



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR NEXUS INSTITUTE OF CREATIVEARTS

LICENCE: YWC67DPC8

**Inspection relating to the educational oversight of
private further education colleges with a Steiner,
Montessori or Eurythmy basis or background, or with a
clear religious purpose**

<i>Inspection Findings</i>	<i>The college meets all the required standards</i>
<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>No action is required</i>

Summary evaluation of the college

Nexus Institute of Creative Arts meets the School Inspection Service College Standards and the requirements relevant to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). Nexus is a thriving higher education community, combining pride in popular music achievement with a positive Christian ethos which supports students well. The courses match students' needs in content and level. Teaching is subject-expert, and systems for learning and assessment are highly organised, making sophisticated use of information technology and web-based resourcing to support student progress effectively. Cultural and moral development are secure and in line with the college ethos. Measures to develop awareness of counter terrorism are in place. Student welfare, health and safety, including safeguarding, and admissions and attendance arrangements all meet the Standards. Appropriate checks are made on staff prior to their appointment. Financial sustainability, management and governance meet the Standards although trustees need to strengthen their review role in relation to policies and procedures. Premises and accommodation are suitable for the needs of the college and the courses it runs. Standards for information and complaints are met but need revision to ensure that grievance and complaints procedures are made more explicit.

The next full inspection will take place in four years. In the interim years the school will be subject to routine annual review.

Purpose and scope of the inspection

The School Inspection Service (SIS) is an approved educational oversight body authorised by the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) section of the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges in England, with a Steiner, Montessori or Eurythmy basis or background, or with a clear religious purpose. Inspection by SIS is designed to assess the college's compliance with the SIS College Standards. The Standards cover the quality of education and welfare provided to all students, including those from overseas who are sponsored by the college for Tier 4 visas, and, where applicable, those under eighteen and vulnerable adults. Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the extent to which colleges meet the Standards. By placing reports in the public domain, the information they contain is available to students, the UKVI, and the wider community.

Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success. It helps colleges, their staff and governors/proprietors to recognise and build on their strengths and to identify and remedy their weaknesses in relation to compliance.

The inspection also takes account of the college's financial performance over the last two years for new providers and since the last inspection for established providers. Based on this evidence an assessment is made of the college's financial sustainability over the next four-year period. This work is done by a qualified accountant on the basis of information provided by the college. Prospective students, their parents and agents should make their own enquiries into the financial viability of institutions before accepting a place.

Characteristics of the college

Nexus Trust was founded as a registered charity, by the present Director and his wife in 1998. From the beginning, the college offered a one year full-time course in some musical instruments and Biblical studies and Christian leadership classes. Its development over time includes the addition of a wider range of musical courses as well as technical studies such as a live sound engineering course. The opportunity was also created for students to continue with Nexus for a second or third year.

Since 2006, Nexus Trust has become a charitable company and in 2014 formally changed its name to Nexus Institute of Creative Arts (Nexus ICA). At present there are 69 students aged 17-35 years. Students come from a wide variety of Christian denominations and traditions from around the world and spend part of their year attached to one of 13 local churches.

In September 2013 Nexus ICA began delivering a one year Certificate of Higher Education in Popular Music and Worship. In September 2014 the portfolio expanded to include a two year Diploma of Higher Education in Popular Music and Worship. These courses are validated and franchised by the University of West London. Additionally,

Nexus ICA offers a leadership training course for those wishing to continue after the DipHE, leading to an internal award.

The college aims 'to develop musicians into godly individuals who can express their hearts to God and others through their instrument and the whole of their lives.'

Detailed evaluation of the Standards

Standards for courses and qualifications

The college website provides clear information about its courses, which are all at a suitable level for its students, including for those coming from outside the UK. The college offers a one year Certificate of Higher Education (Cert HE) in Popular Music and Worship, and a two year Diploma of Higher Education (Dip HE) in Popular Music and Worship. Both are full-time courses requiring full-time study, and are validated and franchised by the University of West London. Additionally, the college offers a leadership training course for those wishing to continue after the DipHE, leading to an internal award. The college offers a range of specialist instrumental classes in, for example, percussion, guitar, keyboards and vocal performance. Students also follow courses in biblical study and Christian worship. The courses on offer are closely aligned to the Christian and musical ethos of the college and lead to qualifications which meet the definition of an approved qualification for UKVI purposes.

The college sets suitably high admission standards for its prospective students. The college website states clearly that international students must have reached a minimum of Band 6 in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or equivalent. Tier 4 students' English is fluent. Good support is provided through the course for their development of specialist technical and musical vocabulary in English.

The website and prospectus make it clear that before admission, students are required to have an interview which can be taken at a college Open Day or remotely by video link, and which includes a musical audition. Students who do not hold a Music Theory grade 5 qualification or equivalent are required to take a music theory examination set at an equivalent level. Students applying for the Live Sound specialism course sit a live sound engineering skills examination as part of their interview. Course completion and pass rates have been consistently very high over recent years.

Standards for teaching, learning and assessment

Students' acquisition of new knowledge is consistently developed through systematic and well-structured planning of courses and lessons. Sophisticated use by the college of electronic tablets and laptops linked to its web-based suite of teaching, learning and assessment resources allows students and tutors to share readily their course materials, assignments and evaluations. This plays a key role in enabling students to make consistent progress according their ability and increase their understanding and skills. Web-based systems are used for timely and thorough assessment, with clear guidance given to students on how to improve and better meet their course requirements.

Across the range of course content, tutors communicate clearly, plan and deliver lessons effectively and show confident and expert subject knowledge. This was observed, for example, in vocal and bass guitar tuition and in biblical and Christian worship study. The courses make suitable demands on students to think for themselves and apply

intellectual and creative efforts, as for example when they participated in group discussions in a study session on the Book of Psalms, or played rock classics in a band using the main performance space. Where students have a learning difficulty such as dyslexia the college provides targeted support.

Standards for cultural and moral development of students

Students' cultural and moral development is a strong feature and is in keeping with the Christian foundation of the college. There are many and varied opportunities for students to gain self-knowledge, self-awareness and self-confidence through their development of musical skills and understanding of Christian worship. Students behave responsibly around the college and show respect for each other, including the diverse range of cultural heritage from which the student body is drawn. The college management team has due regard for the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism, and two senior managers have completed relevant training. Due attention is also given to the requirements of the University of West London, Nexus' validation and franchise provider, in the area of terrorism prevention. In a questionnaire issued in connection with the inspection students gave strong endorsement to the college, its courses, ethos and the support it provides.

Standards for welfare, health and safety

The college has up to date policies related to the health and safety of students, and day to day practice ensures that these are applied effectively. Fire safety checks conform to requirements and are made at regular intervals. Pastoral care arrangements safeguard the welfare of students. In interview, students, including those on Tier 4 visas, said that a positive ethos, in line with the aims of the college, and well organized pastoral care encouraged them to feel part of a caring community, and that support and guidance were readily available. Students say that they would feel able to approach a member of staff if they had any concerns. The college maintains accurate admissions and attendance registers, follows up absences and keeps records which show awareness of the UKVI requirements with regard to students on a Tier 4 visa.

Standards for the effectiveness and suitability of staff

The college recruits and retains staff with suitable experience and expertise, and tutors are encouraged to gain qualifications to supplement and support their expertise in, for example, instrumental performance. Staff are in sympathy with the declared ethos and aims of the college, and many of them are graduates of the college or have had long association with it. This sense of a community with common goals plays a key role in the consistency and quality of the college's provision. Appropriate checks are made on staff prior to their appointment. The college currently has one student under the age of

eighteen, and the required safeguarding checks on staff and volunteers are carried out and are up to date. There have been no instances of disciplinary action in recent years and the college does not use temporary staff.

Standards for financial sustainability, management and governance

Recent financial performance, and plans and forecasts for the next four years show that the college meets the standard for financial sustainability. The trustees and the college management group have extensive experience of finance and project management as well as the necessary academic knowledge for the courses taught, and this enables them to sustain and develop provision. The college has recently reviewed its management and organisation, and is in the process of transition to a new management model. The readiness of those responsible to make changes when needed means that improvement can be achieved quickly. There is a strong commitment to sustain the work of the college and to meet the requirements of the validating institution whose franchise it holds. Trustees carry out reviews of policies and procedures although they need to put in place a more systematic timetable for this duty.

Standards for premises and accommodation

The accommodation, which is in a former cinema, has been imaginatively adapted to meet the needs of the college. Suitable studios and the main auditorium are used for music practice and performance. Other spaces used for seminars and smaller group sessions are suitable in size, although in some of them ventilation is not as good as it should be, particularly when used by larger groups. The premises are regularly used by other groups but this is carefully managed to ensure that it does not interrupt the students' education or pose a threat to their health and safety.

Standards for information and complaints

The information provided to students and prospective students is accurate and up to date, and is easily accessible through the web-based system of resources used by the college. Students, and where applicable their parents, are well informed about their progress on a regular basis both factually and informally as they progress through their courses. Helpful comments are made by staff to highlight where improvement is needed. The college has a formal complaints procedure, but the student handbook is not explicit enough about how the college's own procedures complement those of the academic grievance procedure of its validating institution. The college has had no formal complaints from students for a number of years.

COLLEGE DETAILS

Details of college

Name of college:	Nexus Institute of Creative Arts
Address of college:	Astoria House, 71 Albany Road, Coventry CV5 6JR
Telephone number:	02476 713209
Email address:	admin@nexus-ica.co.uk
Proprietor:	Nexus Institute of Creative Arts
Name of Principal:	David Silber
Licence number:	YWC67DPC8
Type of college:	Private Higher Education College

Details of student body

Age range	From 17 to 35
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Number on roll:		Male	Female
	Full Time:	47	22
	Part Time:		
	Below 18	1	

Annual fees:	From £2,100 to £5,995
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Details of inspection

Type of inspection:	Educational Oversight	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector:	Peter Jones
	Supporting Inspector:	Margaret Buckingham
Dates of inspection:	1 st & 2 nd March 2016	

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service (SIS), which provides independent professional inspection of colleges who offer education to international students through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas. Further copies of the report are available from the college and on the SIS website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk