



BRITISH ACCREDITATION COUNCIL INSPECTION REPORT

INTERIM VISIT (College)

INSTITUTION: Alexander Teacher Training School

ADDRESS: Danceworks
16 Balderton Street
London
W1K 6TN

HEAD OF INSTITUTION: Mr Anthony Kingsley

ACCREDITATION STATUS: Accredited

DATE OF VISIT: 26 June 2018

ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE DECISION AND DATE: Continued accreditation 27 September 2018

PART A - INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the institution

The Alexander Teacher Training School (ATTS/the Institution) is a private limited company. It was established in 2004 by the Director of Training, who is also the company's sole shareholder. The Director of Training is supported by a long-serving part-time administrator.

The Institution aims to develop its students through a process of psychophysical re-education that offers wide-ranging benefits, including lasting improvements in physical and mental health. The core curriculum is based on the basic principles of the Alexander Technique.

The Alexander Technique is a system of mind and body learning that promotes health, self-healing and well-being. Through a number of sessions, the student learns to manage the demands of everyday life focusing on calm and freedom. This removes the causes of many health problems and ensures the highest level of mental and physical functioning across a range of human activities. The Alexander Technique has been taught as part of the curriculum in major performing arts colleges in the world such as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA).

ATTS is located in a listed building, in Mayfair, London, near Bond Street underground station. The premises, which have been hired for over 16 years, consist of a spacious core studio with wall-to-wall mirrors and natural wooden flooring. There are many cafes, restaurants and shops located within a few minutes of the Institution.

2. Brief description of the current provision

ATTS offers a three-year teacher training course as well as two shorter courses of one and two terms' duration. The shorter courses are entitled Foundation and Foundation Plus respectively. Students can choose to progress from the foundation courses to the three-year course. The three-year course, which has a minimum of 1600 learning hours, is designed to provide candidates with the opportunity to train and study in the United Kingdom (UK) with a view to teaching the Alexander Technique. During the three-year course, students study five modules to prepare them for their future professional lives as teachers. The seminars and workshops include subjects such as Anatomy, Physiology and Pathology, Music and the Performing Arts and Basic Counseling Skills. There are also five seminars in Professionalism and Ethics, Psychophysical Unity, the Holistic Model and Integrated Health.

Training is largely based on an apprentice model. In the final year, all students are encouraged to work with members of the public under appropriate supervision, as a preparation for their graduation to full teaching status.

The three-year course is approved by the Society of Teachers for the Alexander Technique (STAT), which is a UK-based charity founded in 1958. ATTS students become student members of STAT when they begin training. Students who meet STAT's strict requirements are certified, both by the Institution and STAT. The vast majority of the teacher training is practical work, in keeping with the fundamentally practical nature of the Alexander Technique. After completing the approved three-year training course, qualified teachers are entitled to a teaching certificate (STAT Cert) and are registered as members of STAT.

After successfully completing the three-year course, students may choose to spend a term or more in postgraduate study, for which ATTS awards its own additional certificate. The postgraduate course is tailored to the interests of the students and allows them to study from a choice of the modules listed above but in more depth.

There are currently ten students studying on the three-year course. The majority of students are female. There are no students currently on the foundation courses. All students are from the UK and are over the age of 18. Students benefit from a high teacher to student ratio at each stage of their course. This is also in line with STAT regulations for approved courses.

3. Inspection visit process

The inspection was carried out over half a day by one inspector. Meetings were held with the Head of the institution. Meetings also took place with a group of students and a tutor. A class was also observed. The inspector also scrutinised documentation. The staff of the Institution co-operated very well and all the required documentation was readily available.

4. Inspection history

Full inspection: 12 July 2017

PART B – JUDGMENTS AND EVIDENCE

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

1. Significant changes since the last inspection

There have been no significant changes since the last inspection. In the previous inspection report reference was made to fact that the Institution was considering offering online training. The Institution has decided not to proceed with this.

2. Response to actions points in last report

There were no action points in the last report.

3. Response to recommended areas for improvement in last report

It is recommended that student feedback is dated to facilitate a more rigorous evaluation.

The ATTS student questionnaire feedback is now dated. The feedback indicates that students are very positive about the Institution. Most students rate the Institution as excellent against most criteria.

ATTS is recommended to expand its Student Handbook to include the welcome pack, health and safety and attendance requirements so that the information is readily accessible in one place.

The Student Handbook has been expanded and now includes relevant elements of the welcome pack. The additional information includes attendance and academic conduct, student health and safety guidance, an outline of the curriculum, assessment, holiday workshops available, student discounts and the ATTS social media page.

4. Compliance with BAC accreditation requirements

4.1 Management, Staffing and Administration (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
Comments				
The Institution is well managed. The Director is experienced and very well qualified and has a deep and thorough understanding of the curriculum offered by the Institution.				
The Institution adheres to the policies and procedures stipulated by the STAT, which approves the courses. The policies and procedures are well understood and strictly enforced.				
Attendance is monitored closely and data scrutinised indicates that attendance rates are high. Students need to maintain an average of 85 per cent attendance in order to qualify for the teaching certificate.				
The moderator's report, from STAT, comments on the progress made by the students on the teacher-training course. It is highly positive about the standards achieved by the students. Staff have ensured that courses are well managed so that students develop qualities such as an excellent ability to communicate. Students are enthusiastic, empathetic and committed potential teachers.				

4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>Students benefit from courses that fully meet their needs. The trainers are registered with STAT and are qualified and experienced Alexander Technique teachers who regularly undertake Continuing Professional Development (CPD).</p> <p>The session observed during the visit was an effective practical lesson within which all students were actively involved practising the Alexander Technique on each other, supported by the tutor through one-to-one coaching and overseen by the Director. Students are clearly focused on applying the techniques in pairs and this represents good peer learning. The teacher observed is very experienced and also teaches at the Royal Academy of Music.</p> <p>Students interviewed report that the training that they have received has been of a high quality. They have developed a very good understanding of the Alexander Techniques and how best to teach them. Inspection findings confirm this view.</p>				

4.3 Student Welfare (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>Appropriate anti-discrimination and abusive behaviour policies are in place. They form part of the policies published by STAT that all teachers running approved courses must follow.</p> <p>Students report that the course has been very beneficial to them, not just in terms of preparing them to teach, but also in developing life skills that help them to manage day-to-day stress.</p> <p>The students' experience is broadened through the trips that are undertaken. For example, the group was due to participate in a weekend workshop on Alexander Techniques in Berlin shortly after the inspection.</p>				

4.4 Premises and Facilities (spot check)

	Met	Partially met	Not met	
The standards are judged to be	✓			
<p>Comments</p> <p>The Institution benefits from a rolling hire agreement for the premises, which has been in place for 16 years and is able to continue on a year-to-year basis by agreement with the landlord. The premises are very well located in the centre of London and near to a tube station.</p> <p>The studio provides an excellent space for training the Alexander Technique and features wall mirrors. There are also small rooms available for private consultations.</p> <p>Even in very hot weather, the studio is maintained at a very comfortable temperature due to the effective air conditioning.</p>				

PART C – SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND ACTION POINTS

STRENGTHS
The Institution is very well managed.
Students benefit from high quality training that develops a good understanding of the Alexander Techniques and how best to teach them.
Students are developing life skills that help them to manage day-to-day stress well.

ACTIONS REQUIRED	Priority H/M/L
None	

RECOMMENDED AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (to be reviewed at the next inspection)
None

COMPLIANCE WITH STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS	
Declaration of compliance has been signed and dated.	YES
Further comments, if applicable	