

Information about the College

Here is some information about our organisation and our values. This information will provide further context about Bird College and help you clarify your suitability for role.

About us – Bird College

Introduction

Doreen Bird college of Performing Arts Ltd trades as Bird College – Conservatoire for Dance and Musical Theatre Company. It is a company limited by guarantee and is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Doreen Bird Foundation, a registered charity. The College has a board of directors and trustees and is committed to best practice in all areas of its work. The boards are responsible for ensuring the College carries out its business according to its terms of reference, accepted good practice and charitable objectives. Geoff Pine is the Chair of the Doreen Bird Foundation and the Chair of the Board of Directors. The College is an equal opportunity employer and employs well-qualified and experienced teaching and non-teaching staff. Teachers are well qualified and experienced, and many have Qualified Teacher Status. The College believes that the diversity of its community is an essential part of its values. It is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity and aims to provide a working, learning and social environment that is free from unfair discrimination. It aims to ensure that students, staff and all others associated with the College are treated with dignity, respect, and equity, regardless of inappropriate distinctions, such as gender, race, nationality, ethnic identity or national origin, socio-economic status or role within the College, religious or political beliefs, disability, age, marital status, family circumstance, or sexual orientation. In addition, the College complies with current and planned legislation and promotes good practice. Bird College is a Founder member of the Alliance of Musical Theatre Conservatories (AMTC).

Early Beginnings: The Foundation and the Founder

Doreen Bird was the founder of the College and she established the Doreen Bird School of Dance, in 1946 at the early age of 18 years. This in turn became the Doreen Bird School of Performing Arts in 1951 with a full-time three-year course for six students. Doreen was a fellow and life member of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) and a former Major Examiner, Committee and Council Member. She was also a life member of the Royal Academy of Dance and was influential in the examination of dance nationally. She examined for the ISTD in the UK, Canada and South Africa, and co-authored a range of syllabi for them at all grades. Doreen retired as Principal of the College in July 1998 but remained on the College Board as a Non-Executive Director until her death in 2004. In 2015 the College relocated to a one site facility campus at Alma Road, Sidcup, in the London Borough of Bexley. This is an exciting time for the College - we have refurbished the former school to a high standard and are continually developing the campus. In addition to well-equipped offices, we now have a suite of fully equipped dance studios each with specialist floors and air conditioning. We have a beautifully equipped Studio Theatre, the Doreen Bird Foundation Theatre. We have an extensive range of facilities for students located in our Well Being Centre which includes a gym, a physio suite and student counselling service. There is also a well-equipped Resources Centre and a café which is open throughout the day. Students have internal and external spaces in which to enjoy their free time. The College operates through a management structure which embodies all staff members and is accountable to the Boards of Trustees and Directors.

The College Executive comprises:

- CEO Shirley Coen BA (Hons), FRSA
- Principal and Artistic Director Luis De Abreu MA, PGCE
- Assistant Principal (Student Wellbeing) Luisa Figuerola
- Assistant Principal (Quality Assurance) Simon Smith

What the College aims to do

The core aim is to recruit and train the talented students to achieve their potential. They are selected at audition for the appropriate programme. The College seeks to offer the best possible education and vocational training and to provide the industry with educated and articulate performers with high technical standards as well as well-developed skills which enable them to work successfully as part of a company. It is intended that our graduates are able to progress to a wide range of disciplines and to be able to sustain lifelong careers.

Our Vision

When Performance Counts

Our Mission is to be an outstanding and innovative international provider of education and professional training in Dance, Music and Musical Theatre.

Our Values and Guiding Principles

At Bird College we expect staff and students to behave in accordance with the following values and guiding principles:

- aspire for excellence
- value and celebrate individuality and diversity
- maintain a culture that embraces inclusion
- nurture and develop artistic talent
- encourage versatility
- develop resilience and employability in our students
- be respectful and courteous
- listen and communicate

Full time FE and HE programmes of study - What we offer

The College currently offers two full time three-year programmes within the post compulsory sector: the BA Honours degree in Professional Dance and Musical theatre validated by the University of Greenwich and the Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre, validated by Trinity College, London. In addition, the College delivers a full time, one-year intensive pre-professional foundation course in Dance and Theatre Performance. The College is accredited by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT) who are the standards body of the professional dance and musical industries.

The College is a registered centre for the Imperial Society for the Teachers of Dancing.

The College currently has 640 full time Higher and Further Education full time students.

How our full-time programmes are funded

Core funding is received from the Department for Education and the University of Greenwich, private fee-paying students and other small grants.

The College was inspected by Ofsted in November 2015 and is an Outstanding Provider.

ADDITIONAL COLLEGE ACTIVITIES WHICH SUPPORT THE CORE PROVISION –

Short Courses

The College provides opportunities for young people who are considering a career in theatre performance, to give them the opportunity to develop their skills and to work with national and international guest teachers. Short courses, normally run during the Easter and Summer vacations, are fun and an excellent way to find out whether or not the participants might be suited to a full-time course and a career within the profession.

Working with Professional Artists

All students have the exciting opportunity of working with a range of professional guest artists. This enables students to gain a much clearer understanding of working in the profession and of the standard required. It also assists the College in ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of the profession and identify and address any skills shortages.

Teacher Training

The College offers intensive training courses to students on an extra curricula basis. They can gain a Foundation in Dance Instruction (FDI) in Ballet, Modern dance and Tap which is validated by the ISTD. Training takes place outside the normal timetable is optional and funded privately by the student or their parents.

The Bird Agency

Through the Bird agency the College aims to give students professional experience during their time with us. The Bird Agency works with students and graduates to support their efforts in gaining suitable employment. The agency does not currently represent graduates in the long term but acts as a stepping-stone until they have gained professional representation. Many graduates are represented by highly respected West End agents including Gavin Barker Associates

Our staff

Bird College strives to be a positive and inclusive employer. We have a core staff team of around 110 members,. Our employment practices are designed to provide a rewarding environment for everyone and our benefits are primarily aimed at fostering a culture of diversity and inclusivity that would appeal to people from a broad spectrum of society. Additional benefits include:

- Generous holiday entitlement including College wide closure at Christmas
- Childcare Vouchers Scheme www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/childcare-vouchers
- Generous Aviva pension scheme (The college offers a generous matching contribution scheme, where we will match up to 8%,
- Ongoing CPD provided by Educare
- Subsidised Canteen
- Onsite parking
- Cycle to work scheme
- Vouchers for eye tests and contributions towards frames
- Death in service provided by AIG
- Enhanced Maternity & Adoption pay Flexible working
- Generous compassionate leave

What our staff say about working at Bird College

Here are some of the comments made by staff when asked, "What is the best thing about working for this organisation?"

- "The College's care and integral goal to improving and enriching the life of its staff and students is second to none."
- "Staff are very dedicated to their disciplines and make a real effort to meet the needs of all students. Bird is a warm and friendly place to work."

Our students

The College offers a relaxed and professionally disciplined environment with students working flexibly every weekday and attending specialist workshops and rehearsals on some weekends. Students' population is diverse and we have the pleasure of welcoming a number of international students.

We will empower our learners to develop a very broad range of industry-focused skills which prepare them very well for employment. They make rapid progress from their starting points and become mature, thoughtful performers. Students benefit from a range of additional support services including

our inhouse counselling, mentoring, physiotherapy, fitness and learning support teams. Student voice is used to shape best practice

'Choosing to train at Bird College was definitely the best decision for me. I love the friendly atmosphere it exudes and the high standard of training that challenges us. When I leave Bird I'm confident in knowing that I will be well-equipped for my career thanks to such a dedicated teaching staff.' Dawnita Smith

Bird College is committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. We are combining our efforts to advance diversity in the arts as we recognise that true diversity enhances and deepens the impact of the arts in our community and in our world.

Bird College is a supporter of the Tired Movement and endorse their Shades Dance Wear range. To find out more <https://www.tiredmovement.com/>



SHADES

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