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Epsom’s Young Performers Light Up Picturehouse Showcase

24 November 2025



It was an unusually busy Sunday morning at Epsom’s Picturehouse, with the main cinema hall filled to the very last seat. It is rare to see it so full at that time of day. Jamie Bannerman, principal of PQA Epsom, moved around with calm efficiency, directing guests, helping young performers find their places and ensuring the event ran smoothly. The screening was completely sold out, and for good reason.

PQA – the Pauline Quirke Academy of Performing Arts – is a nationwide academy for children and teenagers aged 4 to 18. With more than 200 academies operating across the country on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, PQA offers young people a creative and supportive space to learn acting, singing, dancing, filmmaking and more. Around 200 students attend weekly classes in Epsom, developing not only performance skills but also confidence, imagination and teamwork.

The showcase at Picturehouse demonstrated just how transformative these experiences can be. The audience enjoyed an inspiring mix of short films, from musical tributes and Shakespeare recitations by remarkably young performers to socially aware pieces exploring video-game culture, comedy sketches and musical-inspired dance routines. Each film reflected the students’ creativity, commitment and growing self-belief.

The academy plans to stage a musical next season, so families whose children have ever shown an interest in performing may find this the perfect moment to get involved.

PQA’s motto, “Be Yourself, Be Amazing,” captured the atmosphere of the event. It is a safe and creative environment where every child is encouraged to shine at their own pace. As Jamie noted at the close of the showcase, the academy is not just about red carpets or a taste of fame, although students do have those opportunities. It is about belonging, making friends, gaining confidence and discovering one’s own voice through the arts.

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The celebration concluded with medals and special achievement awards presented to students who had made notable progress in confidence, speaking, performing and directing. At PQA, every child can become a diamond; sometimes they simply need someone to believe in them.

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Freelance Journalist



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