

BOA Stage and Screen Production Academy

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	148635
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Type of provider:	16 to 19 Free School
Address:	49 Stour Street Birmingham B18 7AJ

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of education programmes for young people within the further education and skills sector. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

BOA Stage and Screen Production Academy is a 16 to 19 academy, part of the BOA Group, which opened in September 2021. The academy specialises in the skills required for the creative industries, offering a highly specialised, industry-led curriculum, working with partners on collaborative projects to develop learners' work skills. At the time of the visit, there were around 200 learners studying either level 3 BTEC National in creative media practice, performing arts practice or production arts practice. Learners follow one of 4 pathways: broadcast, film and content; writing, directing and screen craft; technical theatre and live events; and creative production and stage management. A few learners study additional subjects, such as A-level English and the extended project (EPQ).

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant education programmes that have a clearly defined purpose? Significant progress

Leaders have created a new and very well-resourced academy, with specialist facilities to meet the needs of the stage and screen industry. Leaders work closely with organisations such as the BBC and other production and theatre companies. This ensures that learners follow a curriculum that enables them to gain production credits and work as a freelancer in various roles to meet the skills shortages in the sector.

Leaders have devised a comprehensive curriculum that enables learners to develop incrementally their knowledge and skills about filming, lighting, broadcast, sound, acting, writing, set design, costume and theatrical makeup and hair. Learners apply and extend their learning during 'live projects', which include theatre shows, films and event performances of an industry standard that attract large audiences.

Leaders monitor the quality of provision thoroughly. They use information, including learner feedback, students' written and practical work, and their intended destinations, effectively to improve the curriculum and further develop teachers'

skills. Senior managers identify and provide teachers with helpful support to improve their weaknesses and ensure that they have both the industry expertise and teaching skills needed to support learners to achieve their best.

Leaders and teachers know the progress of their learners. They use information such as learners' attendance to progress towards developing essential knowledge and skills in their practical work so that all learners achieve their potential. They act swiftly to ensure that the few learners who fall behind in their work receive the support necessary to get back on track. Learners with an identified learning need receive the support required and achieve at least as well as their peers.

The recently appointed board of governors includes experts from industry and education. They receive useful information about learners' progress that they use to hold leaders to account. Because of their high-quality links with the sector, governors identify employment opportunities with employers, ensuring that learners follow current practices required on set and while broadcasting and have access to roles within the region.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality education programmes for young people that prepare them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? Significant progress

Teachers ensure that learners attend useful aptitude workshops prior to enrolling on courses so that they are clear about the commitment needed to succeed on their chosen course. Learners receive helpful information about their course and feedback on their communication, attitude and engagement, which helps them to make an informed decision regarding which pathway is most appropriate for them. As a result, most learners remain on programme for the duration of the course once enrolled.

Managers and teachers establish learners' starting points accurately. They use this information very well to plan learning that increases in complexity over time. This helps learners to practise their skills so that they consolidate their knowledge and apply theory into practice confidently. However, although learners who have the required level of English and mathematics continue to develop these subjects, teachers do not ensure that these learners close gaps identified in these subjects at the start of the course thoroughly.

Learners are prepared well for work in the stage and screen sector. Most teachers are professional practitioners as well as qualified teachers. They use their industry contacts and knowledge to teach learners to highly professional standards. Learners frequently work on professional theatre productions, helping to design lighting schemes or making costumes, for example. Teachers ensure that learners work on live projects, which helps them to develop the skills necessary to meet the exacting and time-bound expectations of the film, television, and theatre industry. These skills

include advanced digital skills, the ability to work with others, effective communication and working to strict deadlines.

Teachers check learners' progress frequently to ensure that they achieve their potential. Learners with additional learning needs receive effective support to help them develop the skills they need to succeed. Teachers often help learners outside of scheduled classes to consolidate and develop their skills to a high standard.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders prioritise the safety and well-being of their learners and staff. They have clear policies and procedures so that staff and learners know who to contact if they have any concerns. In the few instances where safeguarding concerns have been raised, leaders act swiftly and follow up concerns effectively, working with other agencies, where necessary, so that learners receive the support they need.

Leaders and managers follow comprehensive safer recruitment procedures so that all staff and contractors hold the appropriate clearances and have the expertise to work effectively with young people. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and two additional leaders hold the required training. The DSL has additional expertise in areas such as mental health and well-being.

Leaders ensure that learners undertake relevant training and study a range of topics about safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty. As a result, learners know about working safely, safeguarding and the potential threats from extremist groups, online and in their communities.

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