



## **Swanlea School – Tower Hamlets**

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**Daniel Shindler**

Daniel Shindler, The Head of Performing Arts at Swanlea School, told us about their first year on the programme:

**‘There has never been any dance on the curriculum at Swanlea so the students were starting from the beginning. We now have a core group of around 14 students who come every week and have become our Dance Company. The group reflects the ethnic and gender mix of the school, but is never the less quite an unusual group. They are not a group that would naturally have come together, but they have really gelled and that’s great to see. It’s been fantastic to see this group really grow from nothing’.**

Daniel told us about one student who has particularly benefitted from the programme:

**‘This student has really flourished in the school since beginning the classes. He was in a very difficult situation and in danger of being excluded. It has been enormously important for him to have a strong supportive male role model, which he has in Paradigmz, our Step into Dance teacher. He has really found his place in the school and there is no doubt that the dance classes have played a big part in that’.**

The students have recently performed in the school mall, ‘flash mobbing’ a Michael Jackson song just before school began. They went on to perform it in school assemblies.

**‘The students worked very hard on this performance and really owned it. They worked independently on the piece as well as in the Step classes. The performance was a huge success and it had a real impact on the school community as well as on the students themselves. The whole school community, staff and students came to watch and everyone was totally engaged. I’ve never received so many emails from staff after a school event. I was inundated with positive emails’.**

**‘It was really nice that other areas of the school were also involved and it became a cross-curricula event. The art department made the T-Shirts, we used a film made by one of the students, and the choir were also involved’.**

Daniel is not thinking of leaving the programme in the near future!

**‘It’s been really great; we’re definitely in it for the long term. We now have a dance company!’**

Step into Dance is a partnership project between The Jack Petchey Foundation and the Royal Academy of Dance.

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