

KS4 Dance

Curriculum Intent

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts – Dance is designed to develop confident, creative and reflective performers through a purposeful combination of practical dance training, professional repertoire, choreographic exploration and vocational learning. Students study how professional dance work is created and communicated, then apply this understanding through rehearsal, performance and the development of their own skills and ideas. The course encourages students to become disciplined, expressive and thoughtful young artists who can work independently and collaboratively.

Across the course, students develop technical and performance skills including posture and alignment, coordination, balance, control, flexibility, strength, stamina, spatial awareness, musicality, dynamics, projection, focus and characterisation. They also learn to analyse professional repertoire and recognise how movement, choreographic devices, structure, accompaniment, costume, lighting and set contribute to meaning. This balance of practical and analytical study supports students in explaining artistic choices using appropriate dance terminology and in evaluating their own progress with increasing accuracy.

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts has a Total Qualification Time (TQT) of 150 hours, including 120 Guided Learning Hours (GLH). Guided learning includes teacher-led lessons, practical workshops, rehearsals, tutorials, supervised assessment and feedback, alongside independent research, rehearsal and preparation outside the classroom.

The qualification is completed through three interrelated components:

- Component 1: Exploring the Performing Arts (36 GLH) – Internally assessed. Students investigate professional performing arts work, practitioners, styles, processes and the ways in which performance and production elements communicate meaning.
- Component 2: Developing Skills and Techniques in the Performing Arts (36 GLH) – Internally assessed. Students develop and apply dance skills and techniques through workshops, rehearsal and performance, while reviewing their progress and responding to feedback.
- Component 3: Responding to a Brief (48 GLH) – Externally assessed synoptic component. Students draw together their knowledge and practical skills to create and perform work in response to a vocational brief and stimulus for a specified audience.

The course is typically delivered over two years so that knowledge, technique, performance confidence and independence can develop progressively. Learning is sequenced so that students move from guided exploration of professional work towards increasingly independent rehearsal, creative decision-making, performance and evaluation. The qualification supports progression to Level 3 Performing Arts or Dance study, apprenticeships and a wide range of roles within the creative industries.

Assessment, Marking and Feedback

Components 1 and 2 are internally assessed through Pearson-set assignments, marked by the school and externally moderated by Pearson. Assessment is integrated into the learning process so that students understand the standard required and can use feedback to improve their work.

Assessment across the internally assessed components focuses on:

- Understanding professional dance styles, practitioners, repertoire, creative intentions and performance processes.
- Developing and applying physical, technical, expressive and interpretive dance skills in rehearsal and performance.
- Using appropriate dance terminology to analyse professional work and explain how constituent features communicate meaning.

- Demonstrating discipline, organisation, collaboration and safe working practices during practical activity.
- Reflecting on progress, identifying strengths and areas for development, and responding constructively to teacher and peer feedback.

Component 3 is the externally assessed synoptic component completed towards the end of the course. Students respond to a live brief and stimulus, drawing on the knowledge and skills developed in Components 1 and 2. They contribute to the planning and creative development of a group workshop performance for a selected audience and demonstrate their ability to rehearse, refine, perform and evaluate their work. The assessment is set and marked by Pearson and contributes 40% of the overall qualification grade.

The qualification recognises achievement across Levels 1 and 2. Internally assessed components use a mark-based approach and are subject to Pearson moderation, while the externally assessed component is marked by Pearson. Component outcomes contribute to the overall qualification grade, which ranges from Level 1 Pass to Level 2 Distinction*. Regular formative feedback, practical targets, rehearsal notes and written reflection are used throughout the course to help students understand how to make sustained progress.

Homework

Homework in KS4 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. Students may also be asked to review recorded performance work and identify specific targets for improvement.

Because Dance is a practical and vocational subject, regular rehearsal outside normal lesson time can be important, particularly during assessed performance periods. Students are expected to arrive prepared, meet deadlines and take responsibility for independent practice. Consistent engagement with homework and rehearsal enables students to improve accuracy, retention, stamina, expressive performance and confidence, supporting them in achieving their full potential on the course.

Links to National Curriculum / Syllabus Specifications

The Pearson BTEC Level 1/Level 2 Tech Award in Performing Arts (Dance) provides a clear progression route from Key Stage 3 Dance and Physical Education while supporting the wider aims of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Although there is no separate statutory National Curriculum for Dance at KS4, the course develops physical competence, creativity, cultural understanding, communication, critical thinking, collaboration and reflective learning through sustained practical and analytical study.

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.

The vocational structure of the qualification also develops transferable skills valued across further education and employment. Students learn to manage rehearsal time, solve creative problems, communicate ideas, work responsibly within an ensemble, respond to direction and feedback, and evaluate the effectiveness of their own contribution. This combination of practical performance, theoretical understanding and professional working practices prepares students for Level 3 Dance and Performing Arts courses, apprenticeships and future pathways across the creative industries.

Exam Support & Revision Resources

Students are supported to prepare for assessment through structured revision, practical rehearsal, model responses, knowledge organisers, retrieval activities, guided analysis and regular opportunities to apply subject terminology. Revision should include both practical and written preparation: secure knowledge of professional

works and practitioners is strengthened alongside the ability to identify, describe, explain and evaluate movement and production choices.

A useful, published resource is the Pearson REVISE BTEC 2022 Tech Award Performing Arts Revision Guide (Heidi McEntee, ISBN 9781292436135), which provides an overview of the three components and can support independent study at home.

Students should also make purposeful use of class materials and teacher feedback. Effective revision may include revisiting professional repertoire, creating flashcards for dance terminology, annotating performance examples, practising timed written responses, rehearsing set material, recording and reviewing practical work, and setting specific technical or expressive targets. Any additional after-school support or assessment rehearsals offered by the department will be communicated to students as appropriate.

Recommended areas for independent revision include physical, technical, expressive and interpretive skills; safe dance practice; action, space, dynamics and relationships; choreographic devices and structures; professional practitioners and styles; constituent features; rehearsal and refinement strategies; and the requirements of Components 1, 2 and 3.

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:

- Pearson BTEC Tech Award in Performing Arts – qualification specification and learner guidance for Components 1, 2 and 3.
- 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:

- Teacher-provided revision materials for BTEC Performing Arts Components 1, 2 and 3, including terminology, assessment guidance and model analysis.
- 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.