. Not all staff were aware of the most recent official guidance on ensuring the safeguarding of students, as is required.
- 2.3 Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Governors are fully supportive of the vision of the school but have failed to maintain satisfactory oversight of all aspects of school life due to a lack of rigour in discharging their legal responsibilities, particularly for safeguarding. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory as managers have not maintained adequate oversight of safeguarding measures or ensured that policies and related procedures are kept up-to-date and implemented correctly. New arrangements for academic and artistic assessment are not yet fully embedded and the new system intended to monitor the academic progress of students has not yet been implemented. Links with parents are effective and the school is taking positive steps to promote more open communication with parents and students.

2.(b) Action points

(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements

2.4 The school does not meet all the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and therefore it is required to take the following action.

- Implement all required safeguarding arrangements by ensuring that all staff receive suitable training [Part 3, paragraphs 7.(a) and (b), and paragraphs 8 (a) and (b) under Welfare, health and safety and, for the same reason, National Minimum Standard 11, under Child Protection.]
- Ensure that the required checks are carried out on all staff before appointment and are recorded on the single central register and that references are taken up before the appointment of staff [Part 4, paragraph 18 (2) (a), (b), (c)(i), and 18 (3) and 21 (3) (a) (i) (ii) (iii), and 21 (3) (b) under Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors, Part 3, paragraph 7 (a) and (b), and Part 3, paragraph 8 (a) and (b), and for the same reason, National Minimum Standard 14.1, under Suitability of Staff.]
- Ensure that those with leadership and management responsibilities demonstrate good skills and knowledge and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently and the well-being of the pupils is promoted actively [Part 8, paragraph 34 (1) (a), (b) and (c)].

(ii) Recommendations for further improvement

- 2.5 In addition to the above regulatory action points, the school is advised to make the following improvements.
1. Implement fully the new arrangements for academic and artistic assessment.
 2. Implement the new system for tracking students' academic progress.
 3. Continue to develop more open relationships with parents and students.
 4. Organise more opportunities for activities and trips for older boarders in White Lodge.

3. THE QUALITY OF ACADEMIC AND OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) The quality of the pupils' achievements and learning

- 3.1 The quality of the students' achievements and learning is exceptional.
- 3.2 Students, all of whom are seen as having particular gifts and talents, demonstrate levels of achievement in classical ballet which are commensurate with that of professional dancers, together with excellent levels of knowledge, skills and understanding across academic subject areas. This successfully fulfils the school's ambitious aims to set the standards in dance training, nationally and internationally, and to be a centre of academic excellence.
- 3.3 This level of achievement reflects high levels of response to the expectations of the ballet curriculum, facilitated by excellent teaching, and is equally apparent in the achievement of all groups. Students in their final three years, produce individual ballet performances of professional standard. Younger students in White Lodge undertake successfully the demanding training. This prepares them for the rigorous demands of entry into the Upper School, and for successful completion of The Royal Ballet School Diploma in their final year. In addition to regular performances at the Royal Opera House, students in both White Lodge and the Upper School have been successful in winning national choreographic awards.
- 3.4 Students of all abilities throughout the school, including those with SEND, EAL and the more able, demonstrate excellent academic subject knowledge and understanding. In almost all lessons, students develop a breadth of skills, enabling them to work independently and think logically as required. Students are confident speakers as observed in an art lesson where they demonstrated passion when analysing their work. They listen carefully to the views of others and apply their mathematical, scientific and reasoning skills effectively across a range of subjects. Students confidently use information and communication technology (ICT) appropriately to further their learning and understanding. Given the wide range of starting points on entry, students attain high standards of literacy and numeracy. Excellent achievement in art is evident in the displays of students' work illustrating different painting media.
- 3.5 Students achieve highly across an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities. Many students achieve success in external music and drama examinations. In a national art competition, first prizes were achieved in two sections with the winning banner displayed outside the Royal College of Art. Students in Year 8 achieved success completing a national science award.
- 3.6 The following analysis uses the national data for the years 2012 – 2014. These are the most recent years for which comparative statistics are currently available. Results in GCSE have been above the national average for maintained schools with results in IGCSE history higher than the worldwide average. Performance in GCSE examinations in 2015 indicates a higher proportion of students achieving the highest grades. At A level, results overall are similar to the national average for maintained schools. In 2015, the proportion of students gaining the highest grades has increased. Students have also achieved a high number of distinctions in the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) diplomas in 2015.
- 3.7 These levels of attainment, together with available standardized measures of progress and other inspection evidence from observation and discussion, indicate

that students at all levels make progress for their academic work that is good in relation to those with similar abilities. Students with SEND, EAL and the more able make excellent progress. Students achieve a high rate of success in gaining entrance to ballet companies around the world.

- 3.8 Students throughout the school develop learning skills at an unusually high level. They are self-motivated with a well-developed ability to learn independently and work collaboratively. Students demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning in academic classes, and a highly dedicated approach when working in dance studios. Behaviour in lessons is exemplary; students value their supportive relationship with their teachers and are appreciative of the opportunity to study ballet with leading exponents. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, almost all parents and students expressed satisfaction with the progress they make.

3.(b) The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision

- 3.9 The contribution of curricular and extra-curricular provision is excellent.
- 3.10 The combined ballet and academic curriculum is effective in allowing the school to fulfil its aim to provide a carefully structured dance course, supported by a comprehensive academic programme, designed to give students the best possible education to equip them for a career in the world of dance. In both White Lodge and Upper School, classical ballet is pivotal to the curriculum and a significant amount of curriculum time is devoted to it.
- 3.11 In White Lodge, the ballet and dance curriculum is strongly supported by a carefully structured academic programme. An appropriate range of subjects is offered in Years 7 to 9, providing a strong foundation for GCSE study in Years 10 and 11. In addition to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, options include French, geography, additional science, art, music and dance. Additionally, students may also study IGCSE history. Students in Year 9 undertake a pre-GCSE French course, leading to the Foundation Certificate in Secondary Education, thereby giving all students a language qualification. A well-planned personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) programme reflects the inclusive ethos of the school and encourages respect for others. The programme covers all topics relevant to students' ages and enables students to be prepared for life in modern British society. Where this and other subjects cover political matters, they do so in a balanced way. The curriculum does not undermine the shared British values such as democracy, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance.
- 3.12 The curriculum in the Upper School is tailored to meet the needs of individual students and includes the option for students to complete overseas qualifications such as the American High School Diploma or to follow online courses leading to qualifications in their country of birth. A combination of BTEC, A levels and Cambridge English courses is offered to students in the Upper School. The BTEC Diploma in Performing Arts (Dance) is completed in Year 13 and the Trinity Diploma in Professional Dance in Year 14. Additionally, students are offered a choice of A-level subjects, currently English, art, mathematics and French. The flexibility of the Upper School curriculum provides a strong foundation should students wish to pursue a career other than ballet or dance.
- 3.13 Suitable careers guidance is provided for all students and includes guidance when either injury or a change of mind necessitates an alternative career away from dancing.

- 3.14 Provision for students with SEND or EAL, and for those who are more able is excellent. Effective systems enable early identification of students who require support or for those who would benefit from additional challenge. Excellent specialist support is provided on an individual level enabling students to make rapid progress.
- 3.15 In their questionnaire responses, a majority of students expressed dissatisfaction with the range of extra-curricular opportunities provided. The 2011 standard inspection recommended that extra-curricular provision in the Upper School should be enhanced. Given the special character of the school, inspectors view the programme as suitable. A Creative Artist programme in both parts of the school introduces students to the wider world of art through talks by prominent artists. The ease of access to London's museums, exhibitions and theatres ensures students gain a more developed sense of appreciation of the world around them. In discussions with inspectors, students in the Upper School indicated their satisfaction with the opportunities provided for them.
- 3.16 The curriculum is fully supported and enhanced by an excellent programme of activities. Most are designed to enhance the curriculum emphasis on ballet, with opportunities for students to gain experience of choreography, auditioning and solo performance as well as explore a number of dance styles and techniques. Students throughout the school have the opportunity to perform in a variety of classical ballets such as Tchaikovsky's *The Nutcracker* or *Swan Lake*, with members of The Royal Ballet Company at the Royal Opera House. Away from ballet, younger students in White Lodge take music and drama examinations, and all sing in the school choir. Inter-house competitions ensure students have the opportunity to recite poems in French or challenge each other in swimming galas.
- 3.17 Students have numerous opportunities to become involved with the local community through the extensive outreach and access programme. Fundraising for a range of charities is well established with events such as baking for coffee mornings or providing gifts for children at Christmas, being popular. Responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, most parents expressed themselves as satisfied with the range of subjects and areas of experience offered to their children.

3.(c) The contribution of teaching

- 3.18 The contribution of teaching is excellent.
- 3.19 Teaching is highly effective in supporting the aims of the school to train and educate outstanding classical ballet dancers. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire, said they were happy with the progress their children make, and the students were equally satisfied. Inspection evidence fully supports these views.
- 3.20 Excellent teaching in ballet is characterised by high expectations and meticulously detailed subject knowledge. Lessons are planned thoroughly to meet and respond to individual students, to ensure that each makes the best possible progress. During lessons, assessment is continuous, and immediate adjustments are made to achieve greater poise and so promote excellence in performance. Teachers frequently demonstrate complicated techniques and this enables students to make immediate and rapid progress. Teachers and pianists alike, demonstrate an excellent understanding of the musical needs of the students, thereby enhancing interpretation of the music through ballet. The passion of teachers in their art inspires students and raises their aspirations to be excellent in all they attempt.

- 3.21 In academic teaching, high expectations and effective planning ensures that students make excellent progress. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge, confidently using this to initiate lively debates and challenge students' understanding. Teachers work hard to foster enjoyment in their lessons, as was seen, for example, in a practical science lesson, when students participated with vigour and enthusiasm, in testing the burning capacities of a variety of substances.
- 3.22 In almost all teaching, the pace is brisk and students are encouraged to develop their learning independently by taking intellectual risks and exploring topics for themselves. Co-operative tasks enable students to develop the skills of working together. As a result, the high levels of challenge enable students to make rapid progress. In the very rare cases when the pace is less brisk and expectations are lower, students make less progress. Thorough marking enables students to improve the standard of their work, and students are appreciative of the additional oral advice given by their teachers. The atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom encourages students to respond freely and enthusiastically in lessons.
- 3.23 Teachers understand the needs of their students well. Excellent support is offered for students with SEND and EAL through individual plans and targets, with regular checks on progress. The more able students are offered a variety of challenging tasks and this enables them to make rapid progress. The explicit attention to marking criteria in the Upper School provides students with instructive feedback that helps them to develop critical analytical skills.
- 3.24 Teaching across the school encourages high levels of tolerance and respect, does not undermine fundamental British values, and is non-partisan in the coverage of political issues. Students are encouraged to explore different viewpoints as demonstrated during a history lesson when students discussed the reasons for World War One with sensitivity and understanding.
- 3.25 An overwhelming majority of students responding to the questionnaire indicated that their teachers give them individual help to enable them to make progress, however, a small minority felt that their homework did not help them to learn. Through scrutiny of their work, inspectors felt that homework tasks are appropriate and conducive to learning. In discussions with inspectors, students were appreciative of the homework set, and said that the tasks reinforced their learning and helped them to make progress. Marking is thorough and incorporates useful targets for improvement. Improved systems to enable teachers to measure the progress of their students with more consistency across all subjects, are on the point of introduction, but have not yet been introduced.
- 3.26 A few parents and students in their responses to the questionnaire, expressed their concerns over individual assessments, particularly in ballet. New procedures to make and record individual academic and artistic assessment results with greater transparency, have been introduced, however these are not yet fully embedded within the system.

4. THE QUALITY OF THE PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

- 4.1 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the students is excellent.
- 4.2 The personal development of students is an outstanding strength of the school. In establishing an environment where students are encouraged to develop as individuals, the school fully meets its aims to inspire students to fulfil their creative potential. It is also active in promoting values that reflect the distinctive character of Britishness.
- 4.3 Students develop excellent spiritual awareness in the dedicated, emotionally mature response to their dancing. Through physical expression in their ballet and sensitive musical interpretation, students demonstrate their appreciation of the non-material aspects of life. They are self-aware, assured and confident, unhesitatingly expressing themselves as they perform as soloists. Through the bond which grows from the shared, demanding schedule, students show empathy and support for each other. They understand and respect differences in religious belief, using their studies in art, literature and the school's studies in religion course, to explore a wide range of faiths.
- 4.4 The moral development of students is excellent. Their high levels of personal self discipline result from the perseverance required in practising and performing dance. Supported by a clear system of rewards and sanctions, students conduct themselves impeccably well; they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They understand the civil and criminal law of England and the meaning of good conduct, drawing guidance from the 'Being a Citizen' sessions. Students develop mature understanding of moral and ethical issues and relish class debates which allow them to express their opinions. They use their art to explore their responses to moral questions, as was seen in students' artwork entitled, 'Je suis Charlie'.
- 4.5 Students' social skills are excellent. They respond positively to each other, whatever their backgrounds, and fully understand the meaning of equality and the avoidance of any kind of discrimination. As school councillors, mentors and guides who help their 'guidelings' to settle in, students undertake suitable roles of responsibility with vigour. Students show clear understanding of democracy and are politically aware through opportunities to vote, for example, in a recent mock election for members of parliament. They develop social skills and an awareness of the needs of others through their contributions to the wider community, through regular fund-raising and with their dance performances.
- 4.6 Students display a strong cultural sense, exploring other traditions through their relationships with each other, their work in geography, modern foreign languages and their studies in religion. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Western cultural traditions and other world cultures through work on a variety of dance styles and interpretations, and through their drama and music studies. They gain understanding of the impact of world events on cultures, by engaging in special events such as Black History Month and the Holocaust Memorial Day. Students demonstrate clear understanding of the public institutions and services of England, for example through their studies on the role of the British Broadcasting Corporation.
- 4.7 By the time they leave school students display an excellent standard of personal development. They have learnt how to handle the pressures of studying in a highly

competitive environment, where injury and individual limitations may compromise their personal hopes of a professional career in ballet. They develop mental resilience to enable them to perform to the best of their ability, even when they may not attain the standard required to progress to the next level. They are individually mature, tolerant, respectful and supportive of each other, and are completely dedicated to their art.

4.(b) The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care

- 4.8 The contribution of arrangements for pastoral care is good.
- 4.9 The high quality of day-to-day pastoral care provides students with a strong network of support and guidance, effectively meeting the school's aims to nurture their students through eight years of arduous training. Teachers, tutors and house staff work hard to prepare students for the stresses and strains of their intended professional life, and to cope with the daily demands of their training.
- 4.10 Excellent relationships, founded on mutual respect, are evident throughout the school. Students interact well with each other and value the support and guidance they receive from their teachers. The considerate and caring ethos is clearly reflected in the attitudes of more senior students who cheerfully mentor younger dancers. Responding to the questionnaire, a small minority of students felt that their views were not sought or acted upon. Inspectors looked at the matter in detail and found that there are appropriate ways in which students make their views known. Form representatives and school counsellors meet regularly and confidently make requests known. In discussions with inspectors, students confirmed that their views are acted upon. For example, a request for more granola and fruit to be provided as a staple in the canteen was met promptly.
- 4.11 The school has appropriate arrangements to promote good behaviour and to guard against harassment and bullying, including cyber-bullying. At the start of the inspection, the behaviour and anti-bullying policies did not reflect the most recent guidance and in their responses to the questionnaire, a few parents and students did not feel that the school deals well with any instances of bullying. However, through examination of records and in discussions with students and staff, inspection found that the shortcomings in policy did not have a significant effect on practice and that any instances of bullying are dealt with effectively and swiftly. The school acted promptly to amend policies during the inspection and to make them available to parents and pupils. The nature of ballet tuition involves constant appraisal of posture and techniques and the school is aware that students may, at times, find this guidance difficult to accept as constructive instruction. Guidance is therefore given to teachers to enable them to give necessary feedback in a sensitive manner when helping students to correct and improve their performance.
- 4.12 The school promotes a healthy lifestyle through a range of physical classes designed to build up core strength and agility. Three physiotherapists help students deal with and recover from injuries.
- 4.13 A small minority of students indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that teachers are not fair in the way they give rewards. A few also feel that teachers are not fair in the way they give sanctions. A study of records as well as observations of lessons and students' written work, and thorough discussions with students, show that the arrangements are fair and that teachers follow them.

- 4.14 The school's plan for improving educational access for students with SEND meets requirements.

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

- 4.15 The contribution of arrangements for welfare, health and safety is unsatisfactory.
- 4.16 The school has not been sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that all required checks have been completed before staff begin work. For example, checks for prohibition orders or barred listing have not been undertaken for a small number of staff before employment begins. The school acted promptly to remedy this and carry out the necessary checks.
- 4.17 Staff receive annual training in child protection matters from appropriately designated staff. Not all staff are familiar with the latest guidance in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, as is required. Safeguarding and recruitment policies did not meet the latest requirements at the start of the inspection, though they had been suitably updated by its end and made available to staff and parents. The school maintains close links with local welfare agencies.
- 4.18 An audit of maintenance, health and safety is completed annually together with suitable risk assessments for buildings and grounds. Termly reports to the governing body ensure the effective implementation of the detailed health and safety policy. Accidents and incidents are suitably recorded.
- 4.19 The school makes every effort to minimize the risk of fire, through regular fire drills, equipment testing and staff training, with appropriate records maintained. Appropriate systems are also effectively implemented for evacuation of students working in the Royal Opera House. Excellent arrangements are implemented in the case of a fire or fire drill, to ensure dancers are kept warm by the provision of foil thermal blankets and overshoes. Electrical equipment is regularly tested and records are properly kept. Due care is taken to ensure the welfare, health and safety of those on school trips and those with special physical or learning needs.
- 4.20 Admission and attendance registers are correctly maintained and stored and staff know what to do if a student were to go missing. An appropriate number of staff receive first aid training. Excellent arrangements enable students who are unwell to be properly cared for.

4.(d) The quality of boarding

- 4.21 The quality of boarding is sound.
- 4.22 Boarders derive much benefit from the high quality day-to-day pastoral care they receive however the National Minimum Standards regarding the safe recruitment of staff and child protection have not been fully met.
- 4.23 Outcomes for boarders are excellent. Boarders feel individually valued, and enjoy relaxed and happy relationships with each other and the staff, embodying the school's aims to promote the development of self-confidence, responsibility, mutual respect and tolerance. A comprehensive induction programme is thoughtfully implemented with extra support for all with SEND and EAL. Overseas boarders are quickly made to feel at home. Different cultures and traditions are enjoyed and celebrated by all.

- 4.24 Boarders may take on roles of responsibility and make positive contributions to their community through a variety of forums. As Year 11 prefects and house captains, boarders gain leadership skills and boarders in all years may mentor those in the year below, if they wish. Year 7 boarders become 'guides' for the incoming new boarders, enthusiastically participating in the tradition to giving their 'guideling' a decorated ballet shoe.
- 4.25 Dedicated house staff work hard to promote excellent behaviour throughout. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. Boarders are confident in the many adults they can approach for help, and noticeboards display a variety of external helplines, including those for two independent listeners.
- 4.26 Boarders keep in touch with friends and family through mobile phones, the internet and landlines in the houses, and keep abreast with current affairs through television, newspapers and online.
- 4.27 The quality of boarding care and provision is excellent. Boarders at the school grow up and thrive in a wide range of environments, encompassing country and urban life. Students in Years 7 to 11 occupy White Lodge in Richmond Park, where they are initially accommodated in dormitories in the original building. Those in Years 10 and 11 board in purpose-built accommodation with en-suite facilities. More senior boarders move to Covent Garden, where Years 12 and 13 are housed in suitable accommodation nearby with graduate students in Year 14 occupying self-contained flats shared between four to six students. Following a recommendation in the previous boarding inspection, boarders now have an appropriate amount of working space.
- 4.28 In all living accommodation, rooms are warm and well lit. Boarders may personalise their own areas and this they do with much artistic flair. All have lockable spaces in their rooms, and accommodation is secure; security arrangements do not impinge unnecessarily on the boarders' privacy.
- 4.29 The school places great emphasis on correct nutrition to enable boarders to maintain sufficient energy for their physical schedule. In their questionnaire responses, a small minority of boarders expressed dissatisfaction with the food and the provision of drinking water and snacks. Inspection found that the catering arrangements were appropriate to the boarders' needs. Four-week menus are carefully structured to provide an excellent range of food using locally-sourced produce whenever possible. Meals are varied, attractive and nutritious. In addition, the school's nutritionist is available to enable boarders to plan individual diets to meet their needs. All dietary requirements, cultural, medical and religious, are fully catered for. At White Lodge, boarders have their meals in the dining hall. The dining hall is open all day for boarders to help themselves to fruit and hot and cold drinks; drinking water is widely available in the houses, and the range of snacks available in the evenings is much enjoyed. In discussions with inspectors, senior and younger boarders were equally enthusiastic about their meals.
- 4.30 From Year 7, all students including boarders receive practical lessons in cooking easy, healthy meals through the Healthy Performer Programme. This most adequately prepares them for their time in the Upper School where, under the guidance of staff and a nutritionist, boarders enjoy shopping and cooking for themselves and each other. This therefore meets the recommendation about self-catering in the Upper School made in the 2013 intermediate boarding inspection

report. Catering staff play an important role in helping students to understand and plan a balanced diet for themselves.

- 4.31 Throughout the school day, a qualified nurse is available on both sites. At White Lodge, a doctor holds a weekly surgery, while senior boarders are registered with a local practice. Physiotherapists, podiatrists and counsellors are available at both sites, and visits are arranged as required with local specialist services such as a dentist and optician. Boarders who are unwell are looked after in their boarding houses by resident staff or, in the case of White Lodge, in the medical centre where appropriately separated facilities exist for boys and girls. Medical provision appropriately observes confidentiality and the competence of boarders to decide upon their own treatment. The prompt and highly effective treatment of injuries takes full account of the physical and mental wellbeing of elite dancers. Correct procedures are in place for dispensing prescribed drugs and homely remedies, and for allowing self-medication by boarders deemed able to do so.
- 4.32 Boarders appreciate the efficient laundry system at White Lodge, and at Upper School there are sufficient facilities for boarders to do their own. Younger boarders are taken to local shops to buy essential items each week, and older boarders are able to visit the shops in Covent Garden.
- 4.33 In questionnaires, a minority of boarders expressed concerns about the balance of free time and activities. During discussions with boarders, inspectors found that they have busy, demanding days and value their free time in the evening. Boarders in Years 7 and 8 enjoy organised trips at weekends, but older boarders in White Lodge do not have similar opportunities for varied activities in their free time. At weekends, boarders in Upper School take advantage of London attractions such as the free museums, and local events recommended by staff.
- 4.34 The effectiveness of arrangements for welfare and safeguarding is unsatisfactory. The National Minimum Standards regarding the safe recruitment of staff and child protection have not been fully met. The required checks have not always been completed before staff begin work at the school. Suitable measures have been undertaken for adults not employed by the school and living in boarding residential accommodation and visitors to houses are closely monitored. In their responses to the questionnaire, boarders said they feel safe in their houses.
- 4.35 Suitable house risk assessments are regularly updated and fully implemented with all appropriate health and safety checks completed. Fire evacuation drills are practised at least termly in boarding time, and records are correctly maintained. Boarding houses have the appropriate number of resident staff who are easily contactable at night. Signing in and out arrangements are in place, and staff know the procedure to follow should a boarder go missing.
- 4.36 The effectiveness of leadership and management of the boarding provision is unsatisfactory. Required records are carefully maintained by house staff but are not effectively monitored by senior management. At present, there is no formal appraisal procedure for boarding staff to enable their practice to be reviewed. A governor with special responsibility for boarding visits the boarding houses, but the governing body has not maintained effective oversight of the provision. Senior leaders and governors have not ensured that the required checks on staff before appointment have been carried out.
- 4.37 Extremely well-written handbooks help staff and boarders promote and live by the boarding principles. Regular progress meetings and many informal and electronic

exchanges throughout the day, enable effective communication between boarding and academic staff to ensure boarders' welfare and meet their needs. Induction procedures for new members of staff are helpful and thorough and all boarding staff have detailed job descriptions. Training opportunities are made available to staff to enable them to further their careers. In questionnaire responses, most boarders said they enjoyed their boarding and this view was supported by an overwhelming majority of parents.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) The quality of governance

- 5.1 The quality of governance is unsatisfactory.
- 5.2 The governing body strives to promote the school's aim to provide a safe and nurturing environment where students are encouraged to attain excellence in their artistic and academic studies but they have failed to undertake their legal responsibilities with rigour, for example in ensuring that all staff are aware of the latest guidance on their role in safeguarding students. Required recruitment checks have not been correctly carried out and governors have not maintained effective oversight of the required standards within boarding. All governors undertake an annual review of safeguarding arrangements and their effectiveness, but required policies in safeguarding, welfare health and safety have not been adequately maintained to ensure that the most recent requirements have been met. The designated governor for safeguarding has not received effective training for the role. All policies now meet the necessary requirements, and the amended versions are available to parents and staff. Governors receive induction training and are offered opportunities to undertake further training for their roles. An annual safeguarding update is provided by senior designated staff.
- 5.3 Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise and skills. Through regular staff presentations and the clearly defined committee structure, governors maintain sound oversight of the day-to-day working of the school. Clear long term aims for the development of the school are not yet supported by detailed medium term planning to secure their implementation. Governance provides successfully for the development and maintenance of the school's accommodation, facilities and resources, and ensures the recruitment of highly skilled staff.
- 5.4 Governors actively support the school, visiting lessons and attending performances. In their responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire, an overwhelming majority of parents expressed their satisfaction with many aspects of the education provided for their children, and would recommend the school to another parent.

5.(b) The quality of leadership and management, including links with parents, carers and guardians

- 5.5 The quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory.
- 5.6 Appropriate systems to ensure the recruitment of suitable staff have not been consistently applied with all required checks completed before staff begin work at school although the school acted promptly to remedy this and by the end of the inspection all checks had been completed. Staff undertake regular training in their roles in safeguarding, welfare, health and safety, but training has not included all staff being familiar with the current safeguarding guidance contained in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, as required; almost all have now done so. Training records are incomplete. Policies and procedures are reviewed at suitable intervals, although scrutiny of the evidence prior to the inspection showed that the school has not always been rigorous in ensuring that it keeps up-to-date with the most recent regulatory requirements. By the end of the inspection, the school had taken suitable steps to ensure that identified shortcomings in policies and other documentation had been dealt with. Arrangements for the appraisal of staff are undergoing revision.

Effective systems exist for evaluating the school's performance in ballet although these are less developed in other areas.

- 5.7 The leadership and management are highly effective in enabling the school to meet its aim to provide an education where students may fully develop their artistic and academic potential. As a result, students become confident achievers. They flourish in an environment which encourages the development of their natural talents and develop excellent personal qualities. Individual students' educational needs are clearly identified and appropriate management support structures result in excellent provision for students with SEND, EAL and the more able. Senior managers are introducing a system to further improve the effective monitoring of students' progress.
- 5.8 Subject planning is based on a thorough understanding of the needs of students, and schemes of work are detailed and comprehensive, providing a variety of learning opportunities for students and an excellent programme of development in ballet. Carefully tailored programmes of study facilitate the physical demands made on the students by their commitment to train as ballet dancers. Teachers are offered opportunities for professional development and new staff receive suitable induction training. The leadership is successful in promoting values which encourage respect for others and prepares students for life in British society. Fundamental British values are actively promoted.
- 5.9 The action plan prepared by the school following the Ofsted report from the inspection in September 2014, lists four actions. The school has completed the action to review the format and layout of the single central register of appointments. However, it has not carried out all of the required pre-employment checks. In line with the action plan, the school has introduced termly checks of the single central register, currently undertaken by the designated governor and the Principal.
- 5.10 The school has a complaints policy that meets requirements. A few parents indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that they do not think the school handles concerns well. Examinations of records show that concerns are handled appropriately and in accordance with the policy.
- 5.11 A few parents and students responding to the questionnaire indicated that the school has not always communicated with them speedily, and this is especially important when dealing with the results of dance assessments. They also expressed their concerns as to the fairness of the assessment process. The school is aware of these concerns and has begun to initiate procedures to ensure more open and transparent methods of assessment and quicker communication with parents and students. A clear policy is available to parents detailing how assessments are conducted. The arrangements for the assessment process include an external assessor, senior managers and input from the student's teacher on a percentage basis, which changes as the student progresses through the school. This policy is being implemented to ensure the assessment process is conducted as fairly as possible. The school is aware that delays have occurred with communicating results to parents and students in the past, and is working to improve this.
- 5.12 A suitable range of information about the school is available to parents of current and prospective students on the school website and in the school prospectus, with additional documentation readily available. Out-of-date information had been updated by the conclusion of the inspection.

- 5.13 A small minority parents indicated in the pre-inspection questionnaire that the school does not encourage them to be involved in the work and progress of their children. Inspection evidence does not support this view and found that parents receive regular detailed academic reports which provide parents with appropriate information on their children's progress throughout the year. Parents are also invited to meet teachers to discuss progress. There is an active parents' association which is open to all parents, and parents are invited to attend performances and other events. An overwhelming majority of parents responding to the questionnaire would recommend the school to another parent.

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