



BIG CREATIVE
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ACADEMY

BIG CREATIVE TRAINING
UPLANDS HOUSE
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www.BCIS.education

Big Creative Independent School CURRICULUM POLICY 2025 - 2026





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Big Creative Independent School (BCIS) sits within the wider Big Creative Education (BCE) family which includes a training provider, Big Creative Training (BCT) and an academy, Big Creative Academy (BCA). BCT have been in Waltham Forest successfully delivering work-based learning in the creative industries for over 21 years to London and the South East.

Since 2006 we have worked in a close partnership with education services in several

London boroughs, providing programmes for disaffected learners in Year 10/11, getting them back on track in their learning and life plans through high quality alternatives to school.

BCIS was formed to house the alternative provision programme and ensure quality and consistency in service.

In 2014 we opened BCA also in LBWF, London, a 16-19 academy school offering industry standard courses in Digital Media Production, Music Technology, Performing Arts as well as Fashion and Design.

The majority of our tutors are practising industry professionals who have or will be working toward teaching qualifications. This ensures the working knowledge of the tutors is current and in line with industry needs. This also means the learners see the tutors more as role models who become a surrogate network for them in the given vocational field. The sessions are double staffed with a lead and support tutor. This allows for barriers to learning to really be focussed on, more one to one time and less overall class disruptions.



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Introduction

Big Creative Independent School specialises in working with young people often from disadvantaged backgrounds who are passionate, creative and interested to find out more about the creative industries.

The young people often have a wide range of issues and experiences that have had a negative impact on their development, behaviour and academic progress. They might have experienced barriers to personal progression outside of the school environment and therefore find it hard to engage with mainstream school.

They often feel that an alternative to mainstream schools at this time with alternative pedagogy, smaller class sizes and a higher ratio of available support might be more engaging for them to ultimately be successful and particularly in subject areas that are of keen interest.

INTENT

The BCIS curriculum has high expectations for all learners regardless of where they are starting from. Our curriculum is ambitious and has been carefully designed with the wide-ranging needs, wants and barriers to learning of the client group we attract in mind. The curriculum therefore needs to be a holistic one, designed to develop the whole person. It must be vocationally engaging, barriers to learning need to be mitigated in the short term, and learners better equipped to successfully manage them in the medium and long term.

The aim is that by the time learners complete the curriculum, they will be better prepared for the challenges to come, be able to re-engage with the mainstream offer of further education and training and as important, will be empowered to lead purposeful lives with integrity.

Our curriculum and support offer aims to address (but are not limited to) the following key issues: Negative peer influences, the threat of radicalisation and extremism, vulnerability, weak resilience, social and relationship difficulties, substance misuse, gang affiliation, lack of confidence, identity and the impact of a negative educational experience at a previous institution.



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TERM 1 and 2:

Our young people will complete Initial assessments in order for BCIS to gauge baselines. This will help BCIS in understanding what support is needed in order for learners to make the best possible progress with Maths and English.

Learners will have the first of three career information advice and guidance (CIAG) 1-1 meetings, and their first ILP session. This will give them the opportunity to set SMART targets in order to identify and achieve goals. They will gain basic creative industry knowledge, be introduced to the different types of roles available in both the media and music industries. Learners will also learn the basic skills needed in order to tackle practical elements of their creative courses in the 2nd term.

Learners will have their first PSD sessions, which will be around them identifying themselves. From the outset we want our young people to really look into what makes them tick, with a focus on who they feel they currently are and who they want to become.

Through risk assessments we will identify any barriers to learning currently at hand and work with our designated safeguarding lead in the earliest possible instance, to identify and mitigate them, allowing the young person to focus on their progress and hit the ground running.

Mid-way through term 1 and 2, the majority of our young people will have achieved their first term goals, which will translate into more confidence, and learners better motivated. They will be encouraged to set more challenging goals to achieve by the end of term.

Maths and English progress will be continually reviewed and additional support will be utilised if we feel that learners are falling short of their aspirational targets. Learners will be applying the skills and knowledge gained to produce productions in line with industry standards for both creative courses.

Personal and Social Development sessions will move away from self development into a more social remit, allowing learners to start identifying how they as a person will fit into society. Learners will look at different elements of society such as British values,



radicalisation, street culture, sex education, the Law, Money matters and purpose. This is all to help young people gain the knowledge needed in order to make better decisions in life.

BCIS will continue to update risk assessments in order to make sure any barriers to learning are mitigated against, allowing the learner to continue to make progress.

TERM 3:

In the final term, our learners will be edging closer to completing their most important goals via the ILP process. BCIS will utilise ILP's and it's CIAG officer in order to help young people progress onto next steps. Relevant young people will begin revising for GCSE's as well as completing final units for vocational courses. PSD sessions will be based more around progression where our young people will focus on developing skills such as employability skills to assist them with next steps.

The final term is also about showcasing achievements; this is normally done in the form of an end of year show where parents / carers will be invited to marvel at all the great progress achieved in the past 3 terms.

Purposefully, the focus is not solely around the accrual of qualifications, but also around the development of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours needed to help our young people to become well rounded, healthy citizens and successful individuals contributing positively to the society they live in, leading purposeful lives with integrity.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Our Mission

- To transform the lives of young people through inspirational teaching with the creative industries acting as the vehicle for engagement, learning, development and social mobility.

Our Vision

- To ensure our graduates are empowered to lead purposeful lives with integrity.

Our Values

- To place the well-being and development of our young people and the local community at the heart of the organisation.
- Kindness, Respect, Resilience, Integrity and Independence

Our Curriculum



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We aim to provide a holistic, experiential, immersive learning opportunity that encompasses all aspects of a young person's education.

We focus on creative industry, with heavy emphasis on:

- Personal, social and employability development
- Achievement of the core of mathematics and English up to level 2
- Solid progression routes

The creative subject matter is the hook and medium through which the learners are initially engaged.

It is also the medium through which personal, social and functional skills are developed. Personal and social development are the beating heart of the learner experience – not solely based around the achievement of qualifications, but a sound ethical framework permeating all aspects of the school.

The school will be a context in which young people learn from their experiences and become more effective in their decisions and relationships.

Themed areas:

- Interactive Media
- Graphic Design
- Music Production, Performance & Business
- Personal and Social Development
- English, Maths (Functional Skills and GCSE)
- Employability and career development
- Music and media industry guest speakers
- Science
- Trips and guests



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Our broad but specialised curriculum offer is kept under review in order to respond to the needs of young people and to meet our aims.

Vocational options develop learners' skills, knowledge and technique and broaden their understanding of the creative industries.

Maths and English skills underpin the ability of the student to be able to articulate their ideas, communicate well logically and be confident in their day-to-day functionality.

Knowledge and understanding in all functional areas and in scientific thinking will be developed in a number of ways including practical activity, exploration and discussion both contextualised and discrete.

Areas of Learning

Threaded through our themes are the following areas of learning:

- Linguistic
- Mathematical
- Technological
- Human and social
- Science
- Physical
- Aesthetic and creative



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The learners' journey

An initial visit and interview take place where both parties can find out more about the other. It is essential the learner chooses the right school for them.

Initial Assessment

Learner initial assessment provides a detailed picture of their social, personal and educational needs.

Good communication is established between all interested parties including:

- the former school
- support services
- parent / carer or guardians.

Monitoring

All learners have access to a support tutor who with the course manager is assigned to provide one to one reviews;

- to track their progress across all subject areas
- to ensure their personal needs continue to be met.

The support tutor liaises with the Course Manager, the SENco and other members of the support staff team to ensure that the learner receives the most effective financial, pastoral and additional learning support possible.

Qualifications

Qualifications are from distinct sector areas. Subject content is taught where appropriate in the context of the vocational area that the learners are really interested in (table 1 below).

As well as in discrete sessions, learners develop their maths and English skills through such things as the development of social media campaigns, production of podcasts and the exploration of the music industry and the creation of digital content.

This brings the subject to life and helps the learner understand the importance of literacy and numeracy.

In addition, the areas of learning are built into our plans to ensure the young person's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum is met.



Accreditation

Name of Qualification / type of study	Area	Awarding Body
Functional Skills / GCSE	Maths	Pearsons
Functional Skills / GCSE	English	Pearsons
Level 1 Certificate - Creative Music Industry	Music Production / Performance	Rock School London
Level 2 Extended Certificate - Creative Digital Media	Creative Digital Media	Rock School London
Level 1 Award in Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development	Personal & Social Development	NOCN
Sports / P.E	Sports	Non accredited
Personal Development Programme	Personal & Social Development	Non accredited
Combined Science	Science	Non accredited
2x week Multimedia Workshop (Final 2 weeks)	Multimedia	Non accredited

Table 1.

The achievement of nationally recognised qualifications ensures that learners have evidence of the level they are working at and provides a passport to progression to:

- BCE Training
- BCE Academy
- Level 1/2/3 courses at another college or provider
- Employment

The holistic programme is designed not only around the accrual of qualifications but also around the development of the skills, knowledge and aptitudes needed to help our young people to become well rounded, happy, healthy and successful individuals contributing positively to the society they live in. Indeed, our personal and social development programme covers a wide range of topics that include human, social and scientific learning. Sessions include but are not limited to:



PSD, Human and Science

Study skills	Employability	Cyber sexting
Democracy & British Values	Fake News	Why should I bother voting?
Anti-radicalisation	Careers	Loss, grief and bereavement
What is bullying?	Safeguarding	Mental Health
Sexuality and gender identity	Sexual relationships	Heroism
Self-esteem and body image	Pornography	Money & Budgeting
What is bullying?	Conflict & forgiveness	Disrespect nobody
Strengths and goals	Relationships	LGBT+
Stress management	Gender Inequality	Social judgement
CVs, cover letters and job apps	Gang Awareness	Personal and Interpersonal
Alcohol and drug awareness	Strengths and goals	Exploring Space
Prevent - anti-radicalisation	Principles of acoustic treatment	Genetics
Sound Waves, how the ear works	Investigate the effect of music on mood using the scientific method	Nutrition and Diet

Qualification Success Rates and Assessment

Our qualification targets are realistic and achievable. They are set against each course in line with provider and national benchmarks.

- Learners are closely monitored to ensure they are on track and have additional resources and time allocated in the timetable to allow for self-directed study alongside their contact time.



- Assessment is summative and formative. We assess both learner progress and absolute attainment.
- Regular one to ones provide learners with feedback about all the work they are involved in, how they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

This is documented in the student individual learning plan (ILP) and used by the student to measure their own performance, reflect on progress and set their own targets.

By design the learners participate in a variety of engaging subject areas.

- Vocational projects challenge them to work individually and in teams
- Maths and English and the areas of learning stretch them academically
- Personal and social development challenges them personally, morally and spiritually
- Extra curricula, trips, guests and sport challenge them physically and mentally.

Timetable:

BCIS Timetable 2024-25						
Time	Hours	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI
09.20 - 10.40	1 hr 20 mins	Maths	English	Skills for Employment, Training & Personal Development (PSD Level 1) / Self Development Programme	Creative Digital Media Level 2	Creative Digital Media Level 2
10.40 - 10.55	15 mins	BREAK				
10.55 - 12.15	1 hr 20 mins	English	Maths	Skills for Employment, Training & Personal Development (PSD Level 1) / Self Development Programme	Creative Digital Media Level 2	Creative Digital Media Level 2
12.15 - 13.05	50 mins	LUNCH				
13.05 - 14.25	1 hr 20 mins	BCIS P.E	Combined Science	Skills for Employment, Training & Personal Development (PSD Level 1) / Self Development Programme	Creative Music Industry Level 1 (Room 16)	Creative Digital Media



				Level 1) / Self Development Programme		Level 2
14.25 - 14.40	15 mins	BREAK				
14.40 - 15.30	50 mins	BCIS P.E	Creative Music Industry Level 1	Skills for Employment, Training & Personal Development (PSD Level 1) / Self Development Programme	Creative Music Industry Level 1	Creative Digital Media Level 2

Table 2.



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A typical day is not necessarily laid out like a typical school day with single lessons but rather in longer blocks so learners can immerse themselves in the subject matter, as one would do when performing a task at home or at work.

Taught sessions: 9.20am – 3.30pm

Enrichment: Extra curricula programme including but not limited to:

1. Gaming Club
2. Ketchup Club
3. Textiles & Fashion Club
4. Football
5. Film Production Club
6. Music industry Club
7. Studio Access Club

Trips x 8 per year: theatre, museums, showcases, colleges, Parliament, employers, social etc

Assignments & Resources

- Learning on the cutting-edge of current industry practice reflecting current youth trends, technology and innovation;
- Assignments with a clear industry context to engage learners.

London is home to a multitude of successful people and iconic brands that have established worldwide reputations in music, fashion and media. The BCE curriculum draws on these influences to provide unrivalled learning opportunities, master classes, creative briefs and enrichment trips for BCIS learners.

Equalities

A key target for BCIS will be to increase the number of young people achieving level 1 and progressing to level 2 qualifications, and to narrow the attainment gap for learners from disadvantaged communities.

All learners will be treated equally according to their age, disability, gender and gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation. All BCIS staff and learners will sign up and adhere to these principles; the ethos of the school is success and equality for all.

The definition of success will be individualised as will the support required to attain learning goals. However, there will be a requirement of learners that they are capable of achieving at least one, if not two levels higher during their time in the school and that they can meet the goals and objectives they set with the academic and vocational staff.



Leadership Aims and Vision

Through dynamic leadership, BCIS will encourage all staff to support all learners to work towards the following attributes of a successful learner:

- questioning staff and peers
- making connections in and between subjects/topics
- taking risks
- listening and reflecting
- confidence, perseverance
- critical, self-editing
- creative, can-do attitude
- thirst for knowledge and skills
- get on well with others
- generate ideas
- literate
- acts with integrity
- learns from mistakes
- thinks for themselves and flexible

By encouraging these values from all learners it will help overcome barriers such as: gaps in learning, disability, behaviour issues, cultural and social issues, organisational issues, communication and attitudes.

Individualising learning

BCIS knows that there will be learners who exhibit 'spiky profiles' - for example learners who already have more ability in one or more of the areas of creative, music and media, maths and English, PSD awareness and those who don't.

How BCIS will organise learning

- Individualisation – extends the pupil with richer and more challenging tasks but does not isolate. Identify learners in every session and have additional tasks/activities and support planned in advance.
- Cross age tutoring. Learners can act as ambassadors, representing the student body at learner voice and stakeholder meetings. Young people who have been successful in their careers often come to talk to learners about their road to success and the hurdles they have had to navigate.
- Individual Learning Plans. The culture at BCIS is to work with each student to ensure challenging targets are set together and opportunity is given to revisit and review these regularly.



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Disability and Special Educational Needs

Classrooms and rest rooms are accessible and desks are set at an appropriate level. In addition there will be risk assessments undertaken and recorded for each disabled pupil before they start and at regular intervals throughout the academic year.

BCIS will ensure that all the documents it uses in paper format will be created in structured heading formats that have a clear layout.

All documents will be in electronic format to ensure that text size and text colour or background colour can be changed easily and quickly.

BCIS will ensure that assistive technologies support learning. The skills to use the assistive technologies will be shared across the staff and learners.

The Special Educational Needs coordinator (SENCo) oversees all required assessments and liaises with parent schools to obtain previous assessment results to help design appropriate learning strategies and acquire assistive resources/aids.

Educational and Welfare Provision for pupils for whom English is an Additional Language

BCIS recognises the rich contribution made to its community by those learners who have English as an Additional Language (EAL), and who may have significant life experience of other cultures. Studying in an additional language can present considerable challenges and our schools seek to support learners with EAL in a number of ways: through academic provision, communication with pupils and parents and support with cultural and social development. We pursue equal opportunities for all members of our community and value diversity.

Academic Provision:

All learners have an Initial Assessment and Diagnostic in English language to ascertain Function and GCSE level and need.

Small class sizes mean that pupils will receive considerable attention in the classroom and the support tutor can help EAL learners with general comprehension of tasks.

BCIS can supply/offer bilingual dictionaries for learners to use during lessons if they are required or to be used in their Functional Skills Reading papers and Maths exams (not writing).

Staff are expected to keep in mind the needs of pupils with EAL in planning and delivering lessons. For instance, all teachers will be expected to be sensitive to EAL pupils' need to have contextual support in order to access all areas of the curriculum.

Communication with Pupils and Parents:

Care is taken with the provision of information to all learners and their families. Materials must be clear and should be checked for potentially confusing idiom and cultural assumptions.



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Cultural and Social Perspectives:

All cultures are celebrated at the school via the work of the EDI champion including cultural heritage and traditions. Sharing and discussing our respective values is actively encouraged.

Both national events such as World Book day and other school events present opportunities for all learners to explore a rich variety of other languages and cultures, enhancing the global perspective of the school community.

Tutors pay particular attention to the social development of pupils and supporting the development of friendships across the class.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance

BCIS learners will receive 1-1 CEIAG Interviews and a bespoke Action Plan which includes SMART targets from a Level 6 qualified Careers Advisor to support with progression. They will schedule at least three one to ones with the learners across the year and take career sessions in class. The careers advisor or PSD tutor will cover role-playing, CV writing, personal effectiveness and appropriateness together with the wider team.

Learners will take part in careers day and interact with employers on trips and visits.

Work readiness and progress to FE/training/work will be assessed across their programme and captured via one to ones and the ILPs. Indicators of success will be with reference to the Gatsby Benchmark and include qualification progress, attendance, punctuality, communication skills etc.

Expectations of the learners are high with a target of 100% progression.

Support for Disadvantaged Learners

BCIS will draw a significant proportion of learners from Waltham Forest and surrounding boroughs. Waltham Forest (WF) is one of the most deprived boroughs in England. It ranks 15th most deprived out of 326 local authorities in England and 6th most deprived of 32 London boroughs.

Achievement Gap

One of the key targets for BCIS will be to close the achievement gap between young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who do not face disadvantage.

BCIS has delivered almost exclusively to young people from disadvantaged communities. Supporting them to re-engage, progress to FE and flourish as people.

Support from Student Services

Issues can be around finance, pastoral or mental/physical health and the class support tutor is vital at making links for and with the learner, and will consult with student services to gain external support if need be.



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The most effective evaluation tools for these learners will be changes in attendance, retention, success rates in qualifications and progress to FE, employment and/or higher education.

Attendance and retention can be the most important factors in success and this will be supported by the pupil behaviour, attendance and well-being arrangements.

BCIS works closely with the following external parties:

- Parents/carers
- Local authority
- Social services
- Health professionals

BCE managers already know their local communities well whilst the staff team has a good understanding of the often complex circumstances and needs of individual learners.

Learner support will be closely integrated with teaching and there will be good links with external agencies in BCE based on already established networks.

Last updated	Next review	Person responsible
July 2025	July 2027	JB & IM