

An introduction to Elmhurst



Organisation and aims

The aim of the school is to provide training in classical ballet and allied dance forms to the highest possible standards, supported by first-rate academic education.

Training is divided into two sections: 11-16 years (Lower School) and 16-19 years (Sixth Form). Girls and boys are accepted between the ages of 11 and 13 (sometimes 14) and there is a further entry at 16. Pupils are expected to offer between eight and 11 subjects at GCSE. Optional dance examinations of the RAD are taken, sometimes up to the most advanced levels of the Major Executant examinations. From 16 to 19, students follow the Senior Classical Ballet course. At its successful conclusion, students receive the National Diploma in Professional Dance from Trinity College, London, and are in a position to audition for professional work.

The School also offers a one-year pre-professional course in Classical Ballet and Associated Subjects. This course is for pre-professional students in their final year, professional dancers who have had time-out through injury/illness, and overseas students interested in career opportunities following intensive vocational training and education.

The record of students obtaining work is excellent, and there are ex-students in all the major British ballet companies, and in many in Europe and North America. Elmhurst-trained students are also to be found in musical theatre productions in the West End and elsewhere, as well as on television and in film.



Facilities

In autumn 2004, Elmhurst moved from its former home in Camberley, Surrey, to its new, purpose-built campus which occupies a five-acre, green-field site on the outskirts of Birmingham city centre. This splendid, state-of-the-art complex, situated in the attractive and prosperous suburb of Edgbaston, represents a £17 million investment in the future of dance education in the UK. The school's move has received the full backing of central government and Birmingham City Council and is designed to help fulfil the key aims for the development of the DfES Music & Dance and Dance & Drama award schemes.

The new school has been designed by architects Weightman & Bullen. The building is a statement in itself and 'movement' has inspired and shaped the design, with school life moving, vertically and horizontally, around a central focus – the dance theatre.

The pupils' well-being was foremost in the architect's mind. The boarding accommodation is an integral part of the design, utilising courtyards and cloisters to give sheltered access to the main school.

The Bristol Road campus includes:

250-seat studio theatre incorporating the best modern technology

Theatre workshop and support facilities

Seven dance studios

Music recital room

Seven music practice rooms

ICT centre, with 30 networked computers

A suite of spacious and attractive academic classrooms

Science laboratory and prep room

Art and design studio

Library and learning resources centre

New catering and dining facilities

On-site boarding accommodation for up to 125 pupils

Medical centre

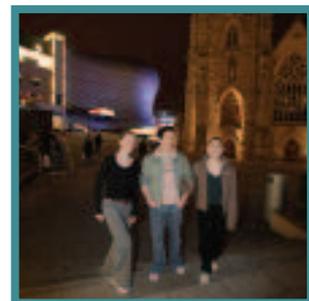
Physiotherapy and exercise centre

The new site is fitted with an extensive CCTV network, as well as a PA system and lifts for disabled access. All bedrooms have desk space and computer access points.

An introduction to Elmhurst contd

Advantages of a Birmingham base

Birmingham is served by an international airport, easily accessible from the new school site. Trains run from London Euston to Birmingham New Street three times an hour and the journey takes just under two hours. There are also direct trains to the south-west, east, north and to Scotland and Wales. The station is less than a mile from the school. London is approximately 115 miles away and the journey takes a little over two hours by car.





Birmingham is a vibrant, culturally rich city and this is reflected in the large number of theatres located close to the new school site:

Birmingham Hippodrome: home to Birmingham Royal Ballet since 1990, the Hippodrome underwent a £30 million refurbishment in 2000–2001. It is host to major touring companies, including Welsh National Opera, and national touring productions, such as those of Cameron Mackintosh.

Midlands Art Centre (MAC): regularly hosts innovative and ground-breaking programmes of cinema, music and visual arts.

Alexandra Theatre: a venue of pre- and post-West End productions, touring shows, opera, ballet and musical theatre.

Birmingham Conservatoire: one of Britain's leading music colleges, it stages a wealth of concerts.

Symphony Hall: one of the greatest concert halls in the world and home to the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. It is also host to prestigious international concerts, rock and pop music (as is the nearby NIA Arena) and the work of local musicians.

Birmingham Rep: stages its own productions of major classics and new works in its two auditoria.

Crescent Theatre: home to the amateur Crescent Theatre Company and host to a wide variety of small-scale touring companies.

The University of Birmingham campus, with many attractions and resources, is in the school's immediate vicinity. Birmingham City Centre is just ten minutes away by bus. Other local points of interest include the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Birmingham Nature Centre, Warwickshire County Cricket Ground, Edgbaston Golf Club, a UCG Cinema and a Megabowl.