

“Cygnet School nurtures artistic growth, critical thinking, and personal development, through an empowering learning environment grounded in joy, belonging, community, and storytelling, preparing the next generation to excel creatively and confidently in diverse dance futures.”

Professor Angela Pickard

Recommendations

Theme	Recommendation	Intended Impact
Progression Routes	Continue to develop individual pathways into vocational training and careers. Consider potential for national roll out across UK.	Increased transition into professional dance and related sectors.
Community Outreach	Continue to expand recruitment and accessibility for underrepresented groups through participation workshops and experience/taster days.	Greater diversity and equity of access.
Alumni Engagement	Maintain connection with alumni network for chaperoning.	Ongoing support, stronger community, and role modelling.
Creative Leadership	Continue to integrate choreography and Cygnet-led teaching/creative sessions.	Foster leadership, ownership, and creative autonomy.
Visibility and Advocacy	Consider a UK tour. Share success stories. Continue to involve Cygnets in advocacy and promotion.	Raise profile, diversify recruitment, influence sector and policy, inspire others.
Reflection and goal setting	Continue to embed reflection tools and engagement in goal setting.	Holistic development, autonomy and ownership of learning for young people.
Dissemination	Continue researcher/evaluator in residence to capture, disseminate and publish learnings and impact.	Inform best practice across the dance and youth arts sectors. Greater funding routes.
Enabling Pedagogy	Continue to embed values-led and Cygnet-centred teaching strategies.	Confident and resilient dancers.



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CYGNET SCHOOL
EVALUATION
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEW/ADVENTURES

Introduction

Cygnet School is a pioneering, pre-vocational dance talent development programme for young people aged between 13-18 years.

Created and led by *New Adventures*, in partnership with *The Marlowe Theatre*, *Cygnet School* is a pathway between *New Adventures* participation work, further dance development opportunities, and vocational training towards the profession.

A key aim is to recruit a diverse range of dancers who may otherwise have barriers to access the arts/ dance. A significant economic barrier has been lifted as there are no costs to participate in *Cygnet School*, with all food, travel and accommodation costs covered.

Cygnet School brings together a group of young dancers once a month and for a week-long summer residency, to explore the unique aspects of *New Adventures*’ work, style and training. They focus on technique, storytelling and creativity, physicality, expression, gesture and character relationships.

Cygnets also see *New Adventures* professional company perform on stage at *Sadler’s Wells* and *The Marlowe Theatre*. They have guest-led workshops, and gain insight into the inner workings of theatres and the dance/wider arts industry, learning about different career pathways in the arts.

Vision

New Adventures is committed to supporting the next generation of dancers and artists, and in diversifying the dance landscape through investing in the future of dance. *Cygnet School* aims to provide holistic social, technical, creative and artistic dance experiences and opportunities for young people, through the work and methodology of *New Adventures* unique storytelling style.

The vision of *Cygnet School* is to:

- Open access and participation to a world of adventures, joy, wonder, connection and creativity.
- Create a safe, fun, dance environment to develop a sense of belonging and community, particularly for young people from diverse and under-served communities.

Values

New Adventures and *Cygnet School* have four values:

- Joy
- Connection
- Wonder
- Creativity



Evaluation

Professor Angela Pickard (Canterbury Christ Church University), evaluated Cygnet School between 2021 and 2024.

Youth Participation Action Research (YPAR) methodology and Cygnet-centred participatory, qualitative and quantitative methods were utilised to gather a range of feedback.

The methods included:

- Observations
- Reflective Journals
- Post-It Note Activities
- Word Clouds
- Number Choice Scales
- Mood Boards
- Emotion Graphs
- Focus Groups
- Photos
- Films
- Goal Setting
- Questionnaires

Process and focus of the evaluation



26 Cygnets and 10 *New Adventures* artists/managers were involved in the evaluation.



Findings

A *Cygnet School* Model of Talent Development was developed from the evaluation

