

Dancing as soon as she could walk, now Felicity is on top of the world

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A SCHOOLGIRL who has danced for almost as long as she has been able to walk has won a world title at the age of nine.

Felicity Mackey was crowned World Freestyle Champion after a year of remarkable achievements both on the dance floor and in the classroom.

She took home the title following an international competition at Blackpool Tower Ballroom – a venue known to many for its connection to BBC's Strictly Come Dancing.

Felicity attends the Stacie Lovell Dance Academy, which holds classes in Leicester, Markfield, Cosby and Sileby.

"She's the youngest world champion we've had at the dance school," said her mum, Kirsty, of Whetstone.

Felicity, who trains five times a week in freestyle dance, began dancing at two years old and started competing when she turned three.

NINE-YEAR-OLD IS CROWNED FREESTYLE CHAMPION AT ICONIC TOWER BALLROOM

Her latest title followed a win at the British Freestyle Championships earlier this year.

The latest triumph means she now has Premier Championship status, meaning that she competes at the very top level.

To reach the finals, Felicity danced multiple rounds, progressing through heats and semi-finals before performing a solo spot routine judged by a panel of 30.

"In the final they have to perform on their own and the spot is marked based on appearance, performance, what they're wearing, how they

come across and how they look," said Kirsty.

"They announce the country of the winner before the name, so my heart was absolutely in my mouth.

"When they called Felicity's name the dance school erupted, we are unbelievably proud."

Her success comes despite a turbulent academic year after her school, Badgerbrook Primary, in Whetstone, suffered major flooding in January.

The school was forced to relocate pupils to a temporary site in Market Harborough, with children travelling up to 45 minutes by bus each way.

"It felt weird because we had different teachers, and not seeing my little brother at school any more for four or five months," said Felicity.

"But I kept everyone motivated on the bus singing together, because some people were getting fed up of the bus."

Felicity continued her intensive dance schedule while attending the



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Mum Kirsty

"It's nice for us to see she's getting the results out of the hard work," said Kirsty.

"We're so proud of her dedication, she's so supportive of everyone in the dance community.

"She wants to help everyone achieve their goals. She will help the little ones. If she needs help she reaches out to the older ones. It's lovely."

Felicity also appeared on BBC News speaking about the school flood and supporting friends through the upheaval.

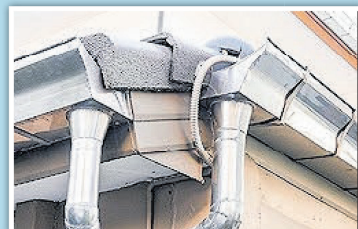
Looking ahead, she will compete at another major competition, DK, in December and will play Glinda in a dance school performance of Wicked.

"I just want to stay at my level because my level is a very high standard," Felicity said.

Kirsty said: "As a parent you have to be committed yourself but mainly just listen to your child.

"We're so lucky because the dance school is just one big family."

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