



## Council seals deal with Bird College to provide Music and Dance Services

Weeks of uncertainty have come to end with the announcement by the London Borough of Bexley that it has reached agreement on the future provision of the Borough's music and dance services.

The new provider will be Bird College, a centre of excellence for dance and theatre with its headquarters in Birkbeck Road, Sidcup. Its new service for students and parents will be formally launched on Monday 29 October.

"A massive amount of work has been done since BAMPA's Board decided to put the organisation into administration in June and we have never wavered from our commitment to get these important services up and running again as quickly as possible," says Cllr Simon Windle, Bexley's Cabinet Member for Schools, Adult Education & Youth Services. "Bird College is a local organisation with a first class reputation and we are looking forward to working with the College to help Bexley's musicians and dancers fulfil their potential and to enrich the cultural life of the Borough."

Registration for instrumental lessons, along with membership of bands, orchestras, choirs and junior dance, will begin at Bird College's new music service offices at 27 Station Road, Sidcup, on Monday 17 September.

Bird College will be known as Bird College - Dance, Music and Theatre Performance - to reflect its new role.

Shirley Coen, Principal of Bird College, said: "We are delighted that the College will have the opportunity to work with the Council in developing and delivering music provision within the Borough and we are excited about the prospect of working with the young people of Bexley.

"Bird College is committed to the arts and welcomes the opportunity to widen its portfolio. It is a natural development, as there are many synergies between our current work and music. There will be new and exciting opportunities for gifted musicians within the Borough."

Bird College will be reinstating and developing a wide range of musical services, including -

- peripatetic tuition in Bexley's primary schools for children at Key Stage 2
- group instrumental and vocal tuition
- individual tuition through Licensed Teaching.

It is expected that Licensed Teachers will be employed by the College.

Other services will include the hire and purchase of musical instruments and accessories, regular public performances and examinations with nationally recognised bodies.

A comprehensive service of both music and junior level dance will be established over the coming weeks, as registration takes place. The former BAMPA's dance faculty will become Bird College's new junior dance department, which will offer unique and unrivalled outlets for young dancers. This will include improved opportunities to work alongside professionally trained dancers.

Bird College is in the process of recruiting the excellent peripatetic, licensed and group-teaching staff it will need to deliver what will be a fantastic service. Advertisements will appear shortly in the press and on Bird College's website at [www.birdcollege.co.uk](http://www.birdcollege.co.uk)

Music teachers are invited to apply for positions as peripatetic and licensed teachers without waiting for the formal advertisement by writing to:

Birkbeck Centre, Birkbeck Road  
Sidcup, Kent DA14 4DE enclosing a CV and details of instrumental and/or vocal disciplines taught.

Applications can also be submitted by email to [\*\*luis.deabreu@birdcollege.co.uk\*\*](mailto:luis.deabreu@birdcollege.co.uk)

The College will be liaising with head teachers of schools with pupils at Key Stage 2 on the re-introduction of instrumental and vocal group tuition from the forthcoming half-term.

An interim service of Licensed Teaching for individual lessons will continue under private arrangements at the former music centre at Station Road and at Townley Grammar School for Girls until the autumn half-term.

Bird College will be working with other organisations in the Borough to provide the new service, including Townley Grammar School for Girls. The Council and College hope that parents' groups, including a new 'friends group', will play an important role in representing the views and aspirations of students and parents in the development of the service. The College is looking forward to working with all interested parties, including friends, parents and former BAMPA members.

The Friends Committee of the former BAMPA will run all the groups and ensembles similar to those in operation previously until half-term. A full list is available on the Council's website at [\*\*www.bexley.gov.uk/service/children/musicservices\\_timetable.html\*\*](http://www.bexley.gov.uk/service/children/musicservices_timetable.html)

Bird College is a company limited by guarantee, a non-profit-making organisation and is wholly owned by the Doreen Bird Foundation, a registered charity. The College was established in Sidcup more than 60 years ago by Doreen Bird, its founder. It has expanded significantly over the last ten years and now has five vocational programmes, ranging from further and higher education to postgraduate provision. The College currently has 240 full-time students. Its courses focus on dance, musical theatre and acting. Its graduates are successful in gaining employment within musical theatre, television and dance companies.

The College has an experienced and capable Board of Trustees and Board of Directors who all work hard to support the College. The Board of Trustees is chaired by Dr Jo Butterworth and the Board of Directors is chaired by Tony Clayton.

