

### **Matt: Tell us about your school & your pupils?**

Belinda: Poole High School is an over-subscribed non-denominational comprehensive serving the historic town of Poole. With over 75 years of service to the education of students from Poole, we are a learning community built around traditional values. Staff are absolutely determined that any child who attends Poole High School will have an excellent educational experience. We want our students to leave, having:

- enjoyed the mutual respect and trust which are our hallmarks;
- developed self-confidence and personal integrity;
- made outstanding progress academically;
- felt known and cared for as an individual;
- experienced superb opportunities, nurtured personal ambition and developed a sense of service to others.

We are committed to educating 'the whole child', strategically focused upon the ever-changing learning landscape our young people are immersed in.

### **Matt: Who are your favourite dance artists & companies?**

Belinda: Our students (and teachers) have wide ranging tastes in dance from Diversity to Mark Meisner, Sergei Polunin and Michael Dameski. Dance works ranging from traditional Swan Lake to Ghost Dances and choreographers from Ashley Banjo to Matthew Bourne - we love it all!

### **Matt: How long have you been a Learning Associates Schools partner & what does it mean to Poole High School to be a "Dream" partner with PDSW in 2020/2021?**

This is the second year that Poole High School have been a Learning Associate School partner with PDSW. We are absolutely thrilled to be a Dream partner as this unlocks so many opportunities for both our students and staff and shows the school's commitment to Dance as a subject.

### **Matt: What are the benefits to your pupils of being a Learning Associates School?**

Belinda: The benefits to our students are vast. Firstly having a unique link with professional artists both at and via PDSW. The opportunity to tailor workshops and attend performances that link directly to the courses we are studying to bring the professional works alive, but also to benefit students across the school by working with PDSW on a range of projects. PDSW's direct access and links to the dance world allow us to access a wide variety of styles and practitioners that a teacher in school would often not have the time or contacts to access. Careers events at PDSW for students looking at moving onto creative careers, attendance by PDSW at school career events to provide an insight to students on future opportunities. Opportunities for work experience and performance opportunities outside school.

### **Matt: Tell us about a particular dance activity that has inspired your pupils?**

Belinda: Some of the highlights in the past year for our students have been a Capoeira and Samba workshop linked to our study of *A Linha Curva*, a performance and workshop with

Anjali Dance company and students from Victoria Education Centre to learn about integrated practice and a Zoom interview with the choreographer James Cousins about his work *Within Her Eyes*. We also just managed to have a street dance workshop before the first lockdown.

**Matt: What support is there for your school teaching staff from PDSW?**

Belinda: PDSW offers a variety of CPD opportunities for teachers (whether specialist or not) so that they develop the confidence and skills to deliver dance successfully to students. PDSW are also a great sounding board to go to with questions and ideas and will always try to find a way to help. The arrangements and tireless work that the PDSW staff put in to fit in with a busy school schedule are also amazing and their understanding and kindness to make things work are boundless. Their attention to detail is fantastic and their enthusiasm and support endless.

**Matt: What curricular & extra-curricular drama, dance & music opportunities do your pupils have at Poole High School?**

Belinda: We offer Dance, Drama and Music at KS3 and at KS4, with an aim to offer in KS5 soon. When not in Covid restrictions, there are a number of dance, drama and music clubs running that are open to all students regardless of ability or experience. We have a biannual school production, alternating with a Summer Arts Evening, take part in the Shakespeare Schools' Festival, are a member of Poole Schools' Music Association and a partner school with The Lighthouse, Poole. We are a Music Mark school with strong links to SoundStorm and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and a Dream Associate School partner with PDSW.

**Matt: Can you describe the exciting projects & performances that you have in the pipeline?**

Belinda: We were due to do our production this summer but this has been postponed to next year. We have taken part in the Poole Schools' Music Association Christmas music video this year as the concert at The Lighthouse was cancelled. We have also created a mini Christmas concert featuring Dance, Drama and Music with our year 10 and 11 students that has been filmed to share. Our traditional Christmas services are also going to be filmed for Years 7 - 9, and rather than group singing, we will be group signing using Makaton to join in with carols and songs. Fingers crossed for some workshops with our partner organisations in the New Year once we all find out about tiers and regulations and getting back to our extra-curricular clubs.

**Matt: Why should other schools consider becoming a Learning Associates partner?**

The sheer ease of working with PDSW and their ability to listen to your needs and tailor to the school is brilliant. The workshops have really brought things to life for our students and to hear the same things from professional artists as they hear from teachers is great positive reinforcement. By working with an external agency the students gain aspirations beyond the school's walls and this fires their creativity and work ethic beyond simply gaining qualifications, to their future, which is ultimately what our role as teachers is all about.



Photo: PHS workshop with Anjali Dance Company

If you would like more information on how we can support your dance offer in school, create one-off workshops, offer after school dance clubs, training for your teachers or explore what is involved with our innovative Learning Associates Schools programme, please don't hesitate to contact **Matt, our Young People's Producer** at: [matthewh@pdsw.org.uk](mailto:matthewh@pdsw.org.uk)

Matt studied at UCL & Mountview before working as a professional actor & choreographer in the West End & across the UK; he has taught in schools, colleges, drama schools & universities for over 10 years. He'd be delighted to hear from you & how best we can work together to inspire your young people.