



# Pupil Experiences

## Dance World Cup

**Violet Coen**

I first auditioned for Dance World Cup in October 2019; then after months of anticipation and years of wait (thanks covid) I finally got to perform this summer in Telford, England, representing Team Northern Ireland and competing against 63 countries.

It was one of the best opportunities and experiences. I was lucky enough to have been given the chance to perform 4 solos, 5 duets and 9 group dances and in each of these dances, I placed in the top 20 in the world! I was able to showcase a variety of different styles of dance including contemporary, lyrical, jazz, show dance and song and dance. My favourite dance was probably my song and dance solo, "I enjoy being a girl". The reason that I loved this solo so much was because I got to play a completely different character and I had the opportunity to showcase not only my dancing, but my singing as well. I was so proud when I placed 9th in the world.

Although it's hard to choose a favourite group dance, my most memorable was "We Are Six" from the musical "Six", which is based on Henry VIII's six wives. In this dance we were lucky enough to have placed 6th in the world. This was also a song and dance number and we had to use teamwork and not just rely on our individual skills.

I take many special memories away from DWC and very important lessons. Many people think that dancing is all about attention and being centre stage, but it's not! Dancing is about commitment and building resilience. DWC has taught me that hard work and perseverance pays off. It has also shown me how

high the standards are outside the small bubble in Northern Ireland and how much I still need to learn to fulfil my dreams.





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## West End Kids

For as long as I can remember, I have always had a love and passion for musical theatre and my dream is to appear on the West End someday. So, whenever I was given the opportunity to audition for West End Kids (WEK), a training camp run by performers from the West End, I jumped at the chance.

After my successful audition, I flew over to Kent in July to begin the most intense week of my life. Every day we woke up at 7am, got dressed and ready for the busy day ahead and then headed for breakfast. Afterwards, we went over to the theatre to begin rehearsals, which started off with a rave to get us 'pumped'; then a 'warm up' and stretching. Singing was next and we had to learn about 4 new songs every day including different harmonies, which was a challenge. After this it was time for dance to start; this was the biggest challenge of all, as we had to remember 15 dances in total, all 10 minutes long. A lot of people struggled to keep up and remember everything. Lunch was next and this was the well-needed

break we all deserved. As soon as we had eaten, it was back to singing and dancing for another 4 hours.

Once rehearsal was over, we all had dinner and then we had fun activities in the evening. Once back in our rooms we were expected to practise to make sure we knew all of our material for the next day, which meant that bedtime was about 1am! WEK

was fierce as every day people were ruthlessly cut from the routines, many were in tears and some even went home because they couldn't hack it! I was however determined to make the most of this experience, tears and all. At the end of the week parents were invited to a performance showcasing our week's work. Performing on stage with my new friends was electric and everything we had endured during the week was well worth it. The thrill of being on stage was unforgettable; WEK has prepared me for what I hope will be my future!

