

KS3 Dance

Curriculum Intent

The Key Stage 3 Dance curriculum aims to develop students as confident, creative, knowledgeable and reflective young dancers, while giving them a broad understanding of dance as an artistic, cultural and physical discipline.

The curriculum should provide students with opportunities to perform, choreograph and appreciate dance, developing both practical skills and the ability to think critically about movement.

Core Curriculum Intent

The curriculum aims to:

- Develop technical and physical skills, including control, coordination, alignment, balance, flexibility, strength, musicality and spatial awareness.
- Develop confident performers who can communicate ideas, emotions and intentions through movement.
- Develop creativity and choreography, enabling students to generate, develop, structure and refine their own movement material.
- Expose students to a broad range of dance styles and traditions, including contemporary, jazz, musical theatre, street/urban, cultural and classical forms where appropriate.
- Develop dance vocabulary and theoretical understanding, enabling students to discuss and analyse movement using appropriate terminology.
- Develop appreciation of professional dance, encouraging students to engage critically with choreographers, dancers, companies and performances.
- Develop cultural awareness, exploring how dance reflects different cultures, societies, histories and identities.
- Develop collaboration, teaching students how to work effectively as individuals, pairs, small groups and ensembles.
- Develop resilience and discipline, recognising the importance of rehearsal, repetition, refinement and responding positively to feedback.
- Develop independence, enabling students to make increasingly sophisticated choreographic and performance decisions.
- Promote physical and creative wellbeing, encouraging students to understand safe movement practices and experience the enjoyment and confidence that dance can provide.
- Prepare students for further study, including BTEC Dance, BTEC/RSL Performing Arts, A Level/Level 3 pathways and other creative subjects.

Our KS3 curriculum is built around three interconnected strands:

1. Performing

Students develop:

- Technical accuracy
- Control and coordination
- Musicality
- Dynamics
- Spatial awareness
- Performance quality
- Expression and communication
- Confidence and commitment

The intention is that students become increasingly able to perform with purpose and communicate meaning through movement.

2. Choreographing

Students learn how to:

- Generate movement ideas
- Develop and manipulate movement
- Use choreographic devices
- Structure dance
- Explore space, time and dynamics
- Work with music and sound
- Create movement for different intentions
- Collaborate with others
- Refine and edit choreography

The aim is to move students from reproducing movement towards becoming independent creative practitioners.

3. Appreciating

Students develop the ability to:

- Watch dance critically
- Use dance terminology
- Identify choreographic choices
- Analyse performance qualities
- Understand context
- Explore different dance styles
- Research practitioners and companies
- Explain the relationship between movement and meaning

This ensures students understand that dance is not only something to do, but also something to analyse, interpret and understand.

Assessment, Marking and Feedback

Formative assessment happens during lessons, rather than only at the end of a scheme of work.

Teachers will use:

- Observation during practical work
- Questioning
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- Teacher demonstrations
- Rehearsal check-ins
- Video playback
- Exit tickets
- Short written reflections
- Target-setting

At the end of a unit, students could complete a practical assessment such as:

- Solo performance
- Duet/trio
- Group performance
- Choreography
- Repertoire performance
- Dance film
- Practical examination
- Choreographic project

Homework

Homework in KS3 Dance is designed to consolidate practical learning and strengthen students' independence. Tasks may include rehearsal and refinement of set material, safe practice of technical exercises, research into professional practitioners and repertoire, completion of rehearsal logs, written analysis, planning for creative tasks and preparation for assessment.

Links to National Curriculum / Syllabus Specifications

Students extend their understanding of dance as both an art form and a professional discipline. They explore professional practitioners and repertoire, recognise stylistic features, analyse how choreographic and production choices create meaning, and develop the technical and expressive skills needed to perform with control, accuracy and intention. They learn to use dance vocabulary confidently when discussing action, space, dynamics and relationships, as well as constituent features such as accompaniment, costume, lighting and set.

Extracurricular and Enrichment Opportunities

Dance students are encouraged to extend their learning beyond the classroom and to experience performance as a collaborative, creative and professional process. Enrichment helps students build confidence, leadership, commitment and a broader appreciation of the performing arts.

Students may have opportunities to take part in Dance and wider Performing Arts clubs, workshops and performance projects, allowing them to explore additional styles, develop choreography and rehearse with students from different year groups.

Each year the Performing Arts department stages a whole-school musical production. Students from Years 7 to 13 can audition to take part, providing valuable experience of ensemble performance, rehearsal discipline and working as part of a large-scale production. The example curriculum identifies Monday rehearsals from 3.00pm to 4.30pm.

The department aims to provide opportunities to experience professional live performance, including theatre visits. Seeing professional dance and musical theatre enables students to observe choreography, performance quality and production elements in an authentic context and supports the analytical work undertaken in the qualification.

In Term 6, the Performing Arts Variety Show brings together Dance and Drama students to perform to friends and families, celebrating work developed across the year. KS4 students can use this experience to strengthen performance confidence and, where appropriate, broaden their understanding of production and backstage roles.

Where available, students are encouraged to participate in workshops, leadership opportunities and collaborative projects that introduce them to the breadth of progression routes within Dance and the wider creative industries.

Interested to know more?

To read and explore:

- One Dance UK – information about dance education, careers, health and professional practice.
- Rambert – digital resources and information about professional contemporary dance practice and repertoire.
- ZooNation: The Kate Prince Company – resources and professional work exploring hip hop dance theatre.

To watch:

- Professional dance repertoire across a range of styles, including contemporary, hip hop, commercial, jazz and dance theatre. Students should consider movement vocabulary, choreographic intention, performance skills and constituent features when viewing work.
- Recorded extracts and educational resources from professional companies and venues such as Rambert, ZooNation, Sadler's Wells and The Place.

To listen and revise:

- A wide range of accompaniment to develop students' understanding of rhythm, tempo, dynamics, phrasing, accents and the relationship between music and movement.

To visit:

- Professional dance performances, workshops and festivals at recognised theatres and dance venues. Live performance gives students valuable first-hand experience of professional standards, choreographic choices, production elements and audience impact.