



**National
Dance
Teachers
Association**

Dance Studios Survey

March 2009

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1. Introduction

- 1 Earlier this year, NDTA was asked to seek information from members about dance studios in their schools to support discussions related to **Building Schools for the Future (BSF)**. A survey form was developed for this purpose and circulated to members with information about Building Schools for the Future and links to related documents.

- 2 Information was sought regarding:
 - dimensions
 - flooring
 - ventilation, heating, lighting and walls
 - music multi-media
 - theatrical applications
 - dance equipment
 - storage/additional space/facilities
 - changing facilities
 - access/use/security
 - other information

- 3 The survey also included the following questions/sections:
 - What is most problematic about the design/resources in relation to learning, teaching, performance etc. and why?
 - What are the most important features/resources in relation to learning, teaching, performance etc. and why?
 - What else would you like/do you need most and why?
 - Comments regarding dual use of dance studios - during school, after school or for outside bookings.
 - Other comments

A copy of the survey template is shown in Appendix A

- 4 We tried to make the survey easy to complete and it was tested with members of the Executive Committee. However, in analysing the responses, some weaknesses regarding questions have been highlighted. Most significantly, respondents were not asked to identify whether the studio was purpose built or specially converted space.

- 5 The survey was circulated to all NDTA members in February 2009 with a closing date in March. Responses were received as follows:

1	Schools with a dance studio	39*
2	Schools reporting on spaces used for dance other than a studio	16
3	FE Colleges / VI Form Centres	3
4	Non State Schools (e.g. private dance schools, dance agencies/centres)	5
5	Schools relying that they did not have a studio	2
	Total Responses	66

** 2 schools had two studios, information about both studios was recorded separately*

- 6 Information is presented as follows:

- Information received from the 39 schools with dance studios
- Key points highlighted by the 15 schools without a dance studio
- Key points highlighted by the 3 sixth form centres

Responses from dance centres/private schools have not been included.

2. Analysis of Responses from Schools with Dance Studios

There were 39 responses with two schools having two studios.

Dimensions

Rectangle shape		
Under 100 square metres	7	Some comments that the studio was too big to measure.
100-200 square metres	10	
200+square metres	3	
Square Shape		
Under 100 square metres	6	Some comments that the studio was too big to measure.
100-200 square metres	3	
200+square metres	1	

Height

Under 3 metres	4	Most did not include information about the exact height.
3-5 metres	7	
5+metres	5	
Very high	3	
Sloping 3.6 - 2.6m	1	

Obstructions in Space

Fixed obstructions	6	Steps (1) access ramp (1) stairs to office (1) pillar (2) spiral staircase (1) Wall bars (1)
Portable obstructions	6	Tables (1) Chairs(3) TV/DVD player (1) Stage blocks (1) There was some evidence that equipment for sporting activities is stored in spaces designated for dance but used for other purpose e.g. trampolines, table tennis tables

Flooring

Sprung Floor	22	
Semi Sprung	9	
Hard	9	

Floor Covering

Harlequin	4	
Lino	1	
Laminate	1	
Foam/wood/MDF layers	1	
Wood on concrete	1	
Vinyl	3	
Tiled	1	

Ventilation

Air-conditioning	13	
Extractor Fans	8	

Heating

Radiators	17	
Under floor heating	3	
Fans	2	
Controlled within space	19	
Not controlled within space	17	

Lighting

Natural Light	2	Most respondents indicated that they had more than one light source
Artificial Lights	9	
Natural & artificial		Most did not comment on whether they had artificial or natural lighting
High Windows	24	
Low/Medium Height	5	
Large Windows	22	
Small Windows	6	

Privacy

Curtains/blinds	1	The survey just says 'privacy' – responses included the details as shown in the first column.
Window in door	2	
Frosted glass	2	
Open plan	1	
People walk through/look in	4	
On top floor	1	

Type of wall covering

Painted	40	Some responses regarding type of wall covering indicated that some studios have more than one type.
Brick	6	
Sound boards	1	3 said mirrors but this is recorded in the section on dance equipment
Plaster	3	
Plastic	1	
Curtains	2	

Music / Multi Media

Integral Music System	21	Music/ICT usually brought into the space when needed e.g. portable laptops etc.
Piano	3	
DVD / video	38	Teachers using their own laptop for teaching (7)
Display Boards / Whiteboards	40	
Sound insulation	12	
ICT	24	
Interactive whiteboard	11	
Projector	17	

Theatrical Applications

Seating	10	Most of those without built in seating responded that it could be brought in when needed
Blackout / Black Box	4	
Lighting Rig	13	No seating because of dance floor covering (1) Partial black box (1) Lighting rig does not work (2)
Curtaining	11	

Dance Equipment

Barres	14	Barre too low (1) Barre has been ordered (1) Barre: not specified fixed or portable (3)
Portable barres	6	
Mirrors	27	

Storage / Additional Space / Facilities

Storage for equipment	34	
Vestibule Area	9	
Carpeted area	10	
Secure area for belongings	21	
Warm-up / Stretching area	7	
Access to drinking water	17	
Space for theory lessons	17	

Changing Facilities

Suitable area for changing	29	Shared with PE (1)
Security for belongings	31	

Access

School use only	9	One commented that bookings had dropped after insisting that footwear had to be removed when using the studio
Outside bookings	25	
Disabled access	34	

Use

Designated dance space	19	
Multi-purpose	21	

Security (level/type)

Not a lot	1	
Lettings manager (PM)	1	
Swipe card into building	2	
Studios locked when not used	12	
Poor no alarm	4	
Good security	6	
School security	4	
Cameras outside	3	
Alarm	1	

1 What is most problematic about the design / resources in relation to learning, teaching, performance etc. and why?

Design

- Lack of understanding of school needs from architects
- Obsession with pillars in open spaces
- Dance teachers need to be consulted when space is being planned
- Space too small for dance (5)
- Space not big enough for evening performances – new one being built
- Small space no good for public performances and makes videoing difficult (2)
- No space for pupils to watch each other perform
- Ceiling too low
- Not big enough (12 students maximum)
- Reasonable size but limited to 20 pupils - at times class sizes greater than capacity
- Lack of space means students cannot perform full out (2)
- No ramp for wheel chair access
- Corridor window makes students embarrassed
- Viewing area but means there is no privacy for assessment
- No vestibule for shoes so strewn on floor – H&S hazard
- No warming up / changing area.(2)
- Conversion of existing area not purpose built
- Need two good size changing rooms – boys and girls
- No designated changing area – have to change in studio (2)
- No changing space

Heating

- Heating/ventilation inadequate (3)
- Draughty and cold in winter (2)
- Hot
- Hot in summer big windows don't open
- Air-conditioning /heating controlled from boiler room
- No air-conditioning so hot in summer
- Hot in summer – cold in winter

Floors, Mirrors, Barres

- No mirrors and needs the space to be designated for dance only
- Hard floor and dirty
- No performance seating (2)
- No seats for theory (4)
- Mirrors not aligned properly
- No barres
- Step by mirrors so that entire floor cannot be seen by pupils dancing at all times

Whiteboards

- Lack of storage space, no interactive white board (4)
- Need curtains to ensure visibility of white boards(3)

Dual Use

- Shared with drama
- Have to move when performances or workshops are arranged
- Mirrors not possible because used for other activities

Responses covering several points

- Need clean undamaged floor, ICT/Audio facilities, privacy, mirrors, curtains. lighting rig, water.
- Need changing area, sprung floor, privacy, sound proofing (for BTEC opportunities)
- Poor acoustics, no space for theory work, no mirrors

Other

- Some of area set aside for staging blocks
- Not cleaned enough

2 What are the most important features / resources in relation to learning, teaching, performance etc. and why?

Design / Space / Access

- Sprung floor, mirrors, light airy clear space (3)
- Light, good sized space(3)
- Clean space - undisturbed access (2)
- Separate area for dance near other arts facilities
- Clean soft floor for use in bare feet
- Another space same size
- Large space (1)
- Another space for multi-purpose teaching would leave dance studio free for dance

Comments covering several points

- Good floor – dedicated space helps give creative and disciplined responses. Mirrors and white boards also useful
- Studio with foldaway seating, theatrical lighting and sound equipment would inspire students
- Space, comfort, privacy, resources that work (white board, TV, video)
- Room with suitable floor – separate area for theory and video analysis
- Exclusive use of clean dedicated facility with easy access to sound and video equipment

Equipment

- White board, projector (10) useful for theory lessons and presentations
- lighting, sound bars
- Integrated music system.(3)
- Mirrors to examine technique (5)
- Sound system that allows use of Ipod connection (no jumping of accompaniment) easy for pupils to use – several speakers.
- Projector DVD system – pupils can watch works on grand scale – easier to analyse movement – can link recording equipment so that pupils can watch their own choreography
- Access to computer and screen – so many dance resources available on You Tube students get a lot from watching other dances
- Chairs for theory sessions

Access

- Access after school instead of use by external clubs/coaches.

Other

- Water (2)

3 What else would you like / do you need most and why?

Practical spaces and specialist fittings

- Large studio for A level exams
- More space or smaller classes
- Larger space
- Higher ceiling to allow elevation
- Rehearsal room
- Fixed barre otherwise fantastic
- Ballet barres - no space for fixed - no money for portable
- Barres for ballet
- Curtains, mirrors for A level only
- Mirrors – students say would help level of performance

Other spaces / rooms

- Dedicated changing areas so that pupils come to room ready to work
- Changing rooms and space to leave belongings
- Allocated theory space or chairs with table attached + space for storage

Equipment / Facilities

- Seating, water fountain (2)
- Better ventilation, Digital projector- create more exciting lessons
- Projector and fitness equipment for theory lessons and for teaching core stability
- Chairs
- Secure lockers for belongings (3)
- Air-conditioning
- Remote control sound system
- In process of having an interactive screen to use
- White board
- Chairs with writing arm for theory, just for dance

Use

- To keep people wearing shoes out

4 Comments regarding dual use of dance studios - during school, after school or for outside bookings.

Positive comments

- No problem with shared facilities - work within community can enhance learning
- Works well, only used for dance, only ballet or soft shoes allowed.
- If it was an attractive space would be able to secure bookings or allow access to community groups.
- School, use till 6.00pm – if the facility is abused by outside groups, the arrangement is terminated
- Bookings organised by community centre – works well used for fitness, ballroom dance, nifty fifties
- Always kept tidy – no writing removed
- There is a contract outside groups are expected to adhere to – school has priority

Negative Comments

- Against it – outside bookings take priority over after school clubs (money)
- Damage to room as result of outside bookings.
- Use by belly dancing group – space often not left as should be - equipment left out - time consuming to put back.
- Shoes not allowed but cannot be sure that outside users respect rule
- Good use of facilities but things get moved about by public or left in the way.
- Bare foot area for dance but pupils allowed in at break with shoes on hence dirt and damage (2)
- Have to put space in order before can start lesson – litter, mud, displays tampered with (2)
- Studio used 100% and time is allocated for community use – short of space – have to use hall which is not suitable for dance
- Main issue is cleaning of space – cleaned for external use but not again for school use next day
- External users move furniture from one place to another
- Floor not always clean after community use at night
- Need the income – not ideal but dance would not be in the school without sports college status

Other

- Designated barefoot area so of little interest for outside bookings

5 Other comments

- Can't leave things out for next day.
- Floor gets messed up at exam time.
- Dance growing rapidly but underfunded and resourced. Needs addressing nationally not just by individual schools. Too good at making do with poor and potentially dangerous environment. Would Science put up with teaching without labs and technicians?
- Studio needs to be bigger with connected changing facilities. Also proper performance area with audience seating high priority. Difficult to film performances for exam purposes
- New dance studio in May
- Dance studio is needed to bring out best in students
- A big area with bars and mirrors but lacking other important features of dance studio.
- When you have a big space every one wants it. Teachers have often given up large space for tiny purpose built studio and feel worse off for it
- Lucky to have such a good facility, students don't always appreciate it
- Shared with drama so not available for all dance lessons
- Great resource – very lucky
- After years teaching in cold, dirty areas very lucky to have a lovely studio – has a positive effect on students
- Lucky to have new facility built. Previous dance space was too small with pillar in room. New facility took a long time to develop – lot of care and attention to plan. Need to live in it for a while before making too many plans and adjustments

3. Responses from Schools without a Studio

There were 15 responses

Spaces used for dance by schools without a dance studio:

School hall	7
School hall plus stage	1
Theatre	1
Sports hall	3
Hall, sports hall or gym	1
Gym	2

Problems cited

- Two groups in the sports hall at the same time
- Problems with cleanliness through multi-use
- Lack of adequate heating
- Hard floor but with harlequin flooring (1 + 1 with harlequin flooring on the stage)
- Space not designed as a classroom therefore no display boards, whiteboards etc
- Constant battle with other people seeing it as a dance space
- Clattering from the kitchen, squashed food on the floor, have to mop after break and lunch, loose space for exams, presentations, pupils walking through during lessons
- No changing space (theatre) booked for other functions, very hard floor, poor ventilation – pupils become lethargic, cannot access PE facilities on a regular basis (large gym)
- Out of school use is a problem-litter, lack of respect for the building, eating and sticky drinks brought into the space
- Felt covered floor, not clean - used for sports activities
- Salsa classes are damaging the floor

Two quotes

Dual use is appalling at my school because of exams which seem to be getting worse and more consistent every year. In 8 weeks I have lost the space for 94% of Year 11 lessons, 84% of Year 13, and 75% of both Year 12 and Year 10 – it's an appalling rate!!!!

I am new to teaching dance and I have found one of the most difficult things this year is the space, its cold, there is food on the floor, the floor is harsh and many pupils complain that doing this years set study is agony. One girl grazed her foot doing floor work at the floor is not suitable for sliding on and as a result got infected. I have found I am constantly having to fight for my teaching space which I feel totally devalues the subject. We put on a 2 night show this week at the local theatre which has been praised so much in school, one of the comments from the deputy head was that he had no idea our GCSE dancers were that talented which I think shows how underestimated the subject is and its at the bottom of the priority list and we are expected to cope dancing in totally unsuitable circumstances. The problem has been highlighted several times to SMT as I feel it's unfair that my teaching space is used by everyone and I am the only department that does not have their own space. In the future there are plans to improve facilities but this depends upon a new school being built or external funding. This survey has highlighted how under resourced we are.

4. Responses from Sixth Form Colleges

Total responses 3, one with 2 studio spaces

Centre 1

- Use theatre at the moment – good seating and sound but needs regular cleaning – has bought own mop and bucket because he doesn't want to upset the cleaner!
- New purpose built studio will be ready for next year – the architects have listened to needs (based on AQA A Level requirements)
- The studio will have fully sprung floor with Harlequin covering, natural light and soundproofing, mirrors
- Will have whiteboard and laptops in theory room
- New studio will provide sense of identity and opportunity to create a dynamic learning environment

Centre 2

- Designated space for dance
- Floor supposed to be fully sprung but installed by a local builder and not a specialist – teacher does not believe that it is a sprung floor, students suffer from leg pains
- Main problem lack of space and air conditioning
- Need a bigger changing area, rehearsal space, sound system and a new floor.

Centre 3 (2 studios)

- Main studio and practice studio both well equipped and built after an extensive consultation process to ensure good facilities
- Main studio can be turned into a black box with banked seating for performances – connected to drama studio with removable wall to make large space for performances
- Cannot control air conditioning from within the studios
- Need fixed barres in the main studio
- Main studio used for exams so loose it for dance in May and June – it is the largest space in the building

**NATIONAL DANCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
Dance Studio Survey (February 2009)**

Name of School	
Name of Teacher	
Contact Phone Number	
Contact Email	

Dance Studio

Dimensions	
Height, Length and Width	
Shape of space for practical work	
Obstructions in space for practical work (e.g. columns etc)	
Flooring	
Sprung / semi-sprung / hard	
Type of flooring	
Ventilation / Heating / Lighting / Walls	
Air conditioning / extractor fans / heating	
Controlled within space?	
Natural / artificial lighting	
Windows – high / low / large / small etc.	
Privacy	
Type of wall covering / colour	
Music / Multi-Media e.g.	
Integral music system	
Piano	
DVD / video display	
Display boards / white boards	
Sound insulation	
ICT	
Interactive whiteboard / projector	

Theatrical Applications e.g.	
Seating	
Blackout / black box	
Lighting rig	
Curtaining	
Dance Equipment	
Barres – fixed / portable	
Mirrors	
Storage / Additional Space / Facilities	
Storage for equipment / resources	
Vestibule area	
Carpeted area for class (discussions, viewing videos, writing etc)	
Secure area for belongings	
Area for spectators	
Warm up / stretching area	
Access to drinking water	
Space for theory lessons	
Changing Facilities	
Suitable changing areas (boys / girls)	
Secure facilities for belongings	
Access / Use / Security	
School use only	
Outside bookings	
Disabled access	
Designated dance space or multi-purpose	
School use only	
Level and type of security	
Other Information	
Please add details of anything not included above	

What is most problematic about the design / resources in relation to learning, teaching, performance etc. and why?
What are the most important features / resources in relation to learning, teaching, performance etc. and why?
What else would you like / do you need most and why?
Comments regarding dual use of dance studios - during school, after school or for outside bookings.
Any other comments

Please email to office@ndta.org.uk by Friday 06 March 2009

With many thanks for your time

Carolyn Woolridge
NDTA Acting Chair