

East London Arts & Music

16–19 Academy

Inspection dates

17–19 May 2017

Overall effectiveness			Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding	16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding		
Outcomes for learners	Outstanding		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Students thrive in lessons that are challenging, vibrant and exciting. Managers and teachers place central importance on the craft of teaching and work together to develop and improve their practice continuously.
- Governors and senior leaders work together exceptionally well. They share a detailed strategic vision, high ambitions and a passionate commitment to preparing students for further careers or study in the music industry.
- Students receive a highly personalised programme of academic support, including individual intensive coaching with a teacher, to enable them to achieve their aspirations.
- Leaders and managers have implemented an exceptionally rigorous and extensive system for the development and monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.
- Staff identify well the reasons why some students face difficulty in attending lessons. Staff provide extensive pastoral support and, as a result, students attend well, and a high proportion complete their studies.
- Staff are passionate about ensuring that their students' career aspirations are fully realised and focus keenly on the development of students' English and mathematics skills. Students enjoy these lessons and recognise how English and mathematics improve their ability to work successfully in the music industry.
- Students benefit from access to a unique and extensive range of very high-profile music industry professionals. Students develop excellent skills through exceptional work experience and highly effective and motivational mentoring arrangements.
- Students on the music programme become excellent musicians. This prepares them well for careers as recording artists and employment in the music industry.
- Students are thoroughly prepared for life in modern Britain. Staff provide exceptional opportunities for students to learn about current affairs and political issues, and to develop a sense of their role in contributing to society.

Full report

Information about the provider

- East London Arts & Music (ELAM) is a 16 to 19 academy based in Tower Hamlets. The academy opened in September 2014 and offers study programmes for students aged 16 to 19 in subjects which prepare them primarily for further study or employment in the music industry.
- Students attend ELAM from many of the London boroughs. A quarter of students are from disadvantaged backgrounds, and many receive support from academy staff for personal and/or social issues. All students study level 3 vocational courses in music, along with level 3 English and mathematics. In addition, the academy is currently working with industry partners to develop a digital media course. This new course will follow the existing model of a level 3 vocational course along with level 3 English and mathematics.
- ELAM has around 119 students and at the time of the inspection, the academy had recently moved into its new premises, which will allow it to recruit to the new digital media course, increasing its capacity to around 300 students.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that managers and teachers use the experience of implementing the current curriculum to enable students on new courses to receive the same outstanding experience as existing students.
- Continue to increase the proportion of students who achieve both GCSE and level 3 mathematics qualifications to be at the same very high rate as for the rest of the provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders established ELAM as a response to leading music industry businesses stating that there was insufficient training with a strong employment focus available for 16- to 19-year-olds to prepare them for careers in the music industry. Leaders and managers have worked highly successfully to design the curriculum that meets the needs of industry. In particular, this includes the development of students' skills in English and mathematics, for many to level 3, alongside their music-based vocational qualifications.
- Under the strong leadership of the principal, leaders and managers have successfully developed an employment-focused culture, centred on the music industry. All staff, including leaders, know the students extremely well and set very high expectations. Staff work effectively to support students to overcome any barriers to their education and development, so they can pursue further study or careers in the music industry.
- Since the academy opened, leaders and managers have very successfully established excellent practice in teaching, learning and assessment among staff. Achievement rates of students last year were high and teachers' records indicate that current students are on target to achieve even better grades than in the previous year.
- Staff structure courses well so that students are able to progress to an apprenticeship, employment, or to higher education. An outstanding range of high-profile employers makes a positive contribution to academy life and ensures that learners develop appropriate employability skills through the use of industry-led projects.
- Leaders and managers have implemented an exceptionally rigorous system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Staff observing lessons focus on learners' progress through themed weekly 10-minute peer observations, which has resulted in very high standards in the quality of teaching and learning. A highly effective performance management system is informed directly by the views of students, staff and leaders within the academy. This has ensured that all staff have very clear targets for development and that they monitor these effectively.

The governance of the provider

- Governance is highly effective. The governors are closely involved with, and strongly committed to, the academy and have a detailed understanding of its performance. They have a clear vision and high ambitions for all learners and use data effectively to monitor the academy's performance. They challenge leaders and managers while providing valued support.
- The five founding governors recognised the importance of extending the governing body in order to have a wide range of skills and experiences to support the strategic development of the academy. They have successfully recruited governors whose experience is highly valued by leaders and managers who work closely and effectively with the governing body to ensure that the academy continues to meet the needs of industry and its strategic priorities.
- Governors have successfully implemented a committee structure which aligns to the vision of the organisation. For example, the partnership committee works with industry

partners such as The Brit Trust and was successful in securing funding for a 400-seat performance space. The use of associate governors with specific expertise, such as experience of building projects, has been used to great effect.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Appropriate pre-employment checks on staff are in place and the governor with responsibility for safeguarding checks all staff appointments. Staff assess risk appropriately, including checks on visiting speakers, work placements and external visits to help ensure that students are safe. All staff have received training on safeguarding and in the 'Prevent' duty and staff know what to do if they have any concerns.
- Staff monitor safeguarding referrals effectively and maintain strong links with local multi-agency groups which provide students with the support they need to complete their studies.
- Governors have put in place effective mechanisms to gain assurances that young people know how to keep themselves safe. The governor with responsibility for safeguarding within the academy regularly meets with groups of students and staff, and audits safeguarding arrangements and staff appointments on a regular basis.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Staff are well qualified, and have good technical skills and excellent links with industry. Managers are strongly committed to the continuous professional development of staff at all levels within the academy. Leaders and managers make excellent use of their connections with teaching organisations. They arrange high-quality continuing professional development, which results in excellence in the classroom.
- Students thrive in lessons that are challenging, vibrant and exciting. Staff set high expectations and place high importance on the craft of teaching. They work together to develop and improve continuously their practice. As a result, students respond positively, engage enthusiastically, and gain high-level skills which prepare them for work and further study in music-related subjects.
- Students take a rigorous assessment prior to starting the course, which includes an assessment of their musicianship, writing skills and team-working ability. As a result, students are well prepared for the high expectations set by the academy.
- Students make extremely good progress in their lessons and recognise their significant development from a range of starting points. Teachers provide continuous individual feedback and students make use of the academy's online tracking systems and resources to monitor their own progress. In addition, learning is supported through online resources such as personalised vocal tests, which offer students constant feedback on the development of their singing skills, such as interval recognition and identifying chords and cadences.
- Staff understand that students face a range of challenges and have developed an extensive range of pastoral support to meet students' individual needs. Those students at risk of not achieving at the high level expected receive a highly personalised support

programme, including individual intensive coaching, to enable them to reach their target grades. This removes barriers to achievement and even the most vulnerable students excel.

- Staff are passionate to ensure that students realise their career aspirations and focus keenly on the development of students' English and mathematics skills. Teachers skilfully embed English and mathematics into lessons that students enjoy.
- Students understand how English and mathematics improve their chances in life and in securing employment within the music industry and develop very good skills in these subjects.
- Students have access to an exceptional range of industry facilities because of the academy's close links with major music industry partners. These close links with industry support students in gaining the skills that employers need. Staff create a positive learning environment and use these facilities well to enhance the quality of students' learning.
- Staff prepare students thoroughly for life in modern Britain. Students are provided with exceptional opportunities to learn about current affairs, political issues and develop a sense of their role in contributing to society. As a result, students become confident, professional and excited about their next steps.
- Staff skilfully present topics on British values, social and ethical issues and the prevention of extremism in the comprehensive tutorial programme, assemblies and in lessons. For example, all students write a 'protest song' as part of an initial song-writing assignment to highlight issues relevant to their local community, such as homelessness, substance abuse and refugees.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- Students enjoy their learning. They are confident and self-assured and are keen to be successful on their programme of study. This is reflected in the progress they make on their vocational music programme, in English and mathematics classes and in achieving their high aspirations.
- Staff encourage students to be ambitious and are ambitious on their behalf. High-profile music industry professionals enhance students' career awareness and provide extensive opportunities for them gain experience in the music industry.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. Students show very high levels of respect for each other and for their teachers. Leaders, managers and teachers act as positive role models for their students, helping them to raise their expectations, self-worth and resilience. Staff promote high expectations of the students' conduct by a relentless reinforcement of positive behaviours in the classroom, the '10 ELAM rules' and by a constant emphasis on music-industry expectations.
- Students participate in an impressive range and quality of work placements, including the opportunity to access a significant number of prominent music companies. As a result, they develop a good range of personal, social and music business skills and an in-depth understanding of the vocational areas in which they aspire to work.
- Students also participate in a comprehensive mentoring programme, which draws on professional musicians and established music companies. Students are thoughtfully

matched to mentors who provide one-to-one advice and guidance and to open doors into the music industry.

- Students receive excellent careers information, including careers talks from industry professionals, visits to universities, support in applying for further study, and support in the preparation of application forms for employment. As a result, students realise their aspirations.
- Students feel safe and are actively encouraged and know how to raise any concerns, which are addressed promptly and effectively by leaders and managers. As a result of student feedback, the academy has been proactive in helping students tackle stress and anxiety through one-to-one support from a coach, and sessions such as 'Meditation Mondays'.
- Students' attendance is good, but staff are not complacent and seek continually to improve it. Leaders and managers align their expectations of attendance to the demands of the industry and ensure students also have this perspective. They have implemented a number of strategies to promote good attendance, which have had a positive impact on in-year attendance figures.

Outcomes for learners

Outstanding

- In 2016, the first cohort of students completed their two-year programme at the academy. The proportion who achieved their qualifications was high. The large majority achieved a vocational qualification equivalent to three A levels, plus an A level or equivalent qualification in English or mathematics. On the vocational music courses, a high proportion of students achieved or exceeded the grades expected of them, given their prior attainment.
- A small minority of students who leave the academy prior to the end of the course do so because they secure employment in the music industry, either through being signed as recording artists or working in related occupations. Many former students later return to teach masterclasses to current students.
- Leaders and managers carefully monitor the performance of different groups of students. Achievement rates of disadvantaged students were lower than those of other students, and managers have successfully put in place strategies to address this gap. As a result, disadvantaged students now perform as well as other students. There are no other significant differences in the performance of different groups of students.
- Students produce work that is of a very high standard. Students develop their skills to industry level through collaborative workshops, for example in song writing. In English and mathematics lessons, students develop complex ideas and theoretical knowledge that they apply to music compositions or business aspects of the music industry.
- Staff support students particularly well to gain the skills, knowledge and insight that they need to find employment, for further or higher education, or apprenticeships. Staff are particularly good at raising students' aspirations, resulting in a high proportion of students' progressing onto prestigious higher-education institutions or into full-time vocationally relevant employment.
- Students starting at ELAM without a grade C in GCSE English achieve well when they resit

their examinations. Students who need to achieve a C grade in mathematics GCSE achieve less well. Managers have put in place actions to bring about improvements but as yet achievement rates of GCSE mathematics qualifications are not as high as for other qualifications courses offered by the academy.

Provider details

Unique reference number	141095
Type of provider	16–19 academy
Age range of learners	16–19
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	119
Principal/CEO	Charlie Kennard
Telephone number	020 34882458
Website	http://elam.co.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	0	0	0	103	16	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	The Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	N/A							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Steve Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rieks Drijver	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lisa Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Elliott	Ofsted Inspector

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