

TALLIS
PERFORMING ARTS
DANCE • DRAMA • MUSIC

DANCE Department



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Tallis Dance offers a creative, holistic and analytical approach to the dance curriculum and beyond.

Our key principles include:

- ▶ Physical and Athletic Technical Training
- ▶ Creative and Innovative Approaches to Choreography
- ▶ Theory-to-Practical-and-back-again
- ▶ Our Inclusive Community

Physical and Athletic Techniques: we offer a range of approaches and styles within our curriculum and dance classes. At A-Level and GCSE, students are exposed to vigorous technical training to enhance their physical and technical skills, whilst also challenging their mental capabilities of **sticking with difficulty**, **crafting and improving** and **developing techniques**. In compulsory year 7 and 8 dance lessons, our creative approaches allow students

to explore their physicality independently, with expert teachers modelling and guiding challenging movements. Our extra curricular dance companies boost the progress of all students and are advised for all who wish to enhance their skills in contemporary, commercial jazz, street dance or parkour.

Creative and Innovative Approaches to Choreography: independence through choreography is promoted from years 7-13, allowing students to develop their own unique style and to create work based on their own experiences. Original choreography is achieved through guiding our students to **challenge the assumptions** of what dance is, allowing them to **play with possible body shapes, daring to be different** and **making connections** between their own work and that of professional choreographers.

Theory-to-Practical-and-back-again: in order to best inform our physical and technical ability, we have to first **investigate** our biology to understand how the body works. The same can be said for **exploring and analysing** professional works to inform original choreography. We use a range of learning techniques in lesson and extra-curricular, in order to support the progress of our dancers from both a qualification and skill acquisition point of view. These include **making connections** through:

- ▶ Watching professional works, noting down movement content and choreographing ourselves, before describing key motifs
- ▶ Learning set repertoire, analysing the intention, choreographing based on the intention and then extended writing practice, examining the choreographic approaches used
- ▶ Quizzes and spelling tests that use both theory and practical elements
- ▶ Games that test knowledge and involve recreating content physically
- ▶ Researching complex questions and concepts and turning the enquiry into movement

Our Inclusive Community: our **collaborative**, holistic and positive teaching strategies allow inclusion to be the foundation for the dance department. We run a

wide range of different dance companies for all styles, ages and abilities:

- ▶ Elevate Contemporary
- ▶ Attitude Street
- ▶ Flex Commercial
- ▶ Parkour

In addition, we have strong partnerships with Laban, Greenwich Dance, U-Dance, Step Into Dance, the Royal Academy of Dance, East London Dance and One Youth Dance. We recently took part in a project with Hofesh Shechter, with our students performing with the professional choreographer and his dance company at the Tower of London for "East Wall".

Finally, the heart and soul of our department is about preparing students for the real world, and giving them the opportunity to engage with dance like a real artist. Our philosophical threshold concepts are:

1. In Dance, Practice Makes (almost) Perfect
2. EveryBODY dances, but not everyone is a dancer
3. Dancers Make and Break Rules
4. Dance is a Balancing Act
5. Dance is not Pretty nor Polite (but dancers should be)
6. Dance is a language



Here at Tallis Dance, you can expect to receive the best standard of physical, technical and expressive training, combined with innovative workshops that enable you to broaden your choreographic movement vocabulary and assist in your application of the written analytical elements of the course. We pride ourselves on our ability to create both aesthetic and original choreography with meaning, tackling challenging issues within our performance work.

Practical Component 1: Performance and Choreography (50%)

We offer a rigorous training programme in preparation for practical assessments, which consist of:

- Technique classes (Ballet, Graham, Cunningham, Jazz, Release, Indian, Breakdance, and Contemporary Fusion)
- Learning and performing set repertoire from professional works and A Level Company choreography
- Creative workshops to enhance originality, aesthetics and intention behind choreography

Section A: Group Choreography (40 marks)

Selection and manipulation of the movement components, structuring of movement material, use of other features including aural setting, use of the dancers. N.B.: students must not perform in this choreography, but take on a directorial role.

Questions 1-3 - choose one of the three choreography options

Section B: Performance (40 marks)

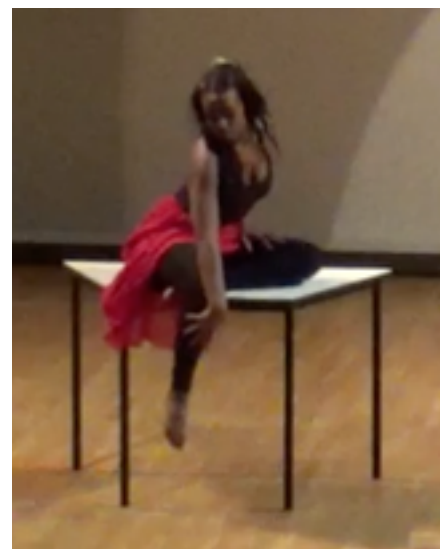
Physical and technical skills, spatial and dynamic elements, and interpretative performance skills.

Question 4 - Solo Performance in the Style of a Specified Practitioner from Written Component 2 (20 marks)

Question 5 - Performance in a Quartet (20 marks)

We train our dancers to perform and behave as if they are **industry professionals**, as we believe that this is key to their success at A Level and enables students to gain key skills in life, such as:

- Leadership, especially when directing the group choreography
- Communication skills, for example when reviewing professional works
- Independence, which is key for completing the solo performance
- Originality when creating the choreographies
- Collaboration, which is needed to demonstrate trust in the performance in a quartet
- Confidence, often developed through the solo performance.





Written Component 2: Critical Appreciation (50%)

Section A: *Rooster* by Christopher Bruce (short answer analytical questions) and *Rambert* (25 mark contextual essay question)

Rambert named practitioners:

- ▶ Robert North
- ▶ Richard Alston
- ▶ Siobhan Davies
- ▶ Ashley Page
- ▶ Glen Tetley

Section B: *Sutra* by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (25 mark set work analysis question) and *the Independent Contemporary Dance Scene in Britain* (25 mark contextual essay question)

ICDSB named practitioners:

- ▶ Hofesh Shechter
- ▶ Akram Khan
- ▶ Shobana Jeyasingh
- ▶ Matthew Bourne
- ▶ Jasmin Vardimon

Written exam = 2 and a half hours long

Written content is taught through practical means, and is therefore far more memorable to our students for the examination.

So how do we do all of this? Holistically, organically and cleverly! Theory and practical work are embedded within each other, in inspiring and creative approaches to teaching and learning. This allows students to make excellent levels of progress throughout the 2 years of the A Level course, as students of all dispositions are able to recall information and ideas through the multi sensory experience that Tallis Dance provides.

Year 12 A Level

This year focuses on students gaining technical training and in depth creative workshops, which are more physically advanced and thought provoking than those of KS4 lessons. In addition, students make optimum progress through our SoWs that focus on building the confidence to perform and create works of a professional standard, developing choreographic and performance skills alongside specific key vocabulary for a wide range of genres and time periods within dance history.

Half Term 1: Technique classes, set repertoire and choreographic principles through dance history (1920s-2000). This unit explores how dance has evolved from ballet through jazz, modern and postmodern contemporary, and investigates key practitioners who contributed towards these developments in dance alongside the impact they had on Rambert Dance Company.

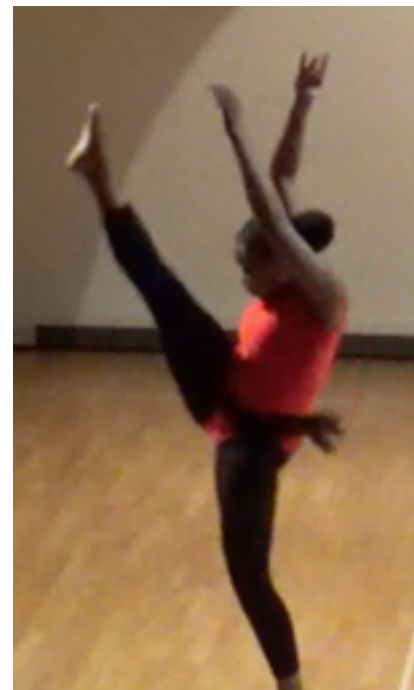
Half Term 2: Technique classes, set repertoire and choreographic principles through dance history (2000-present day). This unit explores how dance has evolved into a very broad and inclusive art form, and how Britain has now stepped into the forefront of developments within contemporary dance, looking at independent choreographers and how they each contribute to the genre.

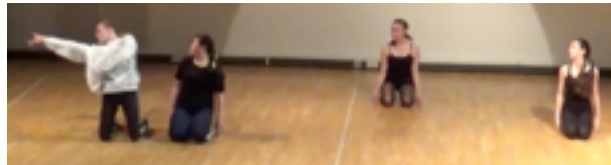
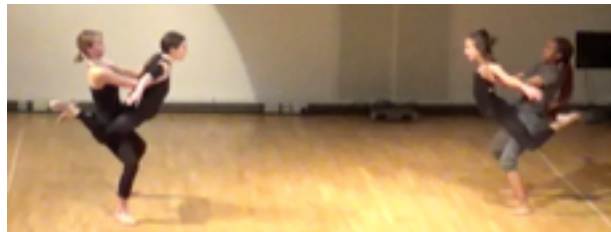
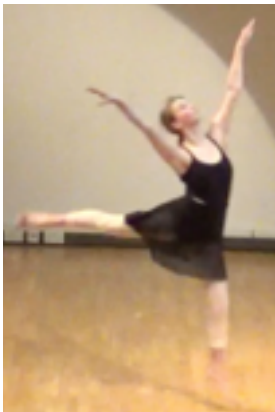
Half Term 3: Creating the solo (in the style of a specified practitioner) and consolidating knowledge of the key practitioners from half terms 1 and 2. There is a written mock and a practical controlled mock assessment in this half term.

Half Term 4: Developing the solo (in the style of a specified practitioner), analysing their own practitioner.

Half Term 5: Creating the performance in a quartet, and analysing the set works.

Half Term 6: Developing the performance in a quartet, summarising the work across the year through a presentation.





Year 13 A Level - Examination Year

This year focuses on getting students used to writing under the demands of the time constraints of a written paper, alongside the physicality required to perform and the critical thinking needed within choreography for the A Level exam at the end of the course.

Half Term 1: Technique classes in the style of each of the chosen practitioners, and refining the solo performance. Recapping and refining the performance in a quartet is also essential, alongside extensive research and exploration of the choreography questions as distributed by AQA in September. In addition, we refine exam/essay technique, refining written work next to each criterion.

Half Term 2: Choreography focus, really honing in on creating unique, aesthetic and meaningful work in relation to the chosen questions. Refining both performance units is essential, as is completing essays to a strict time in class.

Half Term 3: Finishing the choreography, alongside continued rehearsal of the solo and quartet performances to build up to the physical demands of the examination day. There is a written mock and a practical controlled mock assessment in this half term.

Half Term 4: Refining all practical and written work in preparation for upcoming exams, with a practical mock.

Half Term 5: EXAM (May) = Practical exam preparation, exam day and revision for the written exam.

Half Term 6: EXAM (June) = Written exam preparation and the written exam itself.

Overall

Across the whole course (2 years) students are expected to attend A Level company 1 afternoon per week. This is to prepare students for the course and to enable them to complete specific units, e.g.:

- A group performance as a whole company, which is then developed into the performance in a quartet (Component 1, Part B) at the end of year 12, and is then rehearsed during year 13.
- Year 13 choreographies (Component 1, Part A), for which only year 12s and 13s are allowed to be in, therefore students are needed as performers (year 12 and 13) and choreographers (year 13).

This work then gets showcased as part of a tour, to other schools and performances spaces in preparation for exams. This opportunity also builds a sense of professionalism around the course, and enables students to have multiple performance opportunities, mock practical examinations and competitions.

Some examples of our tour work is detailed below:



- Our own A Level Showcase in the Thomas Tallis School auditorium
- At other schools, such as EGAS in Islington
- As guest performances at the Step Into Dance competition
- At Laban Theatre as part of Blaze/Explode and the U Dance regional competition

In addition to our own performances, we aim to see at least 3 professional works per year on stage for the purposes of interpreting and reviewing works live. This is also integral to inspiring our dancers for their own performance and choreographic work.

Picture this!



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If you have any questions about the course, please don't hesitate to contact Miss Allana Rider on arider@thomastallis.org.uk.