

Big Creative Independent School

Uplands House, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow E17 5QJ

Inspection date

21 February 2024

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(2), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii)

- At the last standard inspection, the inspector found that the curriculum was not sufficiently broad because scientific learning was not included as required by the independent school standards (the standards). The inspection also found that pupils did not receive impartial, individualised careers information, advice and guidance. This meant that pupils' personal development was hindered.
- The post-inspection action plan included a planned scheme of work for science. It also included a copy of the school timetable, which indicated that science had been taught since September 2023.
- The action plan stated that pupils would have three one-to-one careers meetings with a suitably qualified careers adviser during the year.
- This progress monitoring inspection found that leaders have implemented their scheme of work for science effectively. This aligns with the school's focus on music and digital media. For example, pupils have learned about the working of the human ear.
- Pupils have benefited from meetings with a qualified careers adviser. These discussions include pupils' current situations, their interests and aspirations for the future. Pupils are directed to suitable colleges and apprenticeships. They receive support with their applications. In personal and social development sessions, pupils use careers information to feed into their individual learning plans. As a result, pupils have clear plans for their next steps in education or employment.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(b), 2A(1)(d) and 2A(1)(f)

- The previous inspection found that leaders had not ensured that their planned curriculum for relationships and sex education (RSE) included all the statutory topics set out in the Department for Education (DfE) guidance. They had not consulted parents and carers about the school's RSE policy.

- In their action plan, leaders included a copy of the RSE policy. This sets out the content that will be taught. It links directly to the DfE guidance on what pupils should know by the end of secondary school. The action plan stated that parents had been consulted via email and that there would be a meeting with parents in November 2023.
- During the inspection, leaders shared evidence of further parental consultation in January 2024. They have ensured that RSE is taught regularly, with input from external agencies where appropriate. Recently, pupils have learned about contraception and sexual health.
- The school now meets the previously unmet requirements of the standards in this part.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(b) and 32(1)(c)

- As at the time of the previous inspection, the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils are suitable and reflect current statutory guidance. Leaders and staff receive regular, suitable safeguarding training. The safeguarding policy is based on the latest government guidance and is available on the school website. Pupils feel safe in school. They have trusted adults whom they can speak to if they have any concerns.

Paragraph 12

- The previous inspection found that leaders did not ensure compliance with fire safety legislation, for example in ensuring that the required checks on emergency lighting were carried out. An external fire risk assessment took place during the previous inspection. This identified concerns. Leaders acted quickly to fix lighting, improve signage and replace doors where needed.
- The action plan set out in detail the actions that leaders had already taken, such as in relation to fire alarm maintenance.
- During this inspection, a site tour and review of documentation showed that the requirements of the fire safety order are met. There is a clear schedule of internal and external checks to ensure that this remains a priority.
- The school now meets the previously unmet requirements of the standards in this part.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a) and 34(1)(b)

- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders did not know the independent school standards well enough. They had no systems in place to keep their knowledge of statutory requirements up to date, nor to check whether they complied with the requirements for running an independent school. Multiple issues had to be resolved during the inspection because of leaders' lack of effective oversight.
- The action plan set out that leaders would be allocated operational responsibility for different parts of the standards. There would be regular meetings to check whether the standards were met.

- This inspection found that leaders have taken swift and effective action to ensure that the previously unmet standards are now met. As planned, leaders have divided the independent school standards between existing leaders in line with their areas of responsibility. They have devised a helpful spreadsheet to record evidence of checks against each standard and any action needed.
- The headteacher meets with each leader termly to review their work. This process ensures that the standards continue to be met. The proprietor is responsible for quality assuring this work. He ensures that the standards are a standing item on the agenda of advisory board meetings.
- Leaders have developed their understanding of the standards and that of the staff. They demonstrate an ongoing commitment to making sure that these continue to be met.
- The school now meets the previously unmet requirements of the standards in this part.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively.
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(a) full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age (construed in accordance with section 8 of the Education Act 1996), which gives pupils experience in linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, human and social, physical and aesthetic and creative education;
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor-
 - 2A(1)(b) ensures that every registered pupil who is provided with secondary education at the school is provided with relationships and sex education, except in so far as the pupil is excused as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2),
 - 2A(1)(d) in making arrangements for the purposes of paragraphs (a), (b) or (c), has regard to any guidance under section 80A of the Education Act 2002 that applies in relation to the provision of education by maintained schools,
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e)

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	141411
DfE registration number	320/6005
Inspection number	10320596

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	14 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	13
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Alexis Michaelides
Headteacher	Ian Morton
Annual fees (day pupils)	£15,000
Telephone number	02038 735800
Website	https://bigcreative.education
Email address	justin.bayley@bigcreative.education
Date of previous standard inspection	27 to 29 June 2023

Information about this school

- Big Creative Independent School is an alternative education provider for pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have an interest in digital media and music. The school works with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with education, health care plans.
- The school's previous standard inspection was in June 2023.
- All pupils are on a dual-registration agreement with their local authority secondary schools in the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Camden.
- The school is part of the BCE group, which includes BCE Training and BCE Academy, for students aged 16 to 19. It shares the building, some teachers, policies and student

services with BCE Training. The proprietor and headteacher are both directors of the BCE Group.

- The school makes no use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The school's previous inspection was in June 2023. Its overall effectiveness was judged to require improvement.
- Leaders were asked to submit an action plan. This was rejected on 6 November 2023. The DfE requested that this progress monitoring inspection consider whether particular independent school standards in parts 1, 3 and 8 are now met.
- This was the school's first progress monitoring inspection.
- The inspector met with school leaders and the proprietor. The inspector also met members of staff and a group of pupils.
- The inspector toured the site. The inspector reviewed documents and policies in relation to the independent school standards that were checked.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.

Inspection team

Lisa Strong, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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