

Dance at Samuel Whitbread Academy

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Intent</p>	<p>Dance is a unique art form in that it combines athleticism and technique with the creative and artistic like no other discipline can do. When a student discovers the passion of dance it is our duty to nurture and develop that passion through a creative and diverse curriculum. At Samuel Whitbread we endeavour to improve students' self-esteem and body image by participating in and viewing dance. The act of making art develops young people's sense of identity and increases resilience, which will help to prepare them for life after education. A Level Dance teaches young people about culture and diversity through studying different choreographers and learning their techniques. Every culture has used dance as an integral part of life, whether it be to creatively tell a story, share a message or celebrate. Studying dance will open students' eyes to the vast influence that dance has had throughout history as well as enabling them to tell current stories and share messages of their own.</p> <p>Dance inspires students to have autonomy over their own work; to have control over their choreography and through their own opinions of dance works we study, with no 'right or wrong' responses but their own personal interpretations. Through this analysis we aim to create "thinking dancers" who are able to see each work through their own eyes with their own viewpoints and critical analysis. Dance provides joy, escapism and self-expression for those who need a voice or an outlet for emotion. It can also help others who are going through the same challenges in life or broaden their mind to another perspective.</p> <p>A Level Dance at SWA provides the opportunity to develop a variety of skills transferrable to many careers; not just those within the dance or creative sectors, but for life in general. Teamwork, leadership and collaborative skills are needed when working together on choreography and performance. Rehearsing and refining technical exercises and choreography enables students to build tenacity, perseverance and resilience. The exercise of repetition and rehearsal when dancing improves mental dexterity and stamina. Creative arts industries are growing again post pandemic and there are many careers to be made in this sector; think how many times you turn on the TV and see dance featured in a film, TV show or advert!</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Implementation</p>	<p>A Level Dance is split into two components; Performance & Choreography and Critical Engagement. This is advantageous for students as it allows an even split for practical and theory, so neither those who excel at theory or performance are disadvantaged. Lessons will be split into theory and practical in order to explore each practitioner and set work through different ways. At Samuel Whitbread Academy, we also have a key focus on developing pupil's literacy and reading skills so that they can access the best the subject has to offer. Students will be given challenging and specific reading tasks to be used as a learning tool. All subject material for Dance will be accessible for students through Google Classroom and our A-Level Learning Platform. Students will be provided with many practical opportunities including workshops with professional dance practitioners, our student dance company, dance shows and performance opportunities outside of the academy.</p>

Implementation	Key Stage 5: Year 12	<p>The first year of Dance A Level will explore the history of modern dance in the early 1900s and how ballet turned into contemporary dance as we know it. We will study Rambert Dance Company (from 1966 – 2002) who are irrefutably the most important modern dance company in the development of the western modern dance scene. One of Rambert’s most notable choreographers Christopher Bruce and his work Rooster are the compulsory focus of study here. We will compare Bruce’s work to other important choreographers of the time and study a range of their work in order to understand the styles, trends and development within the dance scene of this time. Alongside this theory, the year 12s will learning different contemporary techniques such as Graham and Cunningham which will complement what they are learning in theory lessons. We will also be revising and refining choreographic processes and techniques, building up to a solo choreography and performance task.</p>
	Key Stage 5: Year 13	<p>During year 13 we study another set work and area of study which is very contrasting to the year 12 compulsory area. The independent contemporary dance scene in Britain from 2000 – present day presents us with a very different take on contemporary dance as trends in modern dance are changing all the time and at a rapid pace. We will view as much dance as we can from the last 20 years; on video and live, in order to develop our understanding. Focussing on Sutra by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui will allow students to understand how much the contemporary dance scene has developed since the days of Rambert. Other notable choreographers from this time such as Akram Khan and Matthew Bourne will also be part of student’s dance education. Students will undertake a group choreography throughout this year and also learn a quartet performance in order to showcase their practical skills in performance and choreography. Students will be expected to perform their own work in the annual school dance show at Easter.</p>

Impact

Our intent and implementation aim to ensure all Dance students gain knowledge and understanding of the history of modern dance nationally as well as around the world. We aim for our students to become well rounded “thinking” dancers.

We aim to show our students that a career in Dance and the performing arts is a valid and feasible choice. We measure our success by the uptake of students who go on to dance training at further and higher education and develop careers in the industry. We aim to inspire students to want to choose dance and to help them see it as a credible pathway into the world of work.

Our departments strength lies in the enjoyment of the subject, the passion and dedication our students have for the art form.