



Educational Oversight Visit

Live IT Dance Studios

19/12/2023

Head of Establishment	Kirsty Hamilton
Review Date(s)	31 October and 1 November 2023
College Nominee	Kirsty Hamilton
Lead HMI	Sarah Halliwell

1. Background

In Scotland, Education Scotland’s HM Inspectors of Education are responsible for providing educational oversight of provision up to and including Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 8 offered by private colleges or English language schools. These organisations are referred to as ‘providers’ and are either (a) existing, or are seeking to become, a Student Sponsor on behalf of Home Office UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), or (b) delivering provision supported by funding from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS). This review was undertaken as part of the SAAS provider designation arrangements. Further information about how HM Inspectors undertake educational oversight reviews are available [here](#).

The review took place during the week beginning 30th October 2023. During the review, the team engaged with managers, staff and learners.

This report outlines the findings from the visit, and includes aspects of positive practice, aspects for improvement, and any associated main points for action. The report will be shared with the provider and SAAS and will be published on Education Scotland’s website.

2. The organisation and its context

In carrying out the educational oversight review of Live IT Dance Studios, Education Scotland HM Inspectors took the following context into account.

Live IT Dance Studios (The Studio) was founded in 2013 and is based in Edinburgh. The Studio works with 58 schools across Edinburgh, many in areas of deprivation, to provide access to dance training. The Studio also provides dance workshops to 800 children aged between 2 to 18 years across the Edinburgh region. A further 1200 primary and secondary school children access dance classes through partnership with Active Schools programmes.

In 2020, The Studio established The Live IT Dance Academy (The Academy) to deliver the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) Higher National Diploma (HND) qualification in Professional Dance Performance to learners who wish to progress to further training or enter the professional dance industry. The HND programme is delivered at The Heritage Centre and the Out of the Blue Drill Hall in Edinburgh. It currently has 10 full-time learners who are funded by the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS).

2. Outcomes of external review

The review team assigned the following grades for each of the three key themes:

Key theme	Grade awarded
Outcomes and impact	Very Good
Service delivery	Very Good
Leadership and quality culture	Good

3. Summary of key findings

Learner progress and outcomes

How well are learners progressing and achieving high quality outcomes?

Areas of positive practice

- Overall rates of learner retention over the last 3 years for the HND Professional Dance Performance programme are very high. All learners completed the programme.
- Rates of learner attainment over the last 3 years are very high. All learners successfully completed the HND in Professional Dance Performance.
- All learners on the HND programme develop appropriate levels of technical dance skills. They gain confidence in performing and in preparing for auditions.
- All learners participate in additional activities that help them to develop skills for learning, life and work. These include competitions, performance events, volunteering and teaching.
- Effective partnership arrangements with a range of agencies are enabling full-time learners to undertake work placements that support them to develop further their vocational skills.
- Staff from The Studio engage with a wide range of agencies, including Active Schools and NHS Edinburgh and Lothian to deliver dance and rhythm activities to improve and enhance the mental health of school pupils.
- All staff at both The Studio and The Academy have successfully completed PVG checks and have a clear understanding of safeguarding arrangements for young people and vulnerable groups.

Areas for development

- None identified.

How well do we meet the needs of stakeholders?

Areas of positive practice

- The range of programmes delivered at The Studio helps to raise learner aspirations and provides progression pathways to the HND Professional Dance Performance offered at The Academy.
- The Studio has in place partnership agreements with schools across Edinburgh and the Lothians for the delivery of classes and workshops to school-age young people. Staff engage regularly with school and local authority colleagues to monitor and review partnership agreements and co-design initiatives to use dance to address behavioural and mental health issues.
- Managers ensure that productive partnership working helps key groups of learners from areas of high deprivation are supported to overcome financial and social barriers to access dance provision.
- Managers and staff monitor learner progress well. Teaching staff engage regularly with learners and joint meetings between teachers and managers are used well by staff to ensure that arrangements to support individual learner progress are communicated and actioned.

Areas for development

- Promotion and selection arrangements for the HND Professional Dance Performance programme do not highlight sufficiently the theoretical requirements of the programme. As a result, some learners are not adequately prepared for the demands of assessment at this level.

Service delivery

Delivery of learning and teaching:

Areas of positive practice

- Teaching staff set high standards and provide learners with appropriate levels of challenge to continuously develop their dance skills and techniques. They adapt lessons well to take account of individual and class needs and provide good opportunities for learners to select learning methods that reflect their abilities and learning styles.
- All learners are highly motivated and participate actively in classroom activities. They work collaboratively and support each other well to achieve high standards.
- Teaching staff support learners well to identify areas for improvement in their technical dance skills. They apply teaching approaches that encourage learners to reflect on and analyse their abilities and use repetition to improve performance and build confidence in performing.
- An end-of-year showcase is used well by staff to celebrate learner success and engage external agencies in promoting potential employment and progression opportunities.

- All teaching staff are recognised professionals in the dance industry. They draw on their various work experience to make lessons interesting and stimulating for learners.
- Teaching staff and managers use informal peer observation to improve and share best practice. However, participation is not recorded or linked to professional learning.
- An appropriate and well-considered range of teaching approaches is used effectively by teaching staff to engage learners purposefully in developing their dance ability.
- All staff establish and promote the importance of strong and mutually respectful relationships. Learners comment on how they feel well supported and included by staff at The Academy.
- Throughout lessons teachers focus on developing the confidence and skills of individual learners. They consistently check learners understanding and provide further support where necessary.
- Academy staff plan extra-curricular activities that build a positive social culture and encourage learners to develop positive relationships with staff and peers.
- Teaching staff provide learners with comprehensive and helpful feedback, guidance and support to assist them to make informed choices about their chosen career. All learners benefit from the advice they receive to plan steps towards their potential career.
- All learners participate actively in classroom activities to research and explore equalities topics. They draw well on these activities to gain awareness of current social issues.

Areas for development

- The development of meta skills is not embedded or signposted formally within lessons. As a result, learners do not have opportunities to recognise and link development of these skills to their career goals.
- Learners at The Academy are not provided with access to digital resources and technical support is not readily available. This is impacting negatively on the ability of some learners to access learning in ways and at times that accommodate their learning needs.

Management of learning and teaching

How good is our management of the delivery of learning and teaching?

Areas of positive practice

- Recruitment arrangements for the HND Professional Dance Performance include practical assessment through audition. Staff draw productively on audition performance to place learners on an appropriate level of dance programme.
- Arrangements to accommodate the individual needs of learners are comprehensive. Application and recruitment arrangements capture the needs of individual learners well. Written personal statements are used by staff to ensure learners who have additional support needs receive appropriate support. Where required, professional learning is provided to help teaching staff to meet the specific needs of individual learners.

- During induction, learners receive useful and clear information on all arrangements available to support their learning.
- Staff engage learners regularly in providing feedback about their programme through informal discussions with teaching staff and one-to-one meetings with their advisor. The findings are used well by managers to plan future engagement with learners.
- Teaching staff evaluate provision and identify actions for improvement informally. Managers meet with staff regularly to discuss ongoing issues and actions to improve outcomes for learners. This approach is effective in influencing learner success and outcomes for the small number of learners at The Academy.
- Managers work well to reflect on and review outcomes and approaches to learning and teaching on a regular basis. These operational outcomes are communicated well to staff through weekly meetings.
- Pastoral support is coordinated very well and staff and management work well together, and with external agencies, to ensure access to services to support mental health is available to all learners.

Area for development

- Arrangements for evaluation of learning and teaching are largely informal and not sufficiently systematic. As a result, teaching staff do not have sufficient opportunity to influence actions for improvement or future developments in approaches to learning and teaching.

Leadership and quality culture

How good is our strategic leadership?

Areas of positive practice

- Managers share a clear vision for The Academy that takes good account of the needs of local and regional communities and professional standards for dancers. They communicate this vision well to staff.
- The positive culture within The Academy supports and promotes the creative process of dance. This raises learner aspirations and supports the mental health of all learners and staff.
- All staff are committed to delivering a high-quality curriculum. They work cohesively and collaboratively as a team to support each other and meet the ambitions of The Academy.
- Appropriate arrangements are in place to meet the requirements of awarding bodies and funding agencies, including standardisation of assessment for learners.
- Staff participate well in a range of professional learning activities, including informal observation of learning and teaching by peers and managers. However, most teachers are employed on a part-time basis which limits opportunities for collectively sharing best practice in learning and teaching.

- Managers have undertaken training for PREVENT. This has raised awareness of the need to embed these principles into their policies and procedures and for staff to undergo further training. Managers have drawn on PREVENT training to start to embed key principles into organisational policies and procedures and to develop teaching pedagogies to better support learners.

Areas for development

- Managers do not involve learners and staff systematically in evaluation processes. As a result, the views of learner and staff are not always taken into account during future planning.

4. Main Points for Action

- None identified

5. What happens next?

We are confident that the provider has the capacity to continue to improve and we will make no further visits as a result of this review.

Sarah Halliwell
HM Inspector