The Dance Review

A Report to Government on Dance Education and Youth Dance in England by Tony Hall
Dance has been the Cinderella of art forms for too long. Its time has come. Millions watch Strictly Come Dancing – millions watched Darcey Bussell’s farewell at the Royal Opera House. Dance is a fundamental way in which people up and down the nation express themselves creatively. It also encourages people’s self-esteem and self-awareness. But dancing can also reduce obesity, keep young people off the streets and develop team-working skills and discipline. And it is something we are good at in Britain.

Tony Hall, Executive Director, Royal Opera House

Acknowledgement
Lots of people have contributed to this report. Members of the Dance Forum and the Music and Dance Scheme Advisory Group have all spent a considerable amount of time giving their ideas and shaping my thoughts. I owe them all my thanks.

I also want to express my thanks to Chris Thomson of The Place, and Rubbina Karuna of the DCMS who, with me, have authored this report. Their ideas, enthusiasm for Dance, and belief in its future have been an inspiration.

This report was jointly commissioned by:
Andrew Adonis Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Schools and Learners
David Lammy Minister for Culture (until June 2007)
Mulberry School in Tower Hamlets is unusual in that it prioritises dance within the curriculum: a girls school in a predominantly Asian community, all students continue to study dance throughout their time at the school, with many taking it as a subject at GCSE level.

Through this focus on dance, the students have worked with an impressive roster of artists and companies: Shobana Jeyasingh, Ricochet, The Royal Ballet. A few years ago they undertook a major dance project based on The Tempest. A film was made of the process, and included an interview with a young Asian girl who had taken part. She describes her feelings at the challenge: “When I heard what we’d be doing I thought no, it’s not possible. But then I tried it and I did it and it was amazing and I thought to myself – If we can do that, why can’t we do anything in life?”

In conducting this review we have been struck by how many people can tell similar stories where they have been given the chance to dance. Like all forms of art, dance deals with the “big issues”: love, loss, trust, betrayal, relationships – things we all have to deal with at some point in our lives. But dancing can also reduce obesity, guard against osteoporosis, improve posture and muscle strength and increase fitness generally. It will keep young people off the streets, and out of trouble at least for the hour or so of each session. Most dance practice will develop team-working skills and discipline essential to the creative process. If taught properly, it could help young people prepare for the challenges of the creative economy. And it is something we are good at: we have world-class companies and dancers performing in this country.

There could not be a better moment to review the impact of dance on young people. This is the time for dance.

We are recommending:

- Raising the profile of dance in the National Curriculum
- A specialist dance teacher in every secondary school beginning with the establishment of a specialist dance co-ordinator in each of the 450 School Sport Partnerships
- A national strategy for dance education starting with a Government programme board for dance
- Every child or young person attends at least one performance a year
- A national youth dance organisation, with high profile dancers on the Board, that can excite the nation about dance
- Regional dance networks
- A clear progression route for children and young people of exceptional talent wherever they live involving the full roll out of the Centres for Advance Training and a review of the Music and Dance Scheme and the Dance and Drama Awards
- A workforce strategy for training more teachers
- A sprung floor in every new school
- A programme to build diversity in dance that reflects the diversity of Britain – genres like street dance, South Asian Dance and African People’s
- A festival amongst schools leading to a place in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.
**Dance is central to a number of Government initiatives**

The current climate of debate about enhancing children and young people’s creative and cultural experiences at a Government level is at a point where this Review has a strong opportunity to feed into discussions and lead to future action.

The Roberts Review and the follow-up work which DCSF and DCMS are taking forward together is of special importance, particularly with regard to the new DCSF/DCMS Creative and Cultural Education Advisory Group which has now met twice in 2007. As with key education initiatives focusing on aspects of children and young people’s creative and cultural lives – Engaging Places, Music Manifesto, Cultural Hubs and Creative Partnerships – all of which will feed into this new Group, the recommendations of this Review need to also be brought to the table.

Furthermore with the current focus on the Creative Industries through the DCMS Creative Economy Programme there are clear links to be made with how children and young people can become the creative thinkers, artists, and entrepreneurs of the future – dance is an obvious artform to make this link.

Additionally at a curriculum level the Key Stage 3 review, part of wider 11-19 reform by the QCA, has real implications for dance within school. It has looked at the flexibility of the curriculum, a coherent format for all programmes to enable connections between subjects, enhanced learning – including developing pupils’ creativity and adaptability and whole school approaches which will look at the overall aims of Every Child Matters. In relation to all four of these core areas dance needs to be a part of the discussions ensuring that its presence at KS3 can be strengthened.

Alongside these current government initiatives on education and the creative and cultural sectors, are the wider agendas related to halting the increase in childhood obesity (a public service agreement across DCSF, DCMS, and Department of Health), increasing participation in cultural events and social inclusion.

One must recognise that Government is raising the profile of dance. One of David Lammy’s first acts was the establishment of the DCMS Dance Forum. The (DCSF) Music and Dance Scheme set up Youth Dance England to develop and research this country’s youth dance offer. Clearly both DCSF and DCMS see the potential of dance and this Review must build on this.

Finally, one cannot ignore the elephant in the room and nor would one want to. The London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games is a real opportunity for all the cultural sectors to get involved but no more so than dance with its vibrancy and artistic value ensuring that it will be centre stage in the Opening and Closing ceremonies. However the build-up to the Games and the legacy it leaves behind are also doors that dance needs to push at.

---

**The image:**

Dance Review: Opportunity 98

---

**Text:**

The current climate of debate about enhancing children and young people’s creative and cultural experiences at a Government level is at a point where this Review has a strong opportunity to feed into discussions and lead to future action.

The Roberts Review and the follow-up work which DCSF and DCMS are taking forward together is of special importance, particularly with regard to the new DCSF/DCMS Creative and Cultural Education Advisory Group which has now met twice in 2007. As with key education initiatives focusing on aspects of children and young people’s creative and cultural lives – Engaging Places, Music Manifesto, Cultural Hubs and Creative Partnerships – all of which will feed into this new Group, the recommendations of this Review need to also be brought to the table.

Furthermore with the current focus on the Creative Industries through the DCMS Creative Economy Programme there are clear links to be made with how children and young people can become the creative thinkers, artists, and entrepreneurs of the future – dance is an obvious artform to make this link.

Additionally at a curriculum level the Key Stage 3 review, part of wider 11-19 reform by the QCA, has real implications for dance within school. It has looked at the flexibility of the curriculum, a coherent format for all programmes to enable connections between subjects, enhanced learning – including developing pupils’ creativity and adaptability and whole school approaches which will look at the overall aims of Every Child Matters. In relation to all four of these core areas dance needs to be a part of the discussions ensuring that its presence at KS3 can be strengthened.

Alongside these current government initiatives on education and the creative and cultural sectors, are the wider agendas related to halting the increase in childhood obesity (a public service agreement across DCSF, DCMS, and Department of Health), increasing participation in cultural events and social inclusion.

One must recognise that Government is raising the profile of dance. One of David Lammy’s first acts was the establishment of the DCMS Dance Forum. The (DCSF) Music and Dance Scheme set up Youth Dance England to develop and research this country’s youth dance offer. Clearly both DCSF and DCMS see the potential of dance and this Review must build on this.

Finally, one cannot ignore the elephant in the room and nor would one want to. The London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games is a real opportunity for all the cultural sectors to get involved but no more so than dance with its vibrancy and artistic value ensuring that it will be centre stage in the Opening and Closing ceremonies. However the build-up to the Games and the legacy it leaves behind are also doors that dance needs to push at.
Dance is popular

Across the country, dance is increasing in popularity. 4.8 million people take part in community dance, and 13% of the population are attending performances of dance. Amongst children and young people more are now taking dance exams. In 2006 17,135 young people took GCSE Dance, an 8.9% rise on the year before. In the same year 1,725 took A level Dance, a 14% rise on 2005. In England, there are:

- 339 youth dance groups
- 595 dance practitioners engaging in youth dance
- 26 youth dance networks
- 1108 organisations involved in supporting the dance network.

These are resources to build on. Public interest in dance has been reflected and amplified in the media. “Billy Elliot”, amongst other popular films and musicals has done great things for dance. The media has played a huge part in translating the world of dance to a wider and broader audience. Programmes like the BBC’s “Strictly Come Dancing” bring enormous profile to dance and can act as the inspiration for children and young people to take part themselves. On Channel 4, “Ballet Hoo” was a wonderful example of how, working with the right teachers, young people from culturally and emotionally deprived backgrounds change their perceptions of each other, and begin to change their lives too. Harnessed properly, this media interest in dance gives another chance to build the profile of the artform.

Diverse and inclusive

The variety of communities that make up 21st century Britain which could be on show at The London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Games, express themselves in a wide range of genres of dance from ballet to Bollywood, contemporary to Capoeira, and tap to tango. Reflecting these different communities and their styles of dance, the rich face of multi-cultural Britain, is another enormous opportunity for us.

We are also world leaders in the field of dance and disability. CandoCo is a leading professional company that integrates disabled and non-disabled dancers and has created a highly successful foundation course. Anjali Dance Company has pioneered a level 3 training course for young dancers with disabilities.

The opportunities outlined show Government, the Dance sector, and the Education sector coming together at different levels both within school and beyond to enhance the take-up of dance by children and young people. There is a lot of very good work to capitalise on, and in every sense, now is the time to do so. However with opportunities also come barriers. There are significant issues surrounding the development of dance education in the future that we must address to really enable dance to take advantage of what there is on offer.
Issues
Music & Dance education: a different starting point

We want children to be given the same access to dance as they do to music, and at the same level of provision. However, we cannot begin that journey without recognising that these artforms, although closely linked, are starting from very different places.

Music education and youth music historically have developed and been supported in a number of different ways:

- £59 million per annum from the DCSF
- £30 million over two years for CPD and the instrumental pledge from the DCSF
- £415,000 to National Youth orchestras from the DCSF
- £10 million per annum from the Arts Council for Youth Music
- 150 music services reaching 440,000 children

Contrasting with that, funding for dance is low. It is tied up at an education level with funding and support for PE and School Sport of which dance is one of the six PE strands. We have not been able to ascertain how much dance receives individually.

- However under the Club Links programme dance receives:
  - £400k over two years for Dance Links.

There are no specific grants given out to LAs pertaining to dance:

- Only five county based dance advisors remain in comparison to the LA support through DCSF for music.

Funding via Arts Council England for 2006-08:

- £818k for Youth Dance England.
Dance is lost in the National Curriculum

A major issue has been the positioning of dance in the National Curriculum within PE and Sport. Whilst dance sits in the PE Curriculum, teaching is too often delivered by non-specialists. Furthermore as dance is not compulsory at Key Stage 3, there can be a huge gap to bridge when students wish to pursue this subject at GCSE level. Another crucial issue is that by placing dance within PE and Sport, the creativity of dance and its artistic value is missed altogether. Yet it is the creative nature of dance as well as its physical attributes that means that it has so much more to give the education of children and young people than it currently is.

Inadequate teacher training and continuing professional development (CPD)

Access to dance in schools is seriously undermined by a shortage of appropriately trained and experienced teachers. This has long been recognised and was identified at the DCMS Dance Health Seminar held at Laban in December 2004 as key to the success of future development.

Teacher training for Primary education will commonly include just two or three hours of dance training during a one-year PGCE course. Clearly this is insufficient to deliver the entitlement at Key Stages 1 and 2, and the majority of teachers in this phase feel under-confident and lacking in the necessary skills. While there have been some helpful initiatives such as Tops Dance and the national CPD programme as well as NDTA initiatives, and though dance agencies and companies work with schools both within and beyond the curriculum, there is a need for more focused, in-depth and better resourced approach to CPD for Primary teachers.

Dance provision at Secondary level is also severely compromised by the shortage of specialist PGCE places in dance. The number of such places has recently been cut, despite clear evidence of growing enthusiasm for the subject and increasing numbers opting for GCSE dance. This has led to many schools being unable to deliver the dance curriculum effectively and, as a result, non-specialist teachers being pressurised to teach a subject they do not feel qualified to deliver.

Finally, there is an issue of Professional Development for teachers and for dancers. Dance specialists can also come from the dance profession, whether as part of a portfolio career or through retraining at the end of a performing career, and that could also add to the diversity of dance genres on offer. A number of short courses have been created to help facilitate this transfer, but none go beyond Level 3.

The need for a clear pathway for the gifted and talented

There is a real drive from central Government to identify the gifted and talented in schools, both in academic and non-academic subjects. However non-specialist teachers are ill equipped to identify and nurture exceptional talent, and schools frequently do not have the systems in place to support those young people to progress.

However, there has been some very useful work which is starting to rectify the situation. For example, Hillview, a girls’ school and a specialist performing arts college in Kent, has a well developed policy of identifying gifted and talented pupils in dance and providing targeted activities and curriculum opportunities such as fast-track dance examinations and courses.

Furthermore Elmhurst’s Dance Track programme has been expanded to reach a wider range of children at a younger age (Appendix no.1). The Music and Dance Scheme has recently established the first Centres for Advanced Training (CATS) and here for the first time, we are seeing a concerted move to link with schools and other providers to open up access in a very tangible way. But if the talented and difficult to reach are to be identified and given the support they need, the pathway needs to be targeted even more strongly towards areas of economic and cultural deprivation.
An opportunity to reflect 21st century Britain

The lack of an explicit pathway of progression impacts on another issue; the main vocational training pathways in dance that are publicly funded do not represent the potential diversity of dance available from the many communities that make up 21st century Britain.

Youth Dance includes a broad range of dance genres and provides a hotbed of creativity as youth clashes with established dance styles to create new hybrid dance forms that point to the future of the art. However the programmes offered in FE and HE and by the conservatories are heavily based on western theatre dance, in particular contemporary and creative dance. Street Dance (used here as an umbrella term for a wide group of dance forms) is a popular and high-profile form of youth dance. But as an art form it has yet to attract significant amounts of public funding for development. The same applies, to a greater or lesser degree, to other dance genres and forms such as South Asian Dance and African People’s Dance.

The challenge is to provide flexible structures that will allow dance forms arising from youth cultures to be supported without forcing them to change to fit inappropriate institutional frameworks. The richness of art forms in communities not currently supported by publicly funded institutions needs to be investigated. We need to nurture many more different genres of dance than at present to reflect the hybrid diversity of dance from the wealth of communities that make up our nation. Training will be a major issue. But the prize great.

Dancing in the right spaces

For children and young people to access dance there needs to be a co-ordinated approach to addressing the need for appropriate facilities. A sprung floor in a warm place is essential for teaching dance, and yet the majority of schools do not have adequate and basic facilities. For them to carry out dance lessons without such a floor could be dangerous.

Building Schools for the Future is a programme to deliver high quality school buildings for all schools. It is essential that this programme takes into account the need for a sprung floor, not just as an add-on in future school designs, but as a necessity.

The need to join up initiatives

There are several initiatives that are seeking to make dance and dance training more accessible. The problem is that there is no coherent structure joining these schemes together.

There are three main funding streams for vocational dance training. The Music and Dance Scheme has established the first wave of junior centres of advanced training which will seek to grow in number and geographical spread. The second strand of funding for dance training is the Dance and Drama Awards, funded and administered by the LSC since 2004. This scheme provides awards for the most talented dancers to take up training places on mainly musical theatre dance courses. Unlike the Music and Dance Scheme, these places are not means-tested. In addition, HEFCE funds university and conservatoire courses in dance.

For school age children we have Dance Links. This is a joint DCSF/DCMS project under PESSCL delivered by Youth Dance England, which is beginning to facilitate the links between schools and dance providers and practitioners.

Away from the Government, there is a lot of activity but again unco-ordinated and geographically patchy. For example, there are National Dance Agencies set up in the 1990s. There are also Regional Agencies such as East London Dance which together with companies and individual artists form hot spots of high quality activity and access.

Youth Dance England is, through its regional co-ordinators, mapping the provision of dance across England but it is inadequately funded and does not have a specific remit to work in schools.
National Dance Teachers Association (NDTA) has 1,000 members actively developing policies and raising issues, and yet does not have the weight it deserves because dance is within PE in the National Curriculum. In short, dance as an important and inspiring creative and physical subject does not have the type of leadership or collaboration at a national level that PE or music has.

**The need for better data**
Because there is no strategy for dance, and because there is no overall leadership, no one is identifying the provision of dance across the country, and addressing where the gaps are and what should be done. There is no single place to find out where dance for children and young people is best provided, both within and outside school. There is therefore an over-reliance on anecdotal evidence to build a picture. One dance teacher informed this Review that in Kent and Essex not one single all-boys school offers dance. Whilst Youth Dance England is undertaking an audit of Youth Dance across England, no one is doing a similar job for schools.

There also needs to be research into the impact of dance on children and young people both from a health perspective and in relation to dance’s fundamental impact on numeracy and literacy. Lessons should be learned here from sport. The Laban Hampshire dance science experiment which looked at the impact of dance on young people’s health is a first step in the direction of demonstrating the power of the artform physically and cognitively.

**Where do you go for information about dance?**
Finally, how do young people and parents know where to go for further information and advice on dance education and training? It does not matter whether it is information about specialist training for a young person who wishes to pursue a career in dance, or whether it is much more general information about someone who wants to take a recreational interest in the artform. Whichever way you want to go, there is at present a worrying lack of information and certainly no mechanism by which to disseminate it.

This is a major issue if we are to sustain participation and interest in dance. If there is no national focal point for schools, colleges, private dance schools, parents and most importantly for young people where they can go to for direction and information, we risk losing them at the point at which they are keen to be involved and develop their interest. To take one example, the millions who currently watch Strictly Come Dancing, have no clear place to go to where they could explore dance in all its forms and find something that might suit themselves or, in this case, their children.

In addition, there is a desperate demand for guides to dance teaching and examples of best practice. The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) together with NDTA and Youth Sport Trust have developed the Best Practice Dance Network which has produced some excellent work to inform teachers about best practice (Appendix no. 2). It is this type of work that we need to build on as there is quite a lot of material and resources that could be made available. But once again, there is no one central place where such information can be brought together.
Recommendations
Planning for the long term
This is what we recommend

It can be seen that there is a lot going on but there is a lot to do. We could have come forward with many recommendations to cover a wide waterfront. But change works best if the aim is clear, focussed, consistent and planned for the long term. A change in one place feeds through to other parts of the system.

So we have not focussed our recommendations on Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2, though we recommend further work is done here especially looking at the quality of teaching, the time given to it and the possibility of access to a specialist dance teacher in every school. Instead we have chosen to focus our recommendations on Key Stage 3, and the relationship of dance to the PE Curriculum has to be considered.

1. PE and Dance: prominence in the National Curriculum

In the National Curriculum dance is seen more as a sport than as a creative artform. Teachers also need to have the freedom, encouragement and support to deliver dance flexibly and, if they wish, in the context of the performing arts curriculum as well as that of PE.

The QCA are conducting a consultation on Key Stage 3 which ends in May 2007. It is imperative that the DCMS and DCSF feed into these discussions highlighting the creativity of dance as an artform as well as a physical activity, and its ability to contribute towards the aspirations of the Review. As an acknowledgement of this, we recommend to the Key Stage 3 Review that they change the title of the subject of PE to PE, Sport and Dance. This would be of more than totemic significance.

2. An entitlement to dance at Key Stage 3: aim to get a dance teacher in every secondary school

The big challenges for dance and the area where the biggest impact could be made with most speed, is the transition through the “cocoon” teenage years by children especially boys. Time and time again people we have talked to for this Report have said that the issue is boys and girls who are enjoying dance at five, six and seven, but would not dream of doing dance at the age of thirteen. The transition years from primary to secondary school are the critical ones for retaining interest and developing young people’s skills in dance. This is about schools and teachers taking ownership of dance and not seeing it as a rather unimportant option within physical education. Focusing on KS3 will link back to KS1 and KS2 as well as supporting provision and take up at KS4. The notion that it is right to focus on Key Stage 3 is not just the conclusion of the writers of this Review. It is also a conclusion broadly approved by the Music and Dance Scheme and the Dance Forum as well as others that have been consulted in this Review.

We recommend that every child and young person has access to specialist dance teaching at Key Stage 3.

We also believe that working with the PESSCL Programme is the right way to go about achieving this. The PESSCL Programme has proved itself a major success in terms of raising participation in physical education and sport within schools and encouraging schools to make the links with providers. We need to use this network and its clear strengths to achieve our objective of every child or young person having access to specialist dance training.

In the medium term, we believe every secondary school should have a specialist dance teacher. But in the short term:

We recommend each of the 450 School Sport Partnerships should establish a dedicated dance co-ordinator just as they have partnership development managers (PDMs) at the moment for sport.

This could be established in phases, piloting in a number of regions, some with good existing provision and some without. These co-ordinators would be based at the specialist sports college, or other appropriate colleges or art schools, whichever is best to deliver dance in the area. For example Barking Abbey one of the first Sports Colleges has a specialist dance co-ordinator which has made them into a leader in their area for dance so much so that they are now considering becoming a Dance Academy (Appendix no. 3). Each co-ordinator would have access to all of the secondary schools and the primary schools attached to them. The dance co-ordinator’s role would be to provide a resource for all schools in need of guidance and support:

— In teaching dance within the curriculum
— Making the links with dance artists, companies and practitioners
— Act as the talent scout for schools within their cluster helping to spot and develop gifted and talented, and the exceptional
— Co-ordinating the provision of dance in the school and out of school with the various Government training schemes.

We believe that, judging by the success with sport, this would make a radical difference to the quality of dance being taught in schools, and, most importantly, the health, self-esteem and creativity of the children and young people. Eventually we believe that dance will only deliver what is capable of it if a dance teacher is in place in every secondary school.

Furthermore to enhance this entitlement to dance there needs to be an exposure to high quality dance performance and not just at KS3. The opportunities for children and young people to be part of an audience enabling them to experience the calibre of dance we have in this country, is vital in engaging them from a young age. Therefore:

We recommend that every child or young person attends a performance at least once a year.
3. A national strategy for dance and a national youth dance organisation

There is no joined-up national strategy for dance, and it is imperative that the sector follows music, and gets one. The strategy should ensure that at Government level the different funding streams are co-ordinated, and there is clear strategic leadership in both the DCSF and the DCMS to help make the links across the variety of programmes outlined earlier.

We recommend a Programme Board within Government that brings together all the different funders should be established to make genuine progress within dance.

Such a board needs to be led by DCSF and DCMS and include those agencies that have responsibility for dance in schools and the youth dance sector such as the Arts Council, QCA, the Learning and Skills Council, SSAT and the Music and Dance Scheme as well as other key organisations for the cultural sector such as Creative and Cultural Skills. This Board will feed into the Creative and Cultural Education Advisory Board that is being established.

At the sector level, there needs to be an organisation that can bring together the art in all its forms and help devise, and implement a national strategy.

We recommend the establishment of a properly funded, powerful national dance organisation which is vital for developing youth dance.

This organisation needs to take an overview of all the initiatives currently underway, and acts as advisors to Government and Ministers about children and young people’s access to dance both within and beyond the curriculum. They will be a key participant in, and deliverer for, the Programme Board. This organisation also needs to act as an inspirer and communicator for the power of dance in the nation. Board members should include nationally recognised dancers as role models and champions in all communities for dance.

It needs to:
— Contribute to, and deliver, a national strategy for dance for children and young people.
— Link with the regional dance networks and other organisations and convene at national level.
— Lead on advising on issues such as dance and teacher training, CPD, facilities and diversity.
— Take a lead in promoting and marketing dance to the widest possible audience using current interest in the media.
— Produce a comprehensive web site to provide the information for young people, parents and teachers.
— Plan, co-ordinate and evaluate research for the sector on the delivery and impact of dance.

There are a number of existing bodies that have prominent roles that need to be involved in establishing this organisation. Youth Dance England is clearly a key resource. The roles of the NDTA as a subject association for dance and the CDET need to be recognised and considered in this context.

4. Regional Dance Networks

There are a large number of agencies, organisations and schemes across both the formal and informal dance sector delivering dance for children and young people. However the links between the organisations and schemes are not always strong enough, and not designed to capitalise on what could be on offer. The question is how to bring together all the excellent work happening in the sector, also identifying where the provision is poor.

We recommend the establishment of regional dance networks across the country.

These will bring together existing activity and co-ordinating the work of:
— National dance agencies
— Regional dance agencies
— Private dance schools
— Dance companies
— CATs
— Individual artists

These regional dance networks will act as a resource to:
— Help train the best and the brightest
— Provide information about dance
— Provide support to teachers in schools and the hub co-ordinators
— Share information about best practice
— Co-ordinate the education work of dance companies
— Broaden the range of genres of dance on offer
— Work with the National Youth Dance organisation.

Elmhurst has proven that this is possible when they moved from Surrey to Birmingham and establishing strong links and partnerships (Appendix no. 3).

5. Nurturing the exceptional

As outlined previously, identifying the exceptionally talented in dance needs to be more focussed. The dance co-ordinators within the hubs would act as talent scouts, and continue with the various dance training schemes on offer. Furthermore, to make provision for the exceptional complete,

We recommend a full programme of centres for advanced training needs to be rolled out.

When fully established the centres might cater for upwards of 1,500 young people across the country, giving a clear route of progression for dancers of exceptional talent. Furthermore, the CATS should work together strategically to identify talent in a co-ordinated way and to work out who they are reaching.

We also believe that the support for children and young people from deprived backgrounds should be reviewed. The Music and Dance Scheme is means-tested whereas the Dance and Drama Awards whose funding passed from the DCSF to the LSC in 2004 is not.

We recommend that these two schemes are reviewed to see whether a more coherent and co-ordinated approach to nurturing exceptional talent could be formulated regardless of background.
6. A strategy for training more teachers
A major issue if we are to increase participation in dance in schools, is the lack of well trained and accredited dance teachers. For the youth sector it is vital that well trained dance practitioners are available and can be identified to enthuse young people out of school.

We recommend that a strategy is developed for the workforce in dance which;

— Brings more specialist dance teachers into the workforce
— Offers CPD at all levels to working dancers and teachers
— Offers pathways for dancers coming to the end of their dancing career
— Sets nationally agreed qualifications for dance artists working with children and young people

Existing initiatives should be integrated into the development of this strategy.

7. A sprung floor in every new school
There is an urgent need to look at the lack of facilities currently in schools. Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a huge programme looking at updating and modernising schools for the 21st century.

We recommend that dance is a part of the discussions about school design.

Dance facilities should not be considered as an add-on or afterthought but should be planned right from the beginning. This is an area where the new national youth dance organisation could impact working alongside agencies like SSAT who have already begun to feed into the BSF programme highlighting the need for arts facilities including dance to be part of the discussions. There are cost implications here for a sprung floor in every school, and this needs to be acknowledged. However, having adequate facilities should not be sidelined as it is core to offering children and young people the opportunity to dance.

8. Diversity and inclusion
Diversity is the thread that runs through all our recommendations. This issue impacts on training, access and the future vibrancy of the artform. Equally access to dance should be open to all young people irrespective of learning, physical or behavioural ability. There are more styles of dance reflecting more communities than we are currently providing for. The potential richness of dance from many ethnic backgrounds as well as dance styles that are currently beyond the more formally recognised, is in our view an enormous strength which should be capitalised on. This is an area for development and an opportunity. Developing this should be central to the National Strategy which the National Dance Organisation and the Programme Board should devise.

9. Olympics
To excite the nation with the possibilities for dance, we believe the Olympics provides us with a real opportunity. Dance should be a part of the opening and closing ceremonies. We should look to train children and young people to be part of a showcase of dance to the world in 2012.

We recommend that DCSF and DCMS together with LOCOG and the new National Youth Dance Organisation should develop a national schools resource – at regional and national level – that will perform at the opening and closing of the Games.

The UK School Games, which began in 2006, could provide the showcase for Dance in the run-up to 2012, and could be the vehicle by which the 2012 Festival is developed.
Appendix

1. Identifying the Gifted & Talented
Elmhurst’s “DanceTrack” Outreach programme has traditionally provided dance training to children up to the age of 11 years. From September 2006, it has offered dance classes and related outreach projects to much younger children with the intention that the most talented progress to the Elmhurst Pre-Vocational Programme at the age of 7/8, thus ensuring the link from 4 years old through Elmhurst to professional company level. With this “linear” progression now in place, the range of opportunities for participation in dance offered to youngsters in the Midlands area has been significantly extended.

2. Best Practice Dance Network
This network has been developed by the National Dance Teachers Association, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and the Youth Sport Trust to promote and develop dance practice in specialist arts and sports colleges and their partner schools. The Dance Network aims to:

- enable schools to share and disseminate best practice,
- provide regional and national events and projects, including youth dance platforms and continuing professional development (CPD) projects,
- identify a team of lead practitioners – highly-experienced dance teachers with a remit to develop best practice in dance across the schools in their locality.

3. Barking & Dagenham: Dance Academy
In the London borough of Barking and Dagenham a pilot project is being undertaken to create the first Dance Academy based in a school. The Academy will work with Barking Abbey School (specialist Sports and Humanities College) and Dagenham Park Community School (specialist Arts College), and in partnership with the local authority. Funded by the European Social Fund, the Academy will provide a specialist dance training programme with an emphasis on individual needs and will provide access to vocational pathways. 40 students will be selected on the basis of the Gifted and Talented national framework for dance, and a resident dance company will be appointed to provide high-quality teaching and performance.

4. Regional Networks of Excellence
By way of firsthand illustration, Elmhurst has already achieved much in this sphere since moving from Surrey to Birmingham in the summer of 2004. By finding its place within a vibrant dance ecology and forging partnerships with existing providers, it has striven to facilitate coherent and progressive dance provision for children and young people in the Birmingham and West Midlands area through numerous initiatives.

Bibliography

  John Mysercough
  National Dance Teachers Association
  Edel Qin, Emma Redding and Lucy Frazer
- Nurturing Creativity in Young People (2006)
  Paul Roberts
  Professor Chris Bannerman
- PESSCL School Sport Survey (2005/06)
  DCSF /DCMS
- Youth Dance Baseline Audit (2006)
  Youth Dance England