

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## INSPECTION REPORT ON

### Elmhurst School for Dance

Full Name of the School	<b>Elmhurst School for Dance</b>
DCSF Number	<b>330/6111</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>1040286</b>
Address	<b>249 Bristol Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B5 7UH.</b>
Telephone Number	<b>0121 472 6655</b>
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Email Address	<b>enquiries@elmhurstdance.co.uk</b>
Principal	<b>Mrs Elaine Brook</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Mrs Ann Worley</b>
Age Range	<b>11 to 19</b>
Gender	<b>Mixed</b>
Inspection Dates	<b>13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008</b>

This inspection report follows the framework laid down by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). The inspection was carried out under the arrangements of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of their membership. It was also carried out under Section 162A(1)(b) of the Education Act 2002 as amended by the Education Act 2005, under the provisions of which the Secretary of State for Education and Skills accredited ISI as the body approved for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to ISC Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended with effect from January 2005 and May 2007.

The inspection was carried out in conjunction with Ofsted, Children's Directorate. The Ofsted report is available separately at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) under Inspection reports/Boarding schools.

The inspection does not examine the financial viability of the school or investigate its accounting procedures. The inspectors check the school's health and safety procedures and comment on any significant hazards they encounter: they do not carry out an exhaustive health and safety examination. Their inspection of the premises is from an educational perspective and does not include in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the School**

- 1.1 Elmhurst School for Dance has a distinguished history as the UK's oldest vocational dance school. It was founded in the early nineteen twenties in Camberley, Surrey as a Christian foundation specialising in the teaching of drama and dance. The school moved in 2004 to new, purpose-built premises in Birmingham. The mission of the school is to provide a world-renowned centre of excellence for the training and education of dancers for Birmingham Royal Ballet and other national and international dance companies. This includes giving pupils a sound knowledge of allied dance genres, a quality academic education, and a principled, caring, living and working environment, all combined to provide a solid foundation for their life-long learning.
- 1.2 A new, interim principal was appointed in September 2008, and a new senior management team began work at the same time. The previous principal, who managed the school's move from Camberley and established the school in Birmingham, retired in July 2008. At the same time the head of pastoral care and boarding also retired, and the director of studies and artistic director moved to take up posts elsewhere.
- 1.3 The school is attended by 85 boys and 112 girls. Pupils come from a wide variety of ethnic, social and educational backgrounds, with 27 pupils coming from countries other than the UK. Eighty per cent of the UK pupils are funded, either through the Department for Children, Schools and Families Music and Dance Awards scheme, the Learning and Skills Council's Dance and Drama Awards or the school's scholarship scheme. Pupils are selected entirely on the basis of ability and potential in dance. Attainment of all the pupils on entry to the school is difficult to gauge, given the proportion of them who come from overseas educational settings. Based on the evidence the school has, the ability profile of pupils who arrive from UK schools is in line with the national average. If pupils are performing in line with their abilities, their results in public examinations should be in line with the average for all maintained schools.
- 1.4 The school has identified 30 pupils as having learning difficulties/disabilities, and 21 pupils for whom English is not their principal language and who receive extra support for their English.
- 1.5 National Curriculum nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

### **The Educational Experience Provided**

- 2.1 The educational experience provided is good with some outstanding features. The aim of the school to provide a world renowned centre of excellence in the training and education of dancers is fully met. The good qualities identified by the previous inspection have been maintained.
- 2.2 Pupils are well educated within a broad and reasonably balanced range of subjects which is enhanced by an exceptionally rich artistic curriculum. The education successfully contributes to the pupils' skills in the use of language and literacy, and mathematics and numeracy. Pupils' scientific and technological development needs are met, and their human and social skills, as well as their skills in speaking and listening, are developed across the educational provision, through dance studies, academic work and the strong collaborative ethos of the school. The dance curriculum in particular ensures that pupils' physical, aesthetic and creative development is at a very high level. The school choir, vibrant departments in music and art, along with numerous performance opportunities all enhance the richness of the educational experience provided.
- 2.3 A suitable range of extra-curricular activities is undertaken as part of the mainstream curriculum. A number of activities are organized for boarders, but boarding pupils say that they have too few extra-curricular activities at weekends.
- 2.4 A key component of the pupils' dance education is a series of visits to performances by the Birmingham Royal Ballet (BRB) and other companies. These play a vital role in encouraging pupils to aspire to the highest standards in their chosen art form. After seeing a former Elmhurst pupil perform with the BRB, one pupil wrote in her dance diary (completed by all the pupils as part of their ballet portfolio), 'All I kept thinking was that one day this could be me'. Optional Saturday classes are provided in Royal Academy of Dance syllabus ballet, allowing pupils to broaden their experience of ballet and help to prepare for a future career in teaching. Ballet master-classes offer further opportunities for pupils to develop their dance skills to the highest level.
- 2.5 The highly successful association with BRB provides important opportunities for pupils to re-affirm their desire to pursue a career in ballet and enables them to experience opportunities of dancing with a professional company. Selected younger pupils participate in BRB's annual performances of 'The Nutcracker' and other productions. In addition to the two year sixth form course, the school provides a vocational third year sixth form course, taken by most of the pupils, leading to a degree-equivalent dance qualification. The third year sixth pupils participate in the BRB company's classes, rehearsals and performances, often going on tour in this country and internationally. This provides work experience of the highest quality and most relevant character with immediate implications for pupils' future employment.
- 2.6 Visits are arranged to support learning in other subjects, as for example, geography visits to Carndale in Yorkshire, to the Black Country Museum for history, and participation in a mathematics revision conference and a poetry festival. Pupils are able to gain recognised qualifications in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the school ensures that pupils from abroad are given support when needed in learning English as an additional language. The majority of pupils also take extra music lessons which enhance their educational experience. Strong links are made with the community. The whole school is involved in supporting a range of charities. Pupils performed last year in a Save the Children fundraising event at Symphony Hall, Birmingham.

- 2.7 Arrangements for the preparation for the next stage of life and training operate at both formal and informal levels. Pupils preparing for the next stage in ballet are given excellent advice and assistance by the staff of the school. Many of their teachers have a complex network of connections throughout the industry and recommend their final year students for work experience with companies in Europe, as for example in Spain, Germany and Slovakia. In addition the school invites directors from these companies to participate in the final year assessment process so they can see first hand the calibre of the graduating cohort, with a view to offering positions. Conscious of the external connections of their teaching staff, the school ensures that all dance teachers have an opportunity to work with final year students.
- 2.8 Recent changes to the process of Year 11 application and audition for the sixth form mean that pupils are now given valuable early feedback on their prospects for continuing to the next stage of their training. The future for those who are assessed as being not suitable to continue their training into the sixth form is sensitively catered for by the provision of classes in jazz or other dance disciplines to enable them to audition successfully for other colleges. A visiting psychologist helps pupils to develop strategies for decision making for the future.
- 2.9 Pupils gain a generally balanced range of educational experience, but the school is aware that there are some aspects of the curriculum which are in need of review. The extremely full timetable means that pupils' free time is very limited. Pupils in Year 8, for instance, feel that they have very little time for relaxation and reflection because timetabled activity takes up almost their entire day. Given the understandably rigorous and time-consuming dance curriculum, the number of GCSE subjects taken by the Year 10 and Year 11 pupils is very high, leading to insufficient time for the range of subjects taken, and placing very heavy demands on pupils. For example, the taught time allocation of Double Award GCSE science in Year 11 is not adequate.
- 2.10 The academic curriculum for sixth form pupils is not closely enough related to their needs. Sixth form pupils take A-level examinations in their second year, and then complete an Honours degree-equivalent course in dance (Level 6 in the National Qualifications Framework) a year later. A number of sixth form pupils expressed the view that the time spent in A-level study could be better used in activities more closely related to their reason for joining Elmhurst, such as gaining teaching qualifications in their area of expertise. The school is rightly considering the range of options available to it in this regard.
- 2.11 Overall, planning enables good equality of opportunity for pupils of all abilities and access to all areas of the curriculum. Pupils of all abilities actively participate in a range of activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for who English is an additional language, are well catered for in lessons, with activities that are planned to help them learn.
- 2.12 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the curriculum [Standard 1].

## **Pupils' Learning and Achievements**

- 2.13 Pupils' learning and achievement is good overall in academic subjects, and achievement and learning are outstanding in the very demanding vocational dance courses, where pupils show outstanding commitment, application and perseverance. This reflects the school's aims to strive for excellence, especially within its specialist dance curriculum. Pupils are very well educated by the time they leave school and feel that their particular gifts are nurtured. The school has maintained these standards since the previous inspection.
- 2.14 Pupils of all abilities respond well to new material and evaluate what they are doing in class. They are well grounded and confident in applying knowledge, skills and understanding in the subjects and activities provided, and they develop the skills essential for work and study. They express themselves creatively in their imaginative writing. High quality art demonstrates lively interpretation of colour and texture through different media. Pupils think critically in a range of lively discussions such as the examination of the characterisation in a challenging text of a play about the London bombings.
- 2.15 As they move towards their GCSE, pupils articulate their views clearly and express them using complex language. They are increasingly innovative in the media they use for art and make sensible use of ICT in their other work. When they are given the opportunity, pupils research the internet to support their class work. Pupils' grasp of mathematical ideas is good and they have the confidence to put forward their ideas in science.
- 2.16 When taking A-level courses, pupils write with confidence. They develop increasingly abstract ideas and assess the quality of their own work across the curriculum. They apply their learning confidently to new situations and think with increasing independence.
- 2.17 Pupils' attainment in GCSE is good in relation to their abilities. Results in GCSE for the last three years for which comparative data was available at the time of the inspection have been above the national average for all maintained schools. Very good achievement in the creative and performing arts at GCSE reflects high quality teaching and learning in these areas. Pupils make appropriate progress in the sixth form in line with their abilities, despite the considerable demands made on them by their vocational courses. Their performance in A-level examinations over the last three years for which comparative data was available at the time of the inspection has been in line with the national average for all maintained schools. Pupils achieve well in other public examinations, such as the Royal Academy of Dance external examinations and music examinations. Pupils who speak English as an additional language perform well in their specialist English examinations.
- 2.18 Throughout the school, pupils produce work of the highest quality in dance through outstanding strength, control and energy. They achieve outstanding standards in a good range of disciplines, ranging from classical ballet to jazz, tap and contemporary dance. Their work shows poise and self confidence with a keen sense of rhythm and fluidity of movement. These high standards are based on high levels of fitness and technical skill. Consequently, pupils develop their repertoire by learning quickly. Work in art shows considerable technique and imagination, as well as confident style and purpose.
- 2.19 Outside the classroom, pupils achieve successes in a good range of artistic activities. Pupils have performed recently in the opening ceremony for the newly-reconstructed Town Hall in Birmingham in the presence of the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, the school's patron. Pupils have also participated in the International Festival of Dance in Budapest and the opening ceremony of the National Athletics competition. A significant number of pupils work with the Birmingham Royal Ballet on tour.

- 2.20 Pupils' attitudes to work and study are excellent and they work very hard. Their written work is generally well presented. They maintain their own notes and record their ideas effectively. Note-taking and evaluations in ballet portfolios are of an outstanding standard. Pupils work very successfully as individuals and in groups and teams. They respect one another and listen attentively in group discussion. There is a buzz of excitement as pupils go about their work. They are highly committed and work long hours. Across the school there are many examples of pupils working tenaciously to establish new knowledge and skills, from practising steps and consolidating positions in ballet, to perfecting a science investigation.

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils**

- 2.21 At all ages pupils demonstrate outstandingly well-developed spiritual and moral awareness and good social and cultural awareness. The school's aim to provide a solid foundation for pupils' life-long learning is well met. The very effective personal development identified by the previous inspection has been further enhanced.
- 2.22 Pupils have a high level of spiritual awareness. The sense of awe and wonder permeates the school as expressed most fully by very high quality performance. The school helps pupils develop a strong sense of self-worth, which promotes a feeling of belonging and enables pupils to persevere and strive for perfection. Evaluation and encouragement from their teachers, and their own unremitting effort develops and maintains pupils' self-esteem and high morale, and engenders an atmosphere of mutual support. Religious perspectives are used where appropriate and during weekly assemblies, reflecting the Christian origins of the school. Boarding pupils are able to choose to attend church or worship if they wish.
- 2.23 Pupils have a strong sense of mutual respect and support strengthened by a clear moral code and set of rules. They distinguish right from wrong and demonstrate an understanding of what is expected of them, resulting in excellent behaviour. Continual reinforcement of this sense of right and wrong is effected by a range of activities, for example, the personal, social and health education programme, anti-bullying education, role play in drama, and through the content of assemblies and religious education. Pupils have a respect for the law through exploring the legal issues related to, for instance, drug abuse. Challenging questions are debated by the whole school such as the pros and cons of increasing the legal age for purchasing alcohol. Pupils know what is unacceptable in the school and strive to meet the high expectations of staff.
- 2.24 Pupils' social awareness is excellent, and is successfully promoted throughout the school. Pupils talk about the 'family of the school' and help and care for one another. Tutor time, autobiographies, projects about 'myself' and lessons in history and religious education help pupils to explore social skills. The school is successfully helping pupils to develop responsibility for their own actions. Experience of performance with ballet companies and at special functions provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop self-discipline and responsibility. Important social skills are developed through the many opportunities pupils have to give and receive constructive criticism and praise. The role of prefects is taken very seriously. Pupils' involvement in research, for example about how single-parent families can access benefits and contribution to Breast Cancer Awareness week, enables them to begin to understand public services and the work of charities. The school council is an excellent opportunity for them to experience democracy in action and helps them understand how their views and ideas can contribute to a positive community. Pupils' understanding of national and local public services is limited and studies about citizenship are not systematically developed.

- 2.25 Pupils have a well-developed cultural awareness. They acquire an understanding of their own and other cultures that promotes a sense of personal enrichment. Pupils' studies in art, dance, English, history, music and religious education (RE) provide insights into world cultures, encouraging understanding, appreciation and respect. The curriculum provides many opportunities to develop and extend cultural awareness, for example the exploration of world religions, the plight of refugees and the influences that have shaped pupils' own cultural heritage. Through role play in drama, pupils confront racism and value racial equality. Pupils' understanding is further enriched through encounters with artistic enterprises and the cultural traditions of ballet through work with national and international companies. Their awareness is greatly enhanced by artistic exploration of dance from a range of cultural traditions such as dances from the African heritage and the Flamenco from Spain. They stated that they enjoyed the international mix of the school and their appreciation of diversity is extended well through classes with highly qualified specialists from a range of cultural traditions and nationalities, theatre visits, visits to galleries and master classes in dance.
- 2.26 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils [Standard 2].

### **The Quality of Teaching (Including Assessment)**

- 2.27 The teaching of dance at Elmhurst is outstanding. Very high quality teachers are employed on the artistic staff, many of whom have enjoyed a successful international career. The quality of dance teaching is enhanced by regular dance master classes, given by visiting professionals. Across the academic subjects teaching is good and in some areas outstanding, particularly in art and history. Teaching is well planned and lessons have clear teaching and learning objectives, reflecting teachers' knowledge of pupils' prior attainment, and meeting the differing needs of pupils. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language are known to staff and are taught sympathetically, allowing them to progress well. Teachers' expectations of high standards of behaviour are fully met by pupils.
- 2.28 The pupils' intellectual development is well catered for by lessons which challenge them to think for themselves. The development of creativity through dance and through aspects of the academic curriculum, such as art and music, is strength of the school. The rigorous physical challenge of a daily dance programme is well supported by dedicated lessons in muscle strengthening and relaxation. Dance teachers share with pupils their exceptional understanding of the impact of dance on physical development in the teen-age years, and pupils benefit greatly from this aspect of dance teaching.
- 2.29 A range of teaching methods is used effectively, with varied activities including group and paired work. Pupils are encouraged to think independently, and to express their views through challenging work in, for example, art, history and RE. Some of the best teaching includes self-evaluation by pupils. For example, the requirement to keep ballet portfolios and dance diaries encourages mature reflection by pupils on their own progress. In a small minority of lessons teaching does not do enough to challenge pupils to think for themselves, with an over-emphasis on teacher talk.
- 2.30 The school is well equipped to deliver high quality teaching. There is a committed teaching staff with good and often excellent subject knowledge. Resources for teaching are good and the dance studios and the theatre offer outstanding facilities. Many classrooms have interactive whiteboards, which are used well in a range of subjects.

- 2.31 The best marking and assessment informs pupils of how to improve their work but it is inconsistent across departments. The bi-annual reports to parents of pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form do not give sufficient, clear information concerning expected final grades.
- 2.32 The school meets the regulatory requirements for teaching [Standard 1].

### **3. THE QUALITY OF CARE AND RELATIONSHIPS**

#### **The Quality of Pastoral Care, and the Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils**

- 3.1 The school provides good pastoral care and support that is well organised to meet the specific needs of the pupils. Many features of the pastoral provision are outstanding and highly valued by pupils and parents. The school has strengthened many of its procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils since the last inspection. Attendance and admissions registers are well maintained.
- 3.2 Vocational, boarding, medical, academic and non-teaching staff provide an environment in which pupils are very well known and supported, and feel safe. The school has improved its systems for recording and sharing information, so, for example, the system for recording medical consultations and medication provides the option of keeping relevant staff informed instantly by email. The school's nursing team works closely with other visiting health professionals to provide the level of medical support necessary in a school where pupils are expected to make considerable physical demands on themselves.
- 3.3 The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils is generally very good, and this leads to a happy and friendly school community. Year 7 and Year 8 pupils speak highly of the arrangements whereby Year 7 pupils are assigned a Year 8 'buddy' to help them settle in to the school. The school is aware that a few pupils express concerns about their relationships with a very small minority of staff members, and is taking active steps to resolve this issue.
- 3.4 The focus and self discipline that pupils develop through vocational dance permeates their other studies so that behaviour in lessons is excellent. Behaviour and disciplinary policies are appropriate and constructive, and well known to pupils.
- 3.5 The school has a detailed and effective child protection policy and procedures, and all staff are trained. The school's system of internet security is effective in blocking access to undesirable sites, but it also blocks access to potentially useful sites. Access to computers at weekends and in boarding houses is prohibited, thereby making communication with family and friends outside school difficult. The school takes its responsibilities for health and safety very seriously. Fire practices and other risk assessments are carried out regularly. The health and safety committee meets regularly to ensure procedures are being implemented. Vocational dance staff are rigorous in ensuring that pupils understand the importance of warming-up exercises, and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own health. A comprehensive range of procedures is in place for dealing with accidents, injuries and illnesses. A nutritionist advises pupils on healthy eating and a range of healthy options is always available in the school's 'Bistro'.
- 3.6 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the welfare, health and safety of pupils [Standard 3].

### **The Quality of Links with Parents and the Community**

- 3.7 Links with parents and the community are good. Pre-inspection questionnaires indicate that most parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the education and support the school provides. Concerns were raised by a small minority of parents about the feedback they receive about their child's progress, about the scope for parental involvement and the limited range of extra-curricular activities for boarders. The inspectors found that the school does provide well for parental involvement, but agrees with parents that the range of extra-curricular activities for boarders is limited.
- 3.8 The school provides parents with satisfactory information about the school and about pupils' progress and achievement. Academic and vocational reports are provided at the end of each year. They are generally clear and informative, and are complemented by a suitably timed parents meeting for each year group. Year 10 and Year 11 reports do not provide enough information about predicted or target GCSE grades. The annual welcoming letter from the principal and a newsletter which appears three times each year provide helpful information about recent and forthcoming events, examination results, alumni successes and school visits. The school's website also provides valuable information about all aspects of school life.
- 3.9 The parents' page of the school's website contains the key policies that impact on pupils' lives as well as showing parents the school's complaints procedure, and these policies are also available from the school office on request.
- 3.10 The school has a range of strong artistic and educational links with the community at local, national and international levels. Pupils benefit particularly from the school's very close links with BRB. The school's pre-vocational programme gives pupils from all primary schools in the West Midlands the opportunity to be invited to audition for places on Elmhurst's very popular Saturday morning dance courses. Children from a local primary school visit annually to find out about Elmhurst.
- 3.11 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the provision of information and the manner in which complaints are to be handled [Standards 6 and 7].

### **The Quality of Boarding Education**

- 3.12 The quality of boarding education in the school is good. Boarders are generally well-cared for by dedicated staff who know them well and are sympathetic to their needs. Relationships between boarders and boarding staff and amongst boarders themselves are generally excellent and supportive, although the school is aware that a small minority of boarders do not feel entirely comfortable about their relationships with some members of staff, and this is being reviewed and improved.
- 3.13 The boarders are highly focused and work very long hours, and some feel that they do not have enough time to relax. The variable provision for visits and activities out of school, due in some cases to a lack of adequate staffing, limits the potential boarders have for experiencing and enjoying the world beyond school. Most of the boarding accommodation is of excellent quality, with single en suite bedrooms or spacious double rooms in good decorative order, and comfortable, homely social areas. The school currently has the management and maintenance of one off-site mixed sixth form boarding house under review with planned change and improvement.

- 3.14 The school has met the recommendations of the previous Ofsted inspection of boarding (September 2006) except for the recommendation that there should be sufficient staffing in place at weekends to ensure that young people are allowed access to activities and arrangements external to the school site.

## **4. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **The Quality of Governance**

- 4.1 Governance at the school has improved since the last inspection. The governing body is well structured and includes a good range of sub-committees focused on addressing the differing aspects of the school's management and governance. These committees ensure that the governing body has effective oversight of the school.
- 4.2 Governors know their responsibilities well, and are fully aware of, and involved in, financial planning and the issues of resourcing the school. Governors have a secure view of the overall educational provision, and have good contact with staff. The governing body is aware of the challenges currently facing the school in the areas of curriculum, staffing and future financial planning. Although the governing body has been involved in establishing a business plan for the school relating, for example, to external links and the marketing of the school, the absence of a school development plan inhibits the extent to which the governing body can focus on a clear educational vision for the future. The governing body are effective in discharging their responsibilities for the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

### **The Quality of Leadership and Management**

- 4.3 Leadership and management are good overall, and provide good educational direction, maintaining the standard achieved in the previous report. The new interim principal has reviewed the school's provision and identified short to medium-term priorities including improvements to extra-curricular activities, changes to some aspects of boarding provision and the co-ordination of subject departments. She is also beginning to work with the governing body to investigate and model longer-term plans to secure and enhance the school's reputation as a centre of excellence.
- 4.4 Led by the school's newly-appointed artistic director and by the new director of studies, teachers in the dance and academic faculties are now working hard to improve co-ordination of dance and academic curricula and timetables. The purpose of this initiative is to reduce the conflicting demands on pupils' time and attention, which have sometimes led to tensions for staff and pupils in the past. This helpful initiative is beginning to have a positive impact on the way teaching staff work together and on the provision of a more integrated educational experience for pupils.
- 4.5 The school has been careful to appoint staff of high quality, and to ensure their suitability to work with children. Professional dance staff include dancers and teachers of international repute or who have had responsibilities within the management of ballet companies, with a core of full-time teachers and a well-established group of part-timers. Pupils also benefit from master classes led by visiting dancers. Academic staff have good and relevant qualifications, and most have long experience of teaching their subjects.
- 4.6 Academic subject leaders work very hard to ensure that pupils are supported in their work beyond dance studies. Nevertheless, the school does not have an established middle management structure to draw together and co-ordinate the efforts of the subject leaders across the academic subjects in areas such as teaching strategies, marking and assessment, and target-setting. As a result, it is not certain that the school is currently able to ensure that pupils perform to the very best of their ability across all the subject areas. This has been identified as an area for improvement, and has instigated the identification and sharing of best practice across subject areas.

- 4.7 The school's financial resources are well managed by a full-time finance officer and finance staff, and the administration of the school is efficient and effective. The school has appropriate systems for checking the suitability of staff, supply staff and governors. The school does not participate in the national scheme for the induction of newly qualified teachers.
- 4.8 The school meets the regulatory requirements for the suitability of proprietors and staff and for premises and accommodation [Standards 4 and 5].

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

### **Overall Conclusions**

- 5.1 Elmhurst is a thriving and highly successful school. The school fully meets its aim to provide a world-renowned centre of excellence for the training and education of dancers. Educational provision for dance is excellent, and academic provision is good with some outstanding features. Pupils are committed, enthusiastic learners, and the self-confidence engendered by the dance is transferred to their other subjects, allowing them to achieve well in relation to their broader abilities. The pupils are articulate, well behaved and show respect for their teachers and each other. The school has a committed and expert staff of dance and academic teachers.
- 5.2 The school has made a successful move from its previous location in Surrey to Birmingham, consolidated its position and is now ready to move on to the next stage of its development. The recently-appointed interim principal, artistic director, director of academic studies and head of pastoral care form a new and very skilled senior team, and they are reviewing the school's provision to help move the school on to its next stage. They are working hard to ensure that pupils' learning experience is balanced and co-ordinated across the dance and academic faculties. They are aware that there are matters relating to boarding and extra-curricular activities which are in need of attention. They also know that the curriculum for Years 10 and 11, and for the sixth form, is in need of review to best meet the learning needs of pupils. The senior team is aware of the need to look at the co-ordination of academic departments to ensure that outstanding practice in teaching, marking and assessment is shared across subject areas. Looking to the longer term, the principal is beginning to work with the governing body to create a school development plan to help the school plan strategically for the future.
- 5.3 The school meets all the regulatory requirements.

### **Next Steps**

- 5.4 In order to improve its provision further, the school should address the following matters.
1. Review and develop the curriculum for Years 10 and 11, and for the sixth form.
  2. Improve extra-curricular activities for boarders and ensure that provision is consistent across the boarding provision.
  3. Co-ordinate the management of academic departments to ensure that outstanding practice is shared across subject areas.
  4. Prepare a comprehensive school development plan, showing a vision for the educational future of the school and strategies to secure the fulfilment of that vision.
- 5.5 No action is required in respect of regulatory requirements.

## **6. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

- 6.1 The inspection was carried out from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008. The inspectors examined samples of pupils' work, observed lessons and conducted formal interviews with pupils. They held discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff and with governors, observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period, and attended registration sessions and assemblies. Inspectors visited boarding houses and the sanatorium. The responses of parents and pupils to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined a range of documentation made available by the school.
- 6.2 National Minimum Boarding Standards were inspected by a team of two Ofsted inspectors over three days.

### **List of Inspectors**

Mr Peter Jones	Reporting Inspector
Mrs Ann Boyce	Deputy Headteacher, GSA school
Mr Roger Clarke	Headteacher, SHMIS school
Mr Clifford Vote	Vice-Principal, ISA school
Mrs Jennifer Willcock-Bates	Education consultant