

Inspection of Young Dancers Academy

25 Bulwer Street, Shepherds Bush, London W12 8AR

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

There are some serious safety failings in this school. Safeguarding is not effective, including in relation to fire safety and risk assessment. Record-keeping and some checks on the premises are disorganised. The school does not provide enough impartial careers information to help prepare pupils for their next steps.

Pupils enjoy attending this specialist ballet school. They are ambitious for their futures and work very hard. Their attitudes to learning are exceptional. Pupils feel like they are part of a family. They build strong friendships with each other, and have excellent professional relationships with their teachers. They said that bullying is exceptionally rare. Leaders deal with any incidents effectively.

Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations. They behave impeccably, and their attendance is excellent. The curriculum enables pupils to learn well in a range of subjects, in addition to their core ballet tuition. Leaders have not made sure that technological education is included as part of the curriculum. Pupils achieve well, including in English and mathematics.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and the school's proprietorial body have not checked compliance with the requirements for independent schools thoroughly, including the independent school standards. Many are not met. The most serious failings relate to safeguarding, fire safety and risk assessment. Windows on the first floor, which open too wide, had limiters added to them during the inspection. In September 2020, an external fire safety risk assessment identified various necessary actions, which leaders have not followed up or taken action to address. Records of fire-safety checks are disorganised and incomplete. The shared nature of the school's premises has not been thoroughly reviewed in light of the possible risks. The written risk assessment for the premises is out of date. The admission register does not include all the required information in full, including details of pupils' previous schools. There is no medical room facility on one site. On the other site, a changing room with a blow-up bed in a drawer does not meet the requirements for the provision of accommodation for the short-term care of sick and injured pupils.

The school's curriculum includes core study of ballet, performing arts including music and drama, English, mathematics, science, history and French at key stage 3. At key stage 4, there is core study of ballet, performing arts, English, mathematics, biology and history. Pupils can choose additional options in music, drama, French and other sciences. However, the curriculum is limited by the current lack of technological education. Leaders intend to reintroduce the computing curriculum from January 2022.

Pupils work towards both academic and vocational qualifications, which they value equally. They read fluently and widely. In the academic subjects, teaching is in line

with the school's well-sequenced curriculum plans. Teachers assess pupils carefully and plan learning that builds on what pupils already know. Pupils achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, teachers of the academic curriculum receive limited professional development in the subjects they teach. This limits the quality of the academic curriculum.

Pupils are encouraged to be confident, modest and respectful. They spoke with humour about their long days and displayed a very positive attitude to work. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes ensure that lessons proceed without interruption. Pupils said that they are encouraged to be themselves at school. An effective programme of personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education helps to prepare pupils for their future lives. They are taught about British values, equality and the range of differences people have. During anti-bullying week, pupils were taught about what may lead some people to become bullies. During the previous week, the police visited the school to support pupils' learning on personal safety. Pupils said that they especially enjoy engaging in debate during PSHE education. The requirements for relationships and sex education are met.

The vast majority of pupils proceed to further ballet training at vocational colleges. However, impartial careers information, advice and guidance about the possible alternative choices to careers in dance is limited.

The school is not compliant with Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 because a suitable accessibility plan has not been implemented. The headteacher drafted a plan during the inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

The school's system for recruiting staff does not pay regard to government guidance, including in relation to additional overseas vetting checks and references. Some staff are working in the school without the required overseas checks, although the single central record (SCR) of pre-employment checks marks them as completed. The SCR also does not include dates for several of the required vetting checks.

Leaders do not use the school's online system to log concerns fully or accurately to document the actions they take. Records of important safeguarding information are disorganised and stored variously in books, in emails and on portable storage devices. This disorganised approach does not follow the record-keeping guidance set out in national guidance and may have implications for the safeguarding of pupils.

The staff team is caring, vigilant and committed to pupils' safety and well-being. Staff know every pupil well. They work hard to support pupils' mental health.

The school's safeguarding policy reflects the latest national guidance and is available on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Safeguarding is not effective because the safer recruitment process does not reflect government guidance. The recording of concerns and actions is disorganised. The SCR is not compliant. Leaders and the school's proprietorial body should improve safeguarding arrangements and ensure they take full account of the latest statutory guidance.
- The academic curriculum is narrow because there is no technological education. Leaders and the school's proprietorial body should realise their plans to reintroduce computing to the curriculum as quickly as possible.
- Teachers of the academic curriculum receive limited professional development in the subjects they teach. Leaders and the school's proprietorial body should increase the professional development offer to help improve the quality of academic education.
- Arrangements to provide pupils of secondary age with impartial careers information, advice and guidance are limited. Leaders and the school's proprietorial body should ensure that pupils of secondary age receive impartial information, advice and guidance to inform decision-making when they leave the school.
- Leaders and the school's proprietorial body have not checked compliance with many of the independent school standards. Requirements relating to safeguarding, health and safety, fire safety, risk assessment, the admission register and medical facilities are all not met. These are listed in the annex to this report. The proprietorial body and leaders should ensure that they understand the independent school standards and take action to ensure that these are all met consistently.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	135729
DfE registration number	205/6200
Local authority	Hammersmith & Fulham
Inspection number	10204313
Type of school	Day ballet academy
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	Young Dancers Charitable Academy
Chair	Kelly Richardson
Headteacher	Kerry Williams
Annual fees (day pupils)	£12,603 to £13,068
Telephone number	020 8746 0412
Website	www.youngdancersacademy.com
Email address	info@youngdancersacademy.com
Dates of previous inspection	13 to 15 June 2017

Information about this school

- Young Dancers Academy is a day school for boys and girls. The school provides specialist teaching in classical ballet to pupils aged 10 to 16. Pupils are admitted to the school according to their performance at a ballet audition.
- The school's proprietorial arrangements have changed since the previous inspection. The board of trustees is now also responsible as the school's proprietorial body. The proprietorial body is now also responsible for the school's governance.
- The school occupies premises opposite each other at 25 and 58 Bulwer Street, Shepherds Bush, London W12 8AR. The premises are shared with the West London School of Dance.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in June 2017.
- Leaders make no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- This full standard inspection was conducted with one day's notice.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics, PSHE education, and drama. Inspectors visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their work, and met with teachers.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the director of the academic curriculum regularly throughout the inspection. Inspectors also met with the chair of the proprietorial body.
- Inspectors spoke with the school's safeguarding leader by telephone and reviewed a range of related documentation, including pre-employment checks on staff's and employees' files.
- Inspectors met with all the school's pupils over the course of the inspection. Discussions focused on pupils' views about their learning, safety, personal development and behaviour.

- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s survey for parents, Parent View, and responses to the online pupils’ survey and the online survey for staff.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of evidence to check compliance with the independent school standards.

Inspection team

James Waite, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Frances Hawkes

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are–
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that–
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- 15 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that–

- 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
- 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person’s appointment.
- 20(6) The standard in this paragraph is met in relation to an individual ("MB"), not being the Chair of the school, who is a member of a body of persons corporate or unincorporate named as the proprietor of the school in the register or in an application to enter the school in the register, if–
 - 20(6)(a) MB–
 - 20(6)(b)(iii) where, by reason of MB’s living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining an enhanced criminal record certificate is not sufficient to establish MB’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks as the Chair of the school considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
- 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is–
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff ("S") appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether–
 - 21(3)(a)(i) S’s identity was checked;
 - 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S’s right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e).
- 21(6) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation each member ("MB") of a body of persons named as the proprietor appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether the checks referred to in paragraph 20(6)(b) were made, the date they were made and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to cater for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including–
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils; and
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school–
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
- 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010

- The school is not compliant because a suitable accessibility plan has not been implemented.

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