



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (Short Course Provider)

ORGANISATION: Dartington International Summer School

ADDRESS: The Barn, Dartington Hall, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 6DE

HEAD OF ORGANISATION: Karen Williams

Accreditation status: Accredited

Date of inspection: 12 July 2016

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: 9 September 2016

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the organisation

The Dartington Hall Trust was established in 1925 and is based in a 1,200-acre estate near Totnes in south Devon. The trust established a project called the Dartington Experiment to encourage rural regeneration, progressive education and creative endeavour. The Hall housed an independent secondary school called Dartington Hall School, which played a significant role in developing new educational methods. The School closed in 1987. The site also includes the Dartington College of Arts, which was founded in 1961, and focuses on the performance arts. In 2008, the College merged with University College Falmouth (now Falmouth University) and relocated to Cornwall in 2010.

Today, the Trust is involved in a number of charitable activities in the fields of the arts, social justice and sustainability, including Schumacher College, that offers educational courses, including master's degree programmes, at its own site on a different part of the estate. The Trust also has departments managing its property, catering business and shops.

Dartington Hall is a medieval manor house set in listed gardens that are open to the public. Adjacent to the ancient hall are modern buildings providing student accommodation and multi-purpose teaching, rehearsal and performance spaces. Some of these, which were formerly Dartington School and Dartington Arts College buildings, are now let to independent tenants. The Dartington International Summer school (DISS) was established in 1953.

2. Brief description of the current provision

DISS runs for four weeks in August. The summer school is for professional musicians and music students of all ages.

There are 588 participants booked for the 2016 Summer school, of whom 73 are overseas visitors. Most visitors are resident. Most participants are residential, although non-residential day attendance is also possible. There are regular buses from the town of Totnes, which is about three miles away, and has good rail connections to London. Most attend for one week, although a very few stay for two or more weeks. A significant number of participants return year after year. A number of the younger participants are music students, who receive bursaries to help them with the cost of attending.

Each year, the summer school has a different programme offering, and each week of the school's four weeks has a separate theme. Every day is divided into four main sessions, which participants can elect to attend. They are offered a wide choice of courses, master classes and workshops in subjects ranging from Folk Choir, Baroque Orchestra and Advanced Conducting to Harpsichord Workshop or Improvising and Middle Eastern Music and Song. Residential professional musicians and artists, often of international repute, who are typically contracted for one of the School's four themed weeks, lead the sessions. Every evening there is a programme of concerts of up to three performances a night.

3. Inspection process

The interim inspection visit involved one inspector and lasted half a day. The inspector toured the facilities, scrutinised documentation and met a number of staff. The inspector reviewed the progress made against the recommendations in the previous report and identified the recent improvements to policies and procedures and changes to the management of the school. This inspection report is in relation to the provider's provision in the United Kingdom only.

4. Inspection history

Stage 2 inspection:	10 March 2010
Stage 3 inspection:	28 July 2010
Interim visit:	14 April 2011
Full inspection:	11 - 12 August 2015

PART B – JUDGEMENTS AND EVIDENCE

The following judgements and comments are based upon evidence seen by the inspector during the inspection and from documentation provided by the provider.

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

A new Chief Executive and a new General Manager of the arts, with operational responsibility for the School were appointed in September 2015.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points identified in the previous inspection report.

Response to recommendations in last report

The booking and payment systems are reported to be time-consuming and some participants said it was difficult to pay for the courses using international credit cards. It is recommended that the systems are reviewed.

In 2015 an online process was introduced. It featured a very complicated online form, which has since been replaced. This booking system has been reviewed. Now, prospective participants forward an expression of interest. The School's administration staff respond to this to complete the booking. There have also been fewer problems with credit cards this year because better advice is provided to participants to ensure that they inform their card provider of the need for an international transaction before progressing.

DISS should consider sending out the annual summer school programme to international participants in hard copy.

An electronic copy of the programme is sent to all participants. This is in line with the Trust's sustainability policy. International participants are sent an electronic copy of the programme. If a hard copy is required, it will be sent by post, free of charge.

It is recommended that the procedure for dealing with unexpected absences be formalised, both for welfare reasons and also, perhaps, to satisfy any UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) requirements.

A policy document has been created. It states that, if an international participant is absent for more than 24 hours and there has been no response to the school's attempts to get in touch with the absentee, the Home Office will then be contacted.

DISS should consider including some brief summary of action taken in response to feedback in any newsletter circulated to participants at the end of the year.

A new survey has been created which attempts to garner more specific feedback from participants and any recommendations that participants may have. After the programme has finished, all participants will receive a report on the programme, via email. This report will include a summary of the main features of the summer school programme, and may include recommendations for improvement.

A review of the summer school used to be included in the reports to the Trustees, but this was last done in 2012. It is recommended that a formalised annual end-of-course summer school report be re-introduced.

A report featuring a review of the summer school is now distributed to the trustees. It was included in the papers discussed by the trustees' board meeting in the autumn of 2015. This will be repeated annually.

Review the signage around the site.

The trustees are reviewing the signage on the estate to ensure that the signage is clear and also that it is in line with the ethos of the Trust.

3. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

3.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The management, staffing and administration continue to be effective. Another full programme has been planned for the summer school this year. Two new senior management appointments have been made. A registrar position for a booking and participant liaison officer is currently vacant. A small administration team manages all the bookings and undertakes appropriate planning throughout the year.				

3.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments No teaching was taking place at the time of the inspection. The school only runs for four weeks in August. However, all the courses planned continue to be delivered by international renowned artists.				

3.3 Participant Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments Participant welfare and systems seem to be well thought through. Appropriate pre-course information is sent to all participants and guidance and support is available on arrival and throughout the programme.				

3.4 Premises and Facilities

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments The very high quality facilities reported previously have been maintained. The professional performance and practice spaces provide a stimulating environment within which musicians can learn, practice and perform. The variety of accommodation available, from budget accommodation, to high quality hotel rooms meets the needs of participants very well.				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

Institution’s strengths

The summer school is well managed and provides a significant range of music courses to a very high standard, and delivered by internationally renowned professionals that meet the needs of participants very well.

Dartington Hall is an outstanding venue for the summer school providing participants with very high quality performance and practice space set in idyllic surroundings

Actions required	Priority H/M/L
None	

Recommendations

Undertake a review of the signage around the site.

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
<p>Further comments, if applicable</p> <p>The safeguarding policy has been revised to reflect current legislation and best practice.</p>	