



INTERIM INSPECTION REPORT FOR NEXUS INSTITUTE OF CREATIVE ARTS

UKVI LICENCE No: YWC67DPC8

Inspection relating to the educational oversight of private further education colleges on behalf of the Home Office's division of United Kingdom Visas and Immigration - UKVI

The overall inspection findings for this college

UKVI Standards for:

courses and qualifications are	MET
teaching, learning and assessment are	MET
the cultural and moral development of students are	MET
welfare, health and safety are	MET
the effectiveness and suitability of staff are	MET
financial sustainability, leadership and governance are	MET
premises and accommodation are	MET
information and complaints are	MET

Compliance with UKVI Standards

The college meets all the UKVI Standards

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INTRODUCTION

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. On-site student accommodation, where provided, is assessed for compliance with the Standards but is not subject to a full boarding inspection. 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 trustees/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.

Colleges are inspected on a four year cycle, with a full inspection of two days by two inspectors every four years, and an interim inspection of one day by one inspector in each of the three intervening years.

Nexus Institute of Creative Arts received a full inspection in March 2016 and interim inspections in June 2017 and June 2018. Each of these inspections resulted in published reports which are available on the SIS website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.

Characteristics of the college

Nexus Trust was founded as a registered charity by the present Principal and her husband 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 115 students aged 18-40 years, of whom 6 are Tier 4 students. 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. In September 2017 the college began to offer a three-year course to allow students to take a B.A. Honours degree in Popular Music and Worship. New students enrol on the one-year Certificate or three-year degree course. These courses are franchised and validated by the University of West London.

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.'

SECTION A: Main Findings and Actions Required

Main findings

Nexus Institute of Creative Arts continues to offer courses which are at a suitable level for its students, and which lead to qualifications meeting the definition of an approved qualification for UKVI purposes. Students confirm that before they begin their studies they know that a good level of competency in English, and prior knowledge in their subject are required for them to be accepted onto the courses. The college website, Open Days and responses to enquiries directed to the college all give prospective students useful information about requirements. The college provides students in each year group with high levels of contact time with tutors through lectures, seminars and instrumental tuition. The proportion of students completing the courses is exceptionally high. The college offers a one-year Certificate of Higher Education and a three year B.A. Honours degree, both in the areas of Popular Music and Worship. The courses are carefully designed to develop high levels of skills and knowledge in contemporary music within a Christian context, and are franchised and validated by the University of West London (UWL).

Staffing has increased in line with the increase in student numbers since the last inspection, and students value the strong subject expertise of their tutors. They appreciate their tutors' willingness to help them to develop their skills and confidence both as musicians and as people of faith. The recruitment of new staff is carried out with care to ensure that high levels of subject knowledge are matched by a commitment to the ethos of the college. Existing staff members are encouraged to continue with their musical studies, often to Master's or Doctorate level.

Teaching and learning are well supported by a highly effective information technology-based system using electronic tablets which allows curriculum and lesson planning, student assignments and assessments to be readily accessible. A review of curriculum and assessment, undertaken since the last inspection, has been well received by students. The requirements of the validating institution (UWL) strongly promote regular and well organised lesson planning, marking and assessment, and tutors can draw on a good range of evidence by which to gauge students' progress. Written assignments show that the courses make suitably challenging intellectual demands. Students value the practical musical performance elements of their courses for the creative opportunities they provide.

A student questionnaire completed in connection with the inspection showed that students have very positive views of provision for teaching, learning and pastoral care. Discussion with students of different nationalities, including UK nationals and Tier 4 students from other countries, shows that their involvement in Nexus courses helps to develop their self-confidence. They are mature and responsible young adults who treat others with respect. They are proud of what they are able to achieve as individuals and as part of a nurturing community. The college has ensured that staff and students are aware of the Prevent duty.

The college has in place the necessary policies, procedures and practices for health and safety. Changes in non-teaching staff during this academic year have led to some pressure on the college in ensuring that all requirements, including fire safety, have been met. Nevertheless, the college has managed to meet the Standards after some additional work was undertaken to ensure that all identified fire safety hazards were met.

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rectified. Students say that they feel well supported by the pastoral care provided by the college, and overseas students say they are made to feel welcome and are included in the Nexus community. The college has a well established system of attendance records, and absence is carefully monitored and reported to UKVI when required.

Arrangements for the checking of staff suitability, including Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, continue to meet requirements, with a well established system of recording the required information on a single central register.

Scrutiny of the college's financial position by a qualified accountant on behalf of SIS indicates that Nexus is a financially strong institution with carefully considered plans and forecasts giving confidence in its financial sustainability. Contingency planning, including links with UWL, indicates that students are not at risk of being unable to complete their studies in the event of any financial failure.

The Principal is well supported by her team of academic and administrative staff, and between them they have worked very hard to ensure that the college continues to grow and develop. The work of the senior team has been the key factor in enabling the college to meet the Standards in the area of management and governance. This has been achieved in spite of the departure of two members of the administrative staff which has created additional pressure in some areas of administration, for example in meeting fire safety requirements. In addition, although senior leaders keep the Board of Trustees well informed about the work of the college, trustees are not always available to give as much timely support as senior leaders would like in order to help sustain the college's strengths and to remedy any weaknesses. Trustees have outlined a plan to further develop their role in supporting the college.

With the expansion in student numbers since the last inspection the college now makes use of additional teaching and rehearsal space at a nearby church and its adjacent recording studios. These additional facilities, together with the main Nexus building, are fit for purpose and meet requirements. The main premises are used in a well regulated way for other purposes such as meetings and musical events, and these do not interfere in any way with students' education.

Students are given reliable information about their courses and college activities through an accurate and up to date website. Reports to students on their progress are regular and systematic, and reports can be provided, where appropriate, for parents. The college has a complaints procedure which is available to students in their handbook. No formal complaints have been made since the time of the last inspection.

Overall Main Finding	Compliance	Outcome for the College
The college meets UKVI requirements.	It meets all the Standards.	It will receive an interim inspection check in one year and a further full inspection in two years.

Actions Required

No action is required.

SECTION B: COLLEGE AND INSPECTION 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:	Kate Silber
Licence number:	YWC67DPC8
Type of college:	Private Higher Education College

Details of student body

Age range	18-40
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Number on roll:		Male	Female
	Full Time:	80	36
	Part Time:	0	0
	Below 18	0	0

Annual fees:	From £5995 to £6165
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Details of inspection

Type of inspection:	Educational Oversight: Interim	
Inspection Team:	Reporting Inspector:	Peter Jones
Dates of inspection:	6 th June 2018	

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service (SIS), which provides independent professional inspection of colleges who offer education on offer 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.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk