

# Short inspection of East London Arts & Music

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 May 2024

## **Outcome**

East London Arts & Music continues to be an outstanding provider.

## **Information about this provider**

East London Arts & Music (ELAM) is a 16 to 19 free school based in Tower Hamlets. It is part of the Day One Trust. ELAM offers study programmes for young people aspiring to enter careers or higher education in the creative industries.

At the time of the inspection, ELAM had 292 learners, including 17 in receipt of high-needs funding. All learners study a level 3 extended diploma course in either music production and performance, film and TV, or games design (their creative strand). In addition, all learners study a level 3 English or mathematics course, such as A-level English, or an extended project qualification in creative writing. A small minority of learners who do not have a grade 4 or above in GCSE mathematics or English continue to study these subjects alongside their creative strand, instead of an additional level 3 qualification.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Learners, known as trainees, love their time at ELAM. They are embedded in a culture of inclusiveness and respect. Trainees learn, create and perform in a safe environment using high-quality, industry-standard equipment. They have everything they need to find their creative voice.

In an industry where individual talent often takes centre stage, ELAM staff and trainees work hard to support each other's success. Staff and trainees celebrate together in assemblies, praising hard work and excellence. Trainees rightly appreciate the close-knit community where they readily make friends with other like-minded learners. Trainees successfully work together on projects across different subject areas.

Trainees benefit from the academy's exceptionally strong links with industry. For example, music publishing professionals set project briefs and provide feedback that mirrors that found in the music business. Trainees learn how to respond positively to constructive criticism about their work, becoming resilient and reflective practitioners

who often go on to thrive in the creative industries.

Trainees enjoy a wealth of opportunities to develop valuable interpersonal skills. Activities such as pitching ideas to industry professionals, debating and podcasting help trainees become comfortable talking to different people. Trainees quickly become more confident and mature.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have designed an exceptionally ambitious curriculum. Trainees study a challenging specialist creative strand, complemented by demanding English and mathematics courses. For example, mathematics teachers teach music trainees how to budget income gained from royalties and online streaming. As a result, trainees develop a broad set of skills and knowledge beyond their core subject that will help them in their intended careers in the creative industries.

Curriculum managers plan and teach a highly responsive curriculum that meets skills shortages within the creative industries. They work closely with a range of industry partners to ensure that trainees learn relevant content. For example, games design trainees learn specific project management skills, such as agile project methodology, and the use of kanban boards so that they can visualise workflows and adapt tasks to meet deadlines. Consequently, trainees learn relevant new skills that are greatly valued by employers.

Managers and teachers plan well-structured courses. They carefully consider the sequencing of the content. For example, teachers use a project-based approach to help music trainees build their skills and knowledge towards independent performance or production skills. Trainees learn about all aspects of managing a project from pre- to post-production stage. This means trainees develop their knowledge and skills in manageable steps over time.

Teachers have a thorough understanding of their subject specialisms. They convey complex knowledge to trainees in a way that allows them to understand and remember it. For example, they skilfully teach theory to music production trainees, using questioning techniques well to help them remember new specialist concepts and terminology. Trainees very confidently and accurately use technical language such as timbre and cadence.

Teachers and learning support assistants provide highly effective support to trainees with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They implement helpful adjustments, such as adapted resources for trainees with dyslexia and specialist classroom support for autistic trainees. As a result, trainees with SEND perform very well. For example, in games design, the vast majority of trainees with SEND gain merits or distinctions.

Leaders and managers focus the careers advice and guidance they offer on promoting social equity. Careers staff and teachers provide trainees with high-quality

careers experiences. In weekly sessions, trainees enjoy high-quality masterclasses from industry professionals and universities. Trainees meet, and are frequently mentored by, experts, including well-known filmmakers, games designers, musicians and ELAM alumni. As a result, trainees from underrepresented groups develop crucial contacts and essential knowledge that help them overcome traditional barriers to entry into the creative sector. Trainees move on to positive destinations, including high-profile music, film and games companies and top creative universities

Governors and leaders have high levels of expertise. Governors challenge the leadership team to keep making positive changes. For example, governors and leaders have accurately identified that trainees' attendance is below their aspirational targets and have devised a sound improvement plan. Leaders quickly identify and tackle the very few areas for development, which minimises negative impact on trainees.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141095
<b>Address</b>	Maltings Close Bromley-by-Bow London E3 3TA
<b>Contact number</b>	020 7515 2159
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.elam.co.uk">www.elam.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Matt Sheldon
<b>Provider type</b>	16 to 19 free school
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 to 19 May 2017

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since East London Arts & Music was judged to be outstanding in May 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the vice-principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

Claudia Harrison, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrea McMahon	His Majesty's Inspector
John O'Connell	Ofsted Inspector

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