

Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts receives Award of Excellence 2026



The Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts (DAPA) is a growing performing arts school based in Riddings, Derbyshire, dedicated to helping children and adults explore their creativity through dance, drama, and musical theatre. Established in 2020, the academy was created with the aim of providing a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all ages and abilities can develop confidence, learn new skills, and enjoy the excitement of performing on stage.

The academy is led by its founder and principal, Danielle James, a performer and teacher with a strong background in the performing arts. Danielle trained at several amateur performing arts schools in Derbyshire before furthering her education at the renowned Bird College, where she gained a National Diploma in dance and musical theatre. During her career she has also appeared in television productions, including roles in the BAFTA-winning series *This Is England*. After performing and working in the industry, Danielle chose to focus on teaching and sharing her passion for the arts with the next generation.

Danielle founded Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts to create a school where students could learn in a positive and pressure-free environment. Her philosophy centres on building confidence and helping young performers grow at their own pace while still developing strong technical skills. The academy promotes a family-style atmosphere where students support each other and enjoy being part of a creative community.

Here at E2 Media we have proudly unveiled the highly anticipated 2026 Awards of Excellence, celebrating remarkable achievements across a wide range of industries. Among this year's standout winners is Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts. Their unwavering dedication to delivering an exceptional service continues to set them apart, earning the respect and admiration of both industry peers and loyal clients. This recognition not only reflects Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts ongoing commitment to excellence but also underscores their consistent efforts to provide a seamless, positive and memorable experience for every client. At E2 Media, we believe in championing organisations that bring fresh, innovative ideas to their markets. They need not be the largest, but they must strive to offer something truly distinctive—above all delivering an outstanding product or service. Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts embodies all of these qualities, making them a truly deserving recipient of this year's award.

The academy offers a wide range of classes covering many areas of the performing arts. Dance training includes styles such as ballet, tap, jazz, contemporary dance, street dance and acrobatics.

Students can also take part in musical theatre, drama and singing classes, giving them the opportunity to develop skills in acting, movement and vocal performance. Classes are available for a broad age range, from young children as young as two years old through to teenagers and adults, making the academy accessible to beginners as well as those with more experience.

Alongside weekly classes, Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts places a strong emphasis on performance opportunities. Students take part in two large productions each year, typically including a major summer show and a Christmas pantomime or musical. These productions allow performers to gain real stage experience while building teamwork and confidence. Additional activities such as workshops with guest teachers, theatre trips, fundraising events, and seasonal workshops further enrich the students' experience.

Private lessons are also available for students who want individual coaching for auditions, performances or skill development. These one-to-one sessions provide focused guidance and allow performers to refine their abilities with personalised instruction.

Today, Derbyshire Academy of Performing Arts continues to grow as a popular local school for performing arts training. Through Danielle's leadership and dedication, the academy has become known for its supportive environment, varied classes and exciting performance opportunities, helping students discover their talents and build lifelong confidence both on and off the stage.



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