

## **STANDARD AND GRADE EXAMINATIONS**

I am often asked why children are invited to take two ballet classes a week when they get to Grade 2 and above and also why some children are not put forward for exams when others are. Hopefully this section will go some way to explaining it!

Candidates taking their **Grade Examinations** are examined at a much higher level, they are expected to attain greater technical ability and it helps if they have a fairly good turn out, flexible limbs and feet with a high degree of arch. They need to have a complete knowledge of the syllabus and theory which is very hard to achieve in one class a week.

The theory behind taking two lessons a week helps the child progress much faster and is able to retain the technical aspects of ballet better. This enables the child to work towards auditioning for a Cecchetti Associate place or a Cecchetti Scholar and be able to enter the Mabel Ryan Awards, which are the Showcase competitions for the Cecchetti Society.

The **Standard Class Examinations** are marked not so much on the child's technical ability but on their enjoyment of dance, poise, performance, knowledge of syllabus and response etc. These exams are designed for the pupil who does many other activities and only wants to dance once a week. Generally I find I can enter the once a week child for these exams giving them some extra lessons nearer the exam date.

### **Vocational Grade Exams**

It is impossible to enter these examinations on one class a week. Regrettably the standard of marking has been raised by the Society and the syllabus has become much more demanding. Physical attributes have to be taken into consideration and a great degree of turn out and flexibility are essential otherwise the body can be damaged attempting such physical demands. It also appears that no exceptions are made by the examiners for lack of body capabilities. Therefore before considering entering a pupil these aspects have to be taken into account. There are alternative exams for those who are not of vocational grade suitability in ballet but regrettably not in modern, where the teachers' judgement into which path we guide your child is critical. It is also worth remembering that all children are different and develop at very different rates and all of them need nurturing.

I will not enter a child for an examination unless my teachers and I feel that they are completely ready to take it. There is nothing worse than a child taking an exam when they do not feel confident or if they are unlikely to succeed. If your child is not entered for an exam but some of their class are, they will move with their class and hopefully be ready to take an exam at a later stage.

Please always contact the office to discuss your child's progress with me, I am always willing to do this. Or please contact your teacher via the office who will also get back to you if you have any concerns.

I would ask you not to try and discuss these matters with them in between classes as it takes them away from the following class.