



# Ballet Extra

## INFORMATION PACK

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# Jill Bridger School of Dance

## Introduction and our Ballet Extra Levels

Ballet Extra is an opportunity for students at the Jill Bridger School of Dance to attend additional ballet tuition to their weekly RAD grade class.

The class content is listed on page 2 of this supplement.

We have three levels of classes currently running at Abbey Meadows Studio 2 on Saturday afternoons from 12.30 onwards.

Ballet Extra Inter - for grades 2b upwards  
Ballet Extra Senior - as suggested by the teacher  
Ballet Extra Advanced - as suggested by the teacher

Ballet Extra is a personal journey for each student with individual assessment for any exam options and soft pointe or pointe work. Exams and pointe work are not compulsory and students may attend Ballet Extra as a recreational class with a view to improving their overall ballet technique.

## RAD exam pathways: Summary of grade and vocational exams

**Graded syllabus:** Grades 1 to 8 incorporate ballet, free movement and character suitable for candidates attending once or twice a week classes.

**Vocational graded syllabus:** The RAD vocational curriculum starting at Intermediate Foundation is for students wishing to further develop their classical technique and who may be considering a dance-related career. Intermediate Foundation precedes Intermediate which is a requirement to enter the RAD Teacher Training programme. If a vocational exam is considered an appropriate pathway for a student, an information pack is sent to the parent and student with information and costings of the two-year programme of Focus Sessions required to prepare for the exam.

## Reports: Communicating progress to parents

Reports are issued annually to allow our Ballet Extra teacher (Bernadette) to communicate students' progress. At the Ballet Extra Senior level, this will also include a section on whether an individual is ready for pointe work or whether further strengthening of the feet, ankles, legs and core muscles is required. Assessment for readiness for pointe work is based on the individual and not the whole group. We realise it is hard for an eager young dancer to hear that she may not yet be ready to start pointe work but it is important for students and parents to realise that there is risk of serious injury on introducing pointe work too soon. Further information on soft pointe and pointe shoes is available on page 3.

## Uniform and additional accessories:

- As weekly grade class or own style black leotard. NB The regulation Angela leotard is required for grade classes
- Pink ballet tights and shoes. Soft pointes and pointe shoes once approved by the teacher
- Hair must be in a bun
- Yoga/Pilates mat
- Resistance band
- Bottle of water and hand towel

**Class content:**

<p><b>Ballet Extra Inter</b> (For students in RAD Grade 2b+ )</p>	<p><b>Ballet Extra Senior</b> As suggested by the teacher</p>	<p><b>Ballet Extra Advanced</b> As suggested by the teacher</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical technique exercises to aid grade work posture, placing and precision</li> <li>• Broaden the vocabulary of ballet steps in both knowledge and delivery</li> <li>• Improve musicality, artistry and performance skills</li> <li>• Body conditioning exercises</li> <li>• Prepare for soft pointe shoe work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical technique exercises to aid grade work posture, placing and precision</li> <li>• Broaden the vocabulary of ballet steps in both knowledge and delivery</li> <li>• Body conditioning exercises</li> <li>• Soft pointe shoe work</li> <li>• Progress to pointe shoe work when the student shows the required strength</li> <li>• Study the RAD Intermediate Foundation syllabus content</li> <li>• The RAD Intermediate Foundation is a vocational exam with a two-year study period. Three pointe exercises are danced in addition to barre, centre work and a set variation. The exam also includes unset enchainements set by the examiner in the exam, using vocabulary from the syllabus. The exam is taken at an RAD centre. UCAS points are not awarded for this exam. Exam information packs are given to parents if the teacher considers this an appropriate pathway for the student</li> <li>• NB: students do not need to take the Intermediate Foundation exam to be able to take the Intermediate exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical technique exercises to aid grade work posture, placing and precision</li> <li>• Broaden the vocabulary of ballet steps in both knowledge and delivery</li> <li>• Body conditioning exercises</li> <li>• Soft pointe shoe work</li> <li>• Pointe shoe work</li> <li>• Study the RAD Intermediate syllabus content</li> <li>• The RAD intermediate syllabus is a vocational exam with a two-year study period recommended. Barre, centre work , allegro and a set variation is all performed in soft pointe shoes and seven exercises on pointe are danced. The exam also includes unset enchainements set by the examiner in the exam, using vocabulary from both the Intermediate and the Intermediate Foundation syllabi. The exam is taken at an RAD centre. UCAS points are awarded for this exam. Exam information packs are given to parents if the teacher considers this an appropriate pathway for the student</li> <li>• The Intermediate exam enables students to apply to undertake the RAD Certificate in Ballet Teaching and is a recognised level for alternative future teaching pathways</li> </ul>

**Soft pointe shoes:**

Soft pointe shoes (also known as soft block or pre-pointe shoes) are a transitional shoe to prepare students for pointe work. The shoe is made of a similar construction to a pointe shoe but the box is softer with a smaller platform. The most important difference is that it has a thinner inner sole and no shank. Therefore, the soft pointe shoe does not give support for going on pointe.

Using the soft pointe shoe will improve balance, strengthen ankle muscles and work the important arch (intrinsic) muscles necessary for pointe work. The constant rising up onto demi pointe during a class in a soft pointe shoe will help build strength in the feet and ankles. The shoes are also a great way for the feet to get used to the feel of a pointe shoe, as they will be working in the same confined space.

Soft pointe shoes are also worn for all the Intermediate class work, including the set variation, with the exception of the exercises danced in pointe shoes.



### Pointe shoes:

It is every girl's dream to get her first pointe shoes but it is vital that the decision to go on pointe is taken seriously. Starting pointe work is demanding on the feet and body and starting too soon can result in a risk of serious injury.

A teacher assessing a student's readiness for pointe shoes will consider the student's strength, technique, posture, attitude, commitment, maturity, studio etiquette and attendance record.

Strength in the feet and ankles is particularly important for pointe work and the following exercises, in soft shoes, at home are recommended:

1. Place the feet in parallel, with feet slightly apart, with a squishy ball between the ankles. Rise and lower, keeping the ball in position.
2. Stand on demi-pointe on the edge of the bottom step, holding onto the banister, and hold there for as long as possible, building up to at least two minutes.
3. Rise in parallel and first position with focus on holding the ankles firmly without any sickling of the feet.
4. Relevés in all positions with focus on bracing the legs with a feeling of pulling up and out of the shoes, holding the posture and controlling the lowering into a good demi-plié. Aim to perform 16 flawless relevés in first position.

When it has been decided that a student is ready to start pointe work and the parent wishes to purchase them, we recommend the following shops. Soft pointe and pointe shoes must be fitted by professionally trained pointe shoe fitters.

Attitude Dancewear: Tel: 01223 322227. Level 1, 182 Histon Rd, Cambridge CB4 3JP  
Just Ballet: Tel: 01945 581534. 23 Hill Street, Wisbech, Cambs PE13 1BA

Freed of London, 94 St Martin's Lane, London, WC2N 4AT provided an excellent fitting service.

Considerations when purchasing:

- Check with the shop of your choice if an appointment is required
- Wear ballet tights so you know how the shoes will fit
- Select the pads first - your fitter will advise what is best for your feet
- Once the fitter has determined your size, they will give you several shoes to try on. Take your time and pay attention to how they feel and communicate this to the sales person. i.e. do they feel too tight/loose?
- Try on as many pairs as necessary, in as many different styles, strengths and brands
- Purchase toe caps to stick on to protect the ends, or darning cotton. You will also need wide ribbons. Mesh elastic may also be required
- We do not recommend split sole pointe shoes



When you get home with your pointe shoes:

- Your shoe fitter will advise you on how your ribbons (and elastic) should be sewn on. It is a good idea to pin and check before sewing
- Prepare the ends of your shoes by darning or sticking on toe caps. As well as protecting the ends, this will also help to avoid slipping whilst up on pointe
- Do not dance in your shoes at home. They are for supervised class practice only