



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Ministry Council

Inspection Report

Ripon College, Cuddesdon

March 2009

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GLOSSARY

BA	Bachelor of Arts
BTh	Bachelor in Theology
CTh	Certificate in Theology
DDO	Diocesan Directors of Ordinands
FdA	Foundation Degree in Arts
MTh	Master of Theology
OMC	Oxford Ministry Course
OPTET	Oxford Partnership for Theological Education and Training
ODCE	University of Oxford Department for Continuing Education
OxCEPT	Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology
RCC	Ripon College Cuddesdon
RTP	Regional Training Partnership
SAOMC	St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats

LIST OF INSPECTORS

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THE INSPECTIONS FRAMEWORK

On behalf of the sponsoring churches, inspection teams are asked to assess the fitness for purpose of the training institution for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry and to make recommendations for the enhancement of the life and work of the institution.

Within the structures of the Church of England, this report is prepared for the House of Bishops acting through the Ministry Council.

In coming to their judgements, inspectors are asked to use the following outcomes with regard to the overall outcome and individual criteria:

Confidence

Overall outcome: a number of recommendations, none of which question the generally high standards found in the inspection.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show good or best practice.

Confidence with qualifications

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance that questions the generally acceptable standards found in the inspection and which can be rectified or substantially addressed by the institution in the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) at least satisfactory practice but with some parts which are not satisfactory or (b) some unsatisfactory practice but where the institution has the capacity to address the issues within 12 months.

No confidence

Overall outcome: A number of recommendations, including one or more of substance which raise significant questions about the standards found in the inspection and the capacity of the institution to rectify or substantially address these in the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) generally not satisfactory practice or (b) some unsatisfactory practice where it is not evident that the institution can rectify the issues within the coming 12 months.

Criteria level: aspects of an institution's life which show either (a) generally not satisfactory practice or (b) some unsatisfactory practice where it is not evident that the institution can rectify the issues within the coming 12 months.

THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTION OF RIPON COLLEGE CUDDESDON AND THE OXFORD MINISTRY COURSE

March 2009

SUMMARY

Introduction

Ripon College Cuddesdon was founded in 1854 through the benefaction of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, as a non-partisan diocesan training college for graduates. It has grown and adapted since that time to meet the needs of successive generations. In 2006, the Oxford Ministry Course (formerly the Oxford end of the St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course) was incorporated into the college to form one institution, offering residential and non-residential training. At present there are 129 ordinands, 62 residential and 67 non-residential; 66 men and 63 women.

Summary of Outcomes

The inspection team regards Ripon College Cuddesdon and the Oxford Ministry Course fit for purpose for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry.

CRITERIA	OUTCOME
A. Aims, Objectives and Achievements of the Institution	Confidence
B. Relationships with Other Institutions	Confidence
C. Governance, Management, Constitution and Organisation	Confidence with qualifications
D. Accommodation	Confidence with qualifications
E. Community and Corporate life	Confidence
F. Common Worship	Confidence
G. Ministerial, Personal and Spiritual Formation	Confidence
H. Teaching and Learning: Content, Method and Resources	Confidence
J. Practical and Pastoral Theology	Confidence
K. Training in Public Worship	Confidence
L. Teaching Staff	Confidence
M. Administrative Staff	Confidence
N. Students	Confidence

Overall Outcome	Confidence
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General Observations

There has been a significant transformation of the college since the last inspection report of 2003. In 2004 a new Principal was appointed. Among the core full-time teaching staff, only one was on the staff in 2003; two part-time staff were with SAOMC in 2003. The number of residential ordinands has nearly doubled in this time. Since the incorporation of non-residential training through OMC in 2006, the

number of non-residential students has increased by some 50%. There are now more than 60 non-residential ordinands at Cuddesdon, and this has provided a significant new dimension to the nature of the institution, a process which has been handled adroitly. Two years ago, mixed-mode training was begun as a trial that has attracted a good number of students. In the last eighteen months the institution has adopted the Foundation Degree in Ministry with its portfolio method of assessment through Oxford Brookes University. A carefully implemented business plan has put the institution on a healthy financial footing providing the basis for the twelve and half million pound appeal for endowment, fellowships, studentships and new buildings.

Though there are a good number of recommendations in the report, the majority of these are for making good practice better rather than highlighting substantive problems or concerns. The inspectors' overall judgment of 'confidence', with confidence expressed for all but two of the thirteen criteria, reflects the conclusion that the institution provides excellent theological education, ministerial training and formation for the Church of England.

Response to the last inspection

Both RCC and OMC were inspected in 2003. With regard to OMC, most of the recommendations have been met through its incorporation into the combined structures and policies of the one new institution. With regard to RCC, good progress has been made with all the recommendations, with some of the recommendations related to management needing some additional work.

Strengths

- A vibrant institution which is growing and expanding in order to become a rich resource for theological education and ministerial training for the Anglican communion, yet with a clear focus on its core task of training ministers for the Church of England.
- A committed staff, teaching and administrative, which shares a common purpose in forming ordinands with open hearts and open minds.
- A rich community life of students and staff who seek to grow together through prayer, learning, common life and generous hospitality, appreciating differences and diversity.
- A high level of pastoral care by staff for all students and by students for each other.
- A wide range of theological perspectives and church traditions represented on the staff team and by the students.
- A high level of importance placed on and the help provided to enable students to discover their skills as reflective practitioners.

- A very competent staff with high academic achievement appropriate to its Oxford setting, yet able to connect learning with ministry and personal discipleship.

Areas for attention

The need to:

- review the administration structure and provision in order to ensure that it is resourced to cope with the complexity of residential and non-residential training, and with multiple course pathways.
- make progress in its committee structure and community life in order to further establish a more unitary management structure and a more fully integrated academic institution.
- improve the teaching, learning and living space of the existing site, with specific reference to issues related to single accommodation, the library teaching space, staff offices in the Gore building, and disabled access.
- solidify its good practice in developing an inclusive community by a formal policy statement on gender, ethnicity and inclusivity with regard to community life in the handbook, and by providing specific formal opportunities for theological reflection on the diversities within the life of the community.
- develop its use of ICT learning in order to resource all learning programmes and especially the dispersed OMC community.
- review and develop its professional staff development in order better to equip the staff to meet the challenges of training resident and non-resident students, students from a broad variety of church traditions, students with a variety of academic abilities, and students charting different learning pathways.

FULL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

- 1 The College was founded in 1854 through the benefaction of Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford, as a non-partisan diocesan training college, Oxford Diocesan Seminary, for graduates. It quickly became known as 'Cuddesdon College'. It has grown and adapted since that time to meet the needs of successive generations. In 1975, it merged with Ripon Hall, a theological college located at Boar's Hill near Oxford, and became known as Ripon College Cuddesdon. In December 2001, its renewed Royal Charter affirmed the purpose of the college: 'to provide, carry on and maintain a college or colleges for the training of candidates for Holy Orders in the Church of England and such other students of theology and other germane Christian studies as the Governors may permit'. In 2006, the Oxford Ministry Course (formerly the Oxford end of the St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course) was incorporated into the college to form one institution, offering residential and non-residential training. In May 2007, the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology (OxCEPT) was launched to provide a research focus particularly for post-graduates and research projects for the Church. At present there are 129 ordinands, 62 residential and 67 non-residential; 66 men and 63 women. College facilities are used out of term for conferences, both theological and commercial.
- 2 Today, the institution, in both its residential and non-residential (see para 52 for an explanation of the use of these categories) components, encompasses a breadth of church traditions and life experience. The main strengths of the institution are a rich community life, personal pastoral care, and rigorous educational and training pathways. In a context of hospitality, prayer, open inquiry and inclusive dialogue students are enabled to become leaders who are confident in their own tradition, yet able to appreciate and affirm others of different traditions.
- 3 The institution offers a range of courses for a wide range of academic abilities. The main pathway for residential candidates is the BTh (three years) or the CTh (two years) with the University of Oxford, but with increasing numbers opting for the Foundation Degree in Ministry (FdA) with Oxford Brookes University which uses the portfolio means of assessment. The majority of non-resident candidates follow the Oxford Brookes FdA in ministry pathway over three years. But the institution through the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes is able to offer a wider range of training pathways, including study at Master's level. Two years ago, the institution began offering mixed-mode training as a hybrid of non-residential training with residential components.
- 4 Since the last inspection the institution has changed in significant ways and grown in size and complexity. In 2004, a new Principal was appointed. A unitary staff which serves both RCC and OMC has been formed. New and effective management structures have been established, including the executive committee, a Dean of Studies, and an Appeal Committee. In order to

cope with the present challenges and to plan for future developments, an extensive appeal is to be launched in 2009 subject to planning proposals being approved.

- 5 The inspectors would like to express their appreciation for the hospitality and cooperation they received from every member of the institution, staff and students. Everyone went out of their way to provide everything requested. All requests for further documents and meetings were graciously received and responded to. Every person was open and honest, cordial and considered, in responding to our questions.
- 6 The inspection process began with the Senior Inspector meeting with the Principal for a preliminary meeting on 11th July 2008. This was followed up by the Senior Inspector meeting with the teaching staff on 14th October 2008. The formal inspection began in January 2009 with members of the inspection team beginning to attend OMC events. The inspection process culminated with a residential visit to Cuddesdon, 1-8 March 2009.
- 7 With regard to the institution, the Senior Inspector attended the Board of Governors on 27th January, met with the Chair of Board of Governors, interviewed two governors including an area bishop for the Oxford diocese, and met the Chair of the University of Oxford Theology Faculty Board. We received numerous emails from DDOs and CME Officers in response to a general email sent to all. Several team members attended the OPTET termly staff lunch and subject tutors meeting.
- 8 With regard to OMC, members of the inspection team attended three residential weekends, 23-25 January, 27 February-1 March, and 6-8 March. We also attended three Tuesday evenings, 3 and 17 February and 3 March. We observed numerous teaching sessions including student presentations on placements, attended a Course Review Committee, attended a variety of acts of worship including prayer groups, met with representatives from each year group, had conversation with several of the chaplains, met with spouses, and had many informal conversations with students and staff.
- 9 With regard to RCC, members of the inspection team attended the following: a staff meeting, all of the worship during the week including the children's worship on a Wednesday evening, college group worship and meetings. Members of the team also had interviews or conversations with the Principal, the Vice-Principal, the Dean of Studies, each of the core staff members individually, several of the associate staff, the chaplain, married students, single students, commuter/weekly boarders, a representative group of students from each year, the mixed-mode students, the two common room presidents, several individual students who requested a meeting, the sacristans, the director of music, spouses, the bursar, all the administrative staff, domestic bursar, caterer, cleaners and grounds keeper, placement supervisors, former students. There were numerous informal conversations over meals and tea with staff, students and spouses.

- 10 Documentation included the response to the inspection questionnaire with numerous supporting documents including all student and staff handbooks, the draft validation document, SWOT report from RCC and OMC students, and several unsolicited written comments from RCC students. We also were given representative examples of marked work including portfolios.
- 11 The Report that follows is written, and the paragraphs follow, in relation to the Criteria for Inspections (Inspections Handbook 2008, pages 50-55). The Criteria are printed in italic style. The Inspectors' comments are printed in normal type. The Recommendations are in bold type. In places we also **urge** or *suggest* that action be taken.

A AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INSTITUTION

Inspectors will consider to what extent the declared aims and objectives, strategies and policies of the institution correspond to the needs of the Churches, to the institution's own curriculum validation proposals and to accepted public and legal criteria.

A.i The aims and objectives of the institution should be appropriate to the preparation of ordinands for public ministry within the breadth of traditions of the sponsoring church.

- 12 The chief aims of the institution are spelt out clearly in the Royal Charter of 11th December 2001 as stated above. While the business of the institution has grown since the last inspection, training ministers for licensed ministry in the Church of England remains their core task.
- 13 The articulated vision of ministerial training stated in both the inspection questionnaire and the draft validation document demonstrates a commitment to equipping students for an open and inclusive understanding of the diversity of church traditions while enabling them to work more effectively in their own tradition. The curriculum, community and worship life, and ministerial training work well together in order to achieve this end.
- 14 At present, the institution is launching an ambitious appeal for a range of developments. The inspectors commend the aims of the appeal as appropriate to and potentially enhancing of the core aims of the institution. The inspectors are confident that the management structures in place (Board of Governors, Finance Committee, and Executive Committee) will ensure that decisions and financial implications regarding the appeal will be handled carefully and judiciously. With respect to the aims of the appeal, they will, if achieved, enhance the community life of the institution in two ways: firstly, through the expansion of the community with an order of Sisters becoming resident on site; and secondly, by the presence of students and theological educators from the wider Anglican communion and other faiths financed through studentships and fellowships. The appeal also aims to develop the facilities by providing an accessible chapel for the whole community, additional accommodation both for the non-resident students and for

conference and similar events, and a variety of new teaching spaces. This proposed expansion of the facilities is necessary for the institution to meet its present educational work and its future business plans.

A.ii There should be evidence that the current, published statements on training policy produced by the various denominational bodies have been suitably integrated into the training programme.

15 The institution at every level is cognisant of the church's training policies and successfully integrates these policies into their own policy and practice for the formation of students for licensed ministry.

16 The institution satisfactorily educates candidates about issues related to the Act of Synod.

A.iii There should be evidence of action taken in response to the previous inspection Report and any follow-up.

17 The institution has given proper regard and response to the previous inspection reports from 2003 for RCC and OMC. Many of the recommendations for OMC have been made redundant by or addressed by the merger with RCC. Most of the recommendations for RCC have been addressed, though issues related to appraisal (see section C.iv and Recommendation 7 as well as para 154 and Recommendation 17), administration provision (see section C.i and Recommendation 4), and part-time or associate staff (see para 151 and Recommendation 16) are ongoing and are addressed later in this report.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion A, Aims, Objectives and Achievements of the Institution.</p>
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B RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Inspectors will examine how the institution relates to other educational provision (including any partner university) and to the Churches and secular organisations in its locality, with particular reference to regional groupings of providers of theological education.

B.i The terms of academic and validation/ accreditation arrangements with universities should be fair and appropriate to an institution offering training and formation for candidates for ordained ministry.

18 The institution prepares students for awards from two local universities: Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford. The partnership with Oxford Brookes University began six years ago – initially for some full-time residential students (MA, BA, FdA, etc). The relationship has been further extended since 2006, when the college assumed responsibility for the Oxford Ministry Course (OMC). This partnership is regulated by a comprehensive Collaboration Agreement which is kept under regular review. The relationship

with the University of Oxford is historic, and there has been a formal agreement enabling students to matriculate dating back to more than thirty years ago. However, the status of the institution with respect to University of Oxford now needs some further clarification and definition, and the inspection team was told that during 2008 this had led to some delay in the transfer of fees. At the time of the inspection the institution was completing its negotiations with the University for formal inclusion in the Conference of Colleges and the inspection team was assured that this would soon resolve the current ambiguities.

- 19 Financially, the terms of the partnerships with the two universities are similar, insofar as both universities allocate funds to RCC and OMC for the teaching provided on the various courses offered. We note that the provision of the FdA through Oxford Brookes University currently provides an additional income stream for Cuddesdon.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the institution should conclude its negotiations with the University of Oxford about admission to the Conference of Colleges as soon as possible.

B.ii The institution should show signs of drawing as much benefit as may be possible from the demands and resources of universities in teaching quality assessment, staff development and the promotion of research.

- 20 The inspection team saw evidence that the institution is complying with and benefiting from the quality assurance procedures of the two universities. Many staff value the association with the University of Oxford in particular for the support and facilities it offers for research. OxCEPT itself has become a means of promoting staff research through valuable links with national and international connections within the world church.
- 21 Although staff were aware of the menu of staff development opportunities offered by the two universities, there appeared to be little use made of these and little encouragement to benefit from them, and this finding contributes to the team's recommendation that there should be more formal arrangements regarding staff appraisal and development (see section L.v).

B.iii There should be evidence of effective engagement with Churches, other faith communities and secular organisations in the locality such as to enhance preparation for public ministry.

- 22 Through staff and students, there is close involvement with the immediate locality, in the village and other churches, schools and the parish council (which the Principal currently chairs). Further afield, there is extensive engagement with churches, faith communities and secular organisations in the form of student placements and direct inputs into the curriculum, including visits during themed study weeks. However, given the importance the institution places on its vision of Christian ministry as fully engaged with the

world, the inspection team *suggests* the institution consider ways in which it can expand and diversify opportunities for engagement with appropriate communities and organisations in order to achieve more fully the model of ministry for which it aims.

- 23 In other ways, the institution is to be commended for the way it draws on the rich resources of Oxford and the wider church in providing additional input into the training programmes. Through Themed Study Weeks, occasional lectures, OxCEPT seminars, Saturday evening sessions on OMC weekends, and other occasions, external speakers are brought into the life of the institution to provide exceptional learning opportunities which enhance preparation for ministry.

B.iv The institution should demonstrate commitment to effective partnership with the other providers of theological education in the region.

- 24 The institution is actively committed to partnership with other providers of theological education in Oxford and plays a prominent role in the Oxford Partnership for Theological Education and Training (OPTET) in accordance with the agreed constitution (2008). Staff from the OPTET institutions meet regularly, occasionally in subject group areas, to discuss common issues and concerns, and the partnership provides important opportunities for ecumenical engagement and for experiencing different Anglican traditions. The diversity of perspectives which come from the shared teaching of modules and the shared OPTET worship are valued by students. There is some disappointment among the staff that some recent joint OPTET events have not happened, though Cuddesdon was willing to proceed. The staff are committed to OPTET and they feel that the potential for OPTET to provide greater opportunities for formational and ecumenical experiences is not yet fully realised, partially due to a declining commitment by some core members. The inspectors would concur.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the institution maintain its involvement with and commitment to OPTET and continue to work collaboratively to develop and extend the work and resources of OPTET for enhancing the ecumenical and inter-church experiences of theological education and ministerial training.

- 25 The institution also delivers a course in conjunction with Christian Rural Concern and the John Ray Initiative. Through the Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology (OxCEPT), the institution is also developing research collaborations with a number of theological institutions in this country and overseas.
- 26 Within the South Central Regional Training Partnership (RTP), the institution plays an active part at all levels of conversation and collaboration. The RTP is still negotiating the terms of the partnership with its members, including Ripon College Cuddesdon. Within this partnership, the institution has good working

relationships with the Oxford diocese and its OLM Scheme, hosting a number of their residential weekends at Cuddesdon and providing significant teaching input. The inspection team *suggests* the institution develop greater partnership with the diocese and to explore opportunities for convergence with the OLM Scheme and IME 4-7 programme.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion B, Relationships with Other Institutions.

C GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT, CONSTITUTION AND ORGANISATION

Inspectors will examine the role of the Governing Body and other bodies in the oversight and administration of the institution, taking particular note of the way decisions are made and implemented at different levels of the institution.

- 27 Oversight of the institution is vested in the Board of Governors which meets three times a year. The Finance Committee monitors fiscal matters and meets four times a year. The Administration Meeting deals with domestic, buildings and facilities and administration matters; it meets twice a term. There is a weekly Staff (Teaching) Meeting to address academic and pastoral issues of the community; in addition they have a 24 hour residential every year. The Board of Studies (RCC) and Course Review Committee (OMC) meets termly to discuss academic standards and student feedback. In 2008, the Executive Committee was set up and functions as a senior management team in order to assist the Principal; it meets as required.
- 28 There is an open generosity and informality that undergirds these structures. Staff are comfortable about raising issues informally with one another and with the Principal. The Principal operates an open door policy for all employees which is greatly valued and not abused. One senses an institution at ease and comfortable with itself, self-reflective and striving for excellence without being oppressed. While there are a few management processes that could be improved by a more formal approach, the recommendations that follow are not meant to impose a bureaucratic ethos, but to improve the ability of the institution to protect its current ethos and recent achievements for the future times of growth and change.
- C.i There should be evidence of effective financial, administrative and management structures that facilitate the stated aims and objectives of the institution.*
- 29 The Board of Governors is effective in providing oversight. Although membership is still partly based on representation of various constituencies, recent appointments have brought a broad range of expertise to serve the multi-faceted needs of an institution of this size and complexity. This is a very positive development and provides the necessary oversight for the development plans. The present chair will be stepping down and a new chair assuming responsibilities in June of 2009. As the institution continues to grow and especially as the appeal progresses, we *suggest* that the Principal set up

regular meetings with the Chair of Governors to keep him briefed on all significant issues.

- 30 Traditionally, in most theological colleges, the Principal plays a key and dominant role in the management of the whole institution. The present Principal has provided important and effective leadership in the growth and development of the institution over the past five years. As a result the institution has changed in complexity and size. Consequently, the Principal's job has changed from what it was five years ago when he was appointed.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Governors review the job description of the Principal so that it reflects the reality of the institutional situation and the complexity of the job required for the present and any future principal.

- 31 Financially the institution has achieved a great deal over the last five years by moving from a significant trading deficit to running a small surplus and by putting the financial planning on a firm business plan. Furthermore, a large unsecured loan (debt) that had built up over many years has now been eliminated through a range of creative partnerships, and the fostering of relationships with other bodies that are investing in the life and work of Cuddesdon. Recently, a terrace of five cottages in the village has been purchased to augment further married and staff accommodation. These additions (Vine Cottages) to the property portfolio have been enabled through a creative partnership with an overseas charity. The finance committee which is effectively a sub-committee of the Governors has played a key role in these achievements.
- 32 The finances of the College are therefore far more stable than in 2004. The day-to-day management of finances is served well by the Bursar. The budget documentation demonstrates a good and sound financial situation and good accounting practice and oversight. However, fiscal matters remain challenging, and the budgeting continues to be very tight. In common with other residential theological training colleges, Cuddesdon would not be economically viable without generating additional income to the Ministry Division funding. This is becoming increasingly important to make ends meet, and the college is developing a range of cognate and complementary activities that provide essential support for the 'core business' of ordination training.
- 33 In order to cope with the growing intricacy of the institution, two important management changes have been implemented which have been strategically beneficial. First, there is now an Executive Committee composed of senior staff drawn from across the institution which meets regularly to advise and assist the Principal in all aspects of administration and management. As the inspection questionnaire documents, this is now embedded in the management structure of the institution. We suggest that the Governors and Principal in consultation with staff create a formal document with agreed terms of reference and membership.

- 34 Second, in the previous academic year, the institution created the post of Dean of Studies to oversee the academic affairs of both RCC and OMC with different staff members responsible for managing specific course pathways. This has been extremely beneficial; staff as well as students have commented on the advantages this change has brought. We suggest that the principal and staff complete the task of creating the formal job description for the post of Dean of Studies.
- 35 Overall, the administration structures are coping. But the growth and development of the institution are not reflected in the present administration set-up. Most administrative staff and secretaries are part-time, preventing day-to-day continuity in administration with no one person or persons holding a complete picture of the institution at this level. Many academic and secretarial administrative duties are still divided between RCC and OMC. Based on comments of student and staff as well as observation of the situation by the inspectors, we were particularly concerned that the administration of OMC affairs was weak. Some teaching staff commented on the need for administrative assistance particularly with academic affairs in order to have more time for their key tutorial tasks.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the institution review the administration structure and provision in order to ensure that it is resourced to cope with an expanding institution and with the academic and administrative complexity of residential and non-residential training with multiple course pathways.

- 36 We commend the creative and effective ways in which the institution has thus far managed the integration of residential and non-residential training and of two learning communities, particularly in creating a single academic staff to serve diverse training pathways. The key management challenge is to consider what it means to be one institution that trains full and part-time students residentially and non-residentially. At present, there are generally two sets of policies and practices and two sets of academic and community life committees; one for RCC and one for OMC. While there is no perceived inefficiency or management problem, this management structure may not serve the long-term aims and ethos of a fully integrated institution, nor be the most efficient use of valuable staff time.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the institution review its committee structure and community life in order to ensure maximum efficiency and to continue to establish a more unitary management structure that is reflective of its goal of a fully integrated academic institution.

C.ii There should be evidence of a structured contribution made by the student body so that it plays an effective role in decision-making processes.

37 Students are involved in all important aspects of management with appropriate representation on all formal bodies and committees. Students also contribute by raising issues formally at College Meetings for RCC and on weekends at Course Matters for OMC. The RCC Common Room President meets fortnightly with the Principal. In addition, students all spoke of being able informally to approach the Principal, who operates an open door policy, and any member of staff if they wish to discuss any institutional matter.

C.iii There should be evidence that tutorial and administrative staff are able to fulfil their job descriptions both individually and corporately and are resourced to do so.

38 Generally, all academic and administrative staff felt resourced to perform their duties and to fulfil their responsibilities. There is a specific concern regarding part-time teaching staff which is discussed in section L.v. The inspectors noted three other areas of concern. First, the financial and management issues of a growing and complex institution present a particular challenge for the Bursar. At present, he is resourced by one part-time administrator and one additional person who has offered his services in retirement. This arrangement works well at present, but needs to be secured for the future, especially to ensure sufficient support for the increased demand which the appeal will necessitate.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Governors and Principal review the administrative support for the Bursar and ensure that there is adequate and long term provision provided for in an agreed administrative structure for the bursarial department.

39 A second issue is the ICT support for the Domestic Bursar. At present, she is not on the ICT network and she does not wish to be 'computerised'. However, efficient management of the complexity of domestic business for students and conference trade requires all members of administrative staff to be on the ICT system. We **urge** the institution to help the Domestic Bursar to move to management of her work with a computer linked to the ICT network.

40 Thirdly, tutorial staff were broadly content with present arrangements for managing the academic affairs of both RCC and OMC and the resultant workload of a unitary staff for residential and non-residential training. There is a particular challenge with regard to balancing weekday and weekend demands. It is important that the institution continues to monitor staff workload. We **urge** that the institution put in place a work load model (a formula for the distribution of tasks to employees appropriate to their time and job description) to manage the diverse aspects of a unitary staff for residential and non-residential ministerial education and training.

C.iv There should be a well-designed and operative appraisal system for all staff.

- 41 Following the previous inspection, and with the arrival of the current Principal, an appraisal system has been implemented under advice from an outside consultant, Peninsula. The system is designed to have a major appraisal every three years with intervening years being a 'light touch MOT'. While staff are generally content with this system, the informality of the yearly conversation with the principal or line manager poses problems for appraisal documentation where issues of competency are raised and matters of staff development are identified.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the present appraisal practice be formalised with appropriate documentation for each yearly appraisal.

C.v The training institution should meet the current legal requirements, for example, with regard to Fire prevention, Health and Safety and Child Protection.

- 42 The institution has in place all necessary policies to meet current legal requirements as found in the appropriate staff and student handbooks. In addition, there is an excellent policy and practice with regard to special educational needs like dyslexia in place with the support of Oxford Brookes. The nineteenth century building presents distinct challenges with regard to disability access. The institution, with the oversight of the Bursar, seeks to be compliant and is working to address issues of access (see further comments under D.i).

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion C, Governance, Management, Constitution and Organisation.

D ACCOMMODATION

Inspectors will examine the suitability of the accommodation for teaching and residence.

- 43 Cuddesdon's tranquil village location, eight miles out of Oxford, is much-prized by nearly all members of the institution, and its part in running a church gives a rootedness in the life of the church in its locality. There are also other local links, and they make the most of the setting. However, it also constrains patterns of student contact with the universities and other OPTET colleges, and to a lesser extent the range of local placements. With very limited public transport, daily life depends on good planning and goodwill in the use and sharing of cars, for residential, non-residential and mixed-mode students. This is well-handled, and a college car is available. But occasionally non-motorists have to look elsewhere for their training.

44 The original buildings (now grade 2 listed), which provided for a relatively small number of single men, have been added to and developed by each generation to meet changing needs, and now house an extended community of around 120 students (including OMC), plus partners and children (currently around 45, the majority of them living on site) and staff. The institution also owns, or part-owns, a number of student and staff houses in the village and further afield. They share an extensive site but limited indoor public space, which must of necessity be multi-functional to meet the varied needs of RCC and OMC. The buildings are well maintained, decorated and cleaned, and the institution seeks to be flexible and responsive to particular needs.

D.i The teaching and residential accommodation should be fit for the purpose of enhancing the community and corporate life of the Institution and of facilitating good adult learning.

45 With regard to teaching space, there are two good lecture rooms and a smaller seminar room, all attractive and well-equipped, with ICT provision. But the library teaching space, created to meet the needs of OMC for a third larger room on Tuesday evenings, is inadequate as a teaching room. Staff offices are generally good. But conversations with staff located in Gore (including the chaplain) can be overheard from the corridor, so that students are asked to wait elsewhere for appointments.

46 Accommodation for single students is adequate, but gives rise to pressures which can detract from the quality of community life, both during term time (including weekends when these areas are shared with OMC or diocesan OLM students) and, for those who have no other home during their time of training, in vacations. The particular needs are for more bathroom facilities (which need to be created), and for more social and kitchen space (which already exist but may need to be re-designated). Single students (apart from the BA students who may live for a year at the house of SS Gregory & Macrina in Oxford and those who are lone parents with responsibility for children) have no other accommodation options. Improving single accommodation will benefit both the life of the whole community, and the ability of the institution to attract single students in the future.

47 The Runcie flats which are attractive and spacious, have some inherent defects (eg draughty windows unamenable to double glazing, and poor soundproofing), but are more than adequate. Policies on residential issues, such as parking and pets, are generally consistently applied.

48 The kitchens are good and the catering is of a high standard, with wide choice, including vegetarian and healthy options. The dining room has been adapted to accommodate as many as possible, but its size precludes a common evening meal for RCC and OMC on Tuesday evenings. The common room is attractive, and its location makes it a focal point for the life of the whole community.

49 The institution faces significant challenges in relation to access for those with disabilities. In the past couple of years, the college has accommodated

several students with mobility or other special needs, making the necessary modifications to the accommodation or providing appropriate resources. The first floor chapel, library, and College House, remain inaccessible to wheelchair users; this is taken into account in locating teaching sessions, and we comment on its implications for worship at E.i. A portable loop system is available, but it is not currently used.

- 50 OMC also uses All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney for whole-course weekends (which we have visited in connection with this inspection) and the London School of Theology (LST) for its summer school (which we have not, but know from other contexts). The accommodation and teaching facilities at London Colney are adequate, though the chapel can be cold and bleak. LST is purpose-built and very adequate. For the future it is planned that all residential events, including the residential week will be held at Cuddesdon.

D.ii There should be an awareness of perceived inadequacies, and a policy and programme for addressing them.

- 51 There is an awareness of the inadequacies and limitations of the present buildings, and a willingness to seek to respond to issues as they arise. In particular, we welcome the intention to establish a resident site manager post within the next two years, which should serve to address maintenance issues on the existing site more speedily than at present.

- 52 Beyond that lies the ambitious development programme (as described in Ai) designed to address the varied needs of a growing and changing institution. This will address some of the pressure points identified above, but in particular, not the issue of improving single accommodation. The inspectors applaud the bold vision of this appeal, but there is also a need to attend both to the current inadequacies of the site and to those which will not necessarily be met by the development programme.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the governors should develop a programme to improve the teaching, learning and living space of the existing site, that is distinct from or complementary to the development programme, with specific reference to needs related to single accommodation, the library teaching space, staff offices in the Gore building, and disabled access.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion D, Accommodation.</p>

E COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE LIFE

Inspectors will consider how the institution understands and structures community life, and interprets the role of corporate life in training for ordained ministry; also how far corporate life is evident in the relationships between members of the institution.

E.i The institution should offer a clear statement of how it understands its corporate life, including issues of gender, ethnic grouping and disability and other matters of natural justice, in a way, which harmonises with its aims and objectives in preparing candidates for public ministry.

- 53 Since the last inspection, the institution has consciously changed from a liberal catholic residential college to an extended community embracing a wide variety of church traditions (reflected in both staff and students) and modes of training. Half of its members are non-residential, and bring a different and more diffuse experience. The language of 'full-time' and 'part-time' has deliberately given way to 'residential' and 'non-residential' in an attempt to more accurately define the different learning communities; but the reality is more complex. As well as the home parish-based OMC members, there are students - single, married, with and without children - living on site, locally and further afield, 'weekly boarders', and conversely some whose partners join them on site at weekends or midweek, and now two cohorts of mixed-mode students each of whom has an individually negotiated pattern of belonging; there are also a few on other 'bespoke' pathways.
- 54 The institution's public rhetoric, characterised by the phrase 'open hearts and open minds', affirms this diversity - its commitment to the equal ministry of women and men and to the inclusion of all ethnic groups, people with disabilities, and people of different sexual orientation. The emphasis in the validation document on prophetic ministry demonstrates its concern for justice issues. But students are not given a clear statement of these commitments at the start of their training in the respective handbooks, and this must be addressed.

Recommendation 9

We recommend the student handbook include a policy statement on gender, ethnicity and inclusivity with regard to community life.

E.ii The institution should show evidence that the structures, requirements and practice of the institution reflect the stated policy.

- 55 Although, as explained above, the policy on corporate life is more implicit rather than stated, there is much evidence of excellent practice, and a sense that this comes naturally from the Cuddesdon ethos. The common life is rich and varied. Many students speak of the community life as a particular strength.
- 56 Structurally, a unitary staff for RCC and OMC (with the exception of the chaplain: each has distinct arrangements for chaplaincy) has significantly aided integration. Many OMC members told us how much they value taking their place in a residential community, and although there are practical constraints to sharing worship, meals and teaching, the institution works hard at maximising points of contact: for example, each Tuesday some students from OMC and RCC 'rotate', sharing each others' dinner and chapel. If the pattern

of Tuesday evening teaching and worship is reviewed (see H.iii), it may be possible to achieve greater interaction and convergence.

- 57 An inherited feature of OMC weekends are 'prayer groups' which meet on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings, deliberately with no staff presence or involvement. The precise purpose of these groups was unclear to us when we attended them, and to many of the students: are they primarily for fellowship and sharing of news, or part of course worship? We felt their focus was somewhat introverted, and comment further on them at F.ii in the light of the need to establish a clear, and Anglican, pattern of weekend worship.
- 58 A key organisational feature of residential life is the college groups system (each having two or more staff members). They take responsibility on a weekly rota basis not only for worship but for other aspects of community life, including hospitality, which is taken very seriously. Visitors are well cared-for in an unobtrusive way, and the handling of prospective students' visits is impressive, as are arrangements for the regular Guest Night Dinners.
- 59 Partners, and, in the case of OMC, designated supporters of single students, are encouraged to take as full a part as they wish in the life of the community, including attendance at teaching sessions. Events are offered at induction and leaving stages, and we observed a useful mid-year session attended by both residential and non-residential partners. OMC arranges an annual weekend for final year partners at Launde Abbey. It also has a partners' and supporters' committee which meets termly and does good work in addressing detailed issues, including the participation of partners and families in summer/Easter school (it will be important to ensure an equally committed replacement for the retiring staff member who has led on this). Residential partners take responsibility for their own programme, which currently includes a Monday evening gathering and a Friday morning Bible study which they invite staff members to lead, plus other social events on and off campus.
- 60 To facilitate a common community, the college aims to be as generous as possible in terms of partners and families sharing meals in college (and recognises that this depends on reciprocal generosity on the part of those who eat elsewhere). Tea and cake at 4pm in the common room is an important gathering-point for the whole community. We were also impressed by Kids' Church, organised each Wednesday by married and single students in parallel with the College Eucharist.
- 61 We have noted evidence that the structures and practice reflect the wider spectrum of theological traditions which now characterises the residential community and has always been a feature of the non-residential community, and the institution's openness and inclusion of those with particular needs or experiences (including disability). However, we wish to encourage the institution to create opportunities for more overt and structured theological reflection on this diversity for the sake of the learning and formation of all its members. The present natural, unforced attitude and approach is laudable, but we believe that the community is keen to address the issues of whether diversity is being positively embedded, rather than merely being managed,

into corporate life and that it is capable of doing so in creative and non-confrontational ways.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that specific opportunities for theological reflection on the diversities within the life of the community should be created, so that experience of diversity may be integrated into learning and formation.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion E, Community and Corporate Life.

F COMMON WORSHIP

Inspectors will consider the arrangements for common worship and the policy underlying them, noting the use of the authorized and other forms of worship, and how worship is conducted.

F.i The spaces designated for prayer and worship should be appropriate for their purpose.

62 Morning worship most days, and Compline throughout the week, is in the chapel, which is large enough for those who attend, but could not accommodate the whole community. As previously noted, its first floor location makes it inaccessible for wheelchair users or those with limited mobility. In order to accommodate a present wheelchair user, the church is used on Friday mornings, and on other mornings staff and students join the wheelchair user for a parallel service on a voluntary but well-supported basis, though this does not include Eucharistic provision. Some weekends OMC worship is also relocated to the Graham Room to enable access.

63 On Tuesday mornings RCC groups (students and staff) pray the office in various rooms around the site.

64 The parish church is used for evening worship and is fit for purpose, though the 'liturgical space' at the crossing is confined. The chancel is inaccessible for a wheelchair, but is not generally used. A new heating system has been installed since the last inspection.

65 The development plan includes an accessible chapel large enough for the whole community.

F.ii There should be a publicly stated policy on, and arrangements for, corporate worship. The policy and arrangements should take account of, and equip candidates to work within, the variety of practice within the sponsoring church.

- 66 RCC and OMC each have their own worship handbook, setting out both the aims of corporate worship and detailed arrangements. Although we have recommended a common student handbook, the history, needs and practice of corporate worship for residential and non-residential students differ too widely for us to recommend a common worship handbook, though there are common threads suggesting the two documents should be harmonised as much as possible.
- 67 OMC and its predecessor body has always represented and sought to honour a range of traditions and variety of practice, eschewing the creation of a 'house style' and encouraging students to practise a wide variety of styles with integrity. More recently the course has recognised the need to introduce students to the daily office. We welcome this, though because it is infrequent it is difficult to establish its nature as a routine pattern of daily worship. With this, and our concerns about the 'prayer groups' (see E.ii), in mind, we believe there should be continuing reflection about the rhythms and patterns of OMC worship to balance the desire for variety with the need to help students to know and inhabit authorized Anglican liturgy.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that arrangements for corporate worship at OMC weeknights, weekends and residential schools should continue to be reviewed, in order to achieve a pattern which better equips students for public ministry in the Church of England.

- 68 By contrast, RCC definitely has a 'house style' inculcating a pattern of daily prayer: 'simple, stable and corporate' are its stated watchwords. It has a particular flavour, including, for instance, the normative use of vestments, and occasional use of incense, but it is not a closed practice. During the inspection period we witnessed a variety of presidential styles at the Eucharist. Group and creative worship, and the student-led provision for children's worship, also reflect the growing diversity.
- 69 Students are also equipped in other ways. Both RCC and OMC have effective worship committees, made up of staff and students, which meet regularly to review practice and make detailed adjustments. OMC has a final year student worship co-ordinator, and a sacristan; their roles are spelt out in the worship handbook. RCC worship is one of the tasks of the college groups, by weekly rotation; there is also a team of sacristans and musicians (discussed at F.iv).
- 70 Opportunities for RCC and OMC worshipping together are constrained by their different timetable needs and the lack of a suitable space in college (though the church is large enough). OMC students are invited to share in Compline on Tuesdays, and to share in leading it, though since they need to get home after a long day, few stay. We would *suggest* the identification of more opportunities for joint worship, while recognising that OMC needs to make the most of its own more limited corporate time.

F.iii There should be a policy concerning balance of worship, including authorized and innovative forms, and of denominational worship in ecumenical situations.

- 71 The stated policies of RCC and OMC over balance of worship are under continual review by their respective worship committees.
- 72 RCC seeks to hold in balance the settled routines of the daily office and Eucharist (plus Compline, where the college's inherited tradition is perhaps most obviously 'held') with opportunities for innovative worship, both to reflect the present variety of students' traditions and to give everyone the experience of planning and sharing such worship. This is chiefly done through 'Creative Worship' most Monday evenings in church and Tuesday morning prayer in college groups, but is also a feature of some College Eucharists.
- 73 All students and staff are currently Anglican--a recent URC staff member having left recently--but the pattern of a twice-termly URC or other ecumenical Eucharist continues, and texts and music from Celtic, Orthodox and other traditions are regularly used on other occasions. The one genuinely ecumenical opportunity (apart from those in placement parishes) is the termly OPTET service, where students from all the theological colleges in Oxford travel to share each others' acts of worship. *We suggest* that the institution expand as far as possible opportunities for learning from and about ecumenical worship.
- 74 OMC has moved from a pattern in which all student-led worship, on Tuesday evenings and at weekends, was 'informal' to one where more direction is provided over what should be included, and (as noted at F.ii) an authorized office has been introduced on Saturday mornings and (staff-led) at the residential week. This was a necessary adjustment because students were not obtaining regular and sustained experience with authorised Anglican liturgy. Although it caused initial dismay for some because students preferred a wholly creative worship pattern, it has been a positive development for ordination training. There is a better balance now. The inspectors encourage staff to keep the balance of the worship pattern under review. Authorized Eucharistic rites are used; on 'world church' Sundays and at other times, texts from other Anglican provinces are incorporated. Those who plan Saturday evening worship draw on material from other traditions. We observed some very good worship - well led and organised, as well as some that were less impressive - poorly led and lacking liturgical focus.
- 75 The college has BCP Holy Communion three times a term and BCP Evening Prayer (generally sung) for the second half of Hilary term. OMC makes regular use of BCP, including Holy Communion, throughout the year. It would be helpful if students received more detailed instruction in how to lead Prayer Book services before doing so.

F.iv In the light of preparation for public ministry, there should be provision to address the tension between worship as an activity of the Church and as a vehicle of professional training.

- 76 Staff are well-aware of tension between worship and its means as a vehicle of training, and it is a strength of both RCC and OMC that it is handled with sensitivity. It impacts differently on each mode of training because of their different dynamics: OMC students worship at home churches more often than as a course and need some time to re-create a community of worship when they come together (though we have voiced a concern at E.ii/F.ii about the prayer groups as a vehicle for addressing this). Their worship handbook details the structured support on offer to prevent worship from becoming a source of anxiety.
- 77 The parish church setting of much RCC worship helps to ensure that it is done 'for real' rather than 'for practice'. In this regard, we note the role of the two church sacristans, appointed by the staff on an annual basis. They bear a heavy responsibility (11½ hours a week, they told us - it counts as a Sunday placement) since they also have parochial duties, such as arrangements for baptisms, weddings and funerals, and the church fête, and are members of the PCC. They, and their two chapel sacristan counterparts, train all students for sacristan and serving duties, 'shadowing' them as appropriate, and are in many respects the guardians of the 'house style'. We encourage the staff to remember how much is asked of them, and to communicate with them over the appointment of their successors.
- 78 The student director of music also carries considerable responsibility in planning and rehearsal (together with the assistants who prepare the weekly accompanists' and service rotas and oversee their operation). The college is blessed with a number of highly-qualified and able musicians who offer their skills to enrich corporate worship. Because these skills are already developed when they come into training, they can be put to immediate use and are obvious to others. As in parish life, this can have the unintended effect of deskilling the musically less-confident, and worship policies should take account of this so that all may be encouraged to reach their potential as singers and worship leaders.
- F.v There should be a policy about expected attendance at public worship and evidence of its outworking.*
- 79 For the college, the expectations about attendance at worship are clearly stated in the worship handbook: students should attend Evening Prayer (or Creative Worship) unless prevented by academic or pastoral commitments, and should agree and keep under review a responsible and sustainable pattern of attendance at Morning Prayer, to reflect their domestic situation, with their personal tutors, who are generally firm but sensitive in implementing the policy. All should attend the College Eucharist (unless on duty at Kids' Church) and absentees must notify their tutor. Other Eucharists (apart from those on greater festivals, where it replaces one of the offices), and Compline, are voluntary.
- 80 Attendance at the main services during the inspection period was about two-thirds of the student body on each occasion, with between 10 and 15 at the morning Eucharists and Compline.

- 81 For OMC, it has not been felt necessary to articulate a 'policy', since students who value their limited time together naturally attend all Tuesday and weekend services unless they have good reason.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion F, Common Worship.

G MINISTERIAL, PERSONAL AND SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Inspectors will consider how the institution helps candidates in their ministerial, personal and spiritual formation, and how candidates are encouraged or enabled to deepen their spiritual life and their self-awareness.

G.i The policy regarding ministerial formation should be easily available and communicated to candidates.

- 82 The fundamental ethos of both college and course puts significant value on the necessity of integrating ministerial, personal and spiritual formation within an educational context. This is articulated in general terms in the Draft Validation Document 2009, and more specifically communicated to students via the aims and learning outcomes of the Core Programme in Mission and Ministry.

- 83 Specific policy is set out in two Formational Theology Handbooks, one for residential and one for non-residential students (see Gii).

- 84 Examining both these documents (alongside the OMC Student Handbook and RCC Handbook) leads the inspectors to *suggest* that a review of all the formational material currently available may be helpful, with the aim of adopting a more wide ranging and holistic approach which would integrate the processes of self-assessment (and reporting) with other equally important issues concerning personal, spiritual and ministerial formation, individually and in relation to the community.

G.ii The institution through its common life and through the way it guides and supervises candidates should enable them to grow in Christian discipleship with a view to exercising a public role in ordained ministry.

- 85 Inspectors noted a strong commitment from staff to nourish a community (both gathered and dispersed) where each individual's growth in discipleship and self-awareness is enabled and sustained during training, and where healthy patterns of self-reflection and review with others become normative, thereby offering the means for students to continue to negotiate the ongoing demands of public ministry and personal life and faith after ordination.

- 86 The Formational Theology Handbooks articulate the expectation that candidates for ministry will develop ways to integrate their theological learning, spiritual, personal and ministerial formation and practical preparation for

ordained ministry. Framed in a consideration of the human dimensions of 'being, knowing and doing', it acknowledges that an emphasis on 'knowing' in terms of intellectual knowledge and academic achievement is prevalent in our culture and most explicitly in a setting such as Oxford. We wish to commend the emphasis placed on the formational dimension of training and the outstanding efforts to enable integration. There is, however, an ongoing need to continue to pay attention to the dimension of 'being'.

- 87 The Handbook comments briefly on the need for 'personal and corporate spiritual disciplines' and also establishes a process and framework for self-assessment, which is a mandatory, but unmarked, part of course work submitted as part of the spirituality module in the Mission and Ministry programme. The Handbook sets out 'expectations for ministerial formation', based on the Ministry Division's selection criteria, and a series of descriptors under each headline criterion. These become the basis for formational exercises to aid self-reflection, culminating in the writing of an 'Annual Profile' where the student assesses strengths, weaknesses, skills, experience, knowledge and training needs. OMC students are encouraged to reflect with their Local Tutor, and possibly their Local Panel, the group which offers support and constructive comment during training and which includes student's home incumbent and lay members. Subsequently, discussion occurs with a staff tutor. Residential students make a personal assessment before discussion with a personal tutor. Students, in the main, commented on the usefulness of this process, although some noted the tension that is inherent in it: honest self-assessment is offered to tutors who are also responsible for reporting on candidates as to their suitability for ordination. (See further comment at N.i)
- 88 The commitment of personal/staff tutors to supporting students was almost universally praised. Students' assessment of the efficacy of the Local Tutor/ Local Panel scheme was mixed, some were enthusiastic, others less so. Whilst the responsibilities of Local Tutors, appointed by the institution in consultation with dioceses, are made clear in the OMC Student Handbook, we *suggest* that the institution keeps under review how Local Tutors are, i) appointed, ii) trained for their role, and iii) kept updated as to developments, particularly as the FdA continues to evolve.
- 89 We commend the emphasis on formation and the processes outlined above. However, as students commented and as we observed, the weekly schedule for both residential and non-residential students is busy and the formational dimension does require space. We would encourage staff to continue to be attentive to this element of training by reviewing from time to time, the length of teaching sessions and the balance of the day (or weekend/evening for non-residential students), the week, the term, the year; by being aware that the need for assessment can sometimes diminish the value gained in a rich experience; and by being alert to the fact that being 'counter-cultural' in this way requires energy and commitment, along with some hard choices, in order to safeguard what is most valuable (see further comment at G.iv).

G.iii The institution should enable candidates to be immersed in the traditions of their own churches, together with an empathetic understanding of strands other than their own. It should also increase candidates' understanding of the traditions of other churches and deepen their sense of their ecclesial identity.

90 One of the strengths of the institution is the range of theological perspectives and church traditions represented on the staff team and by the students. The institution's ethos of inclusivity makes possible a rich diversity, where, within community, differences can be explored and fresh understanding gained. This was borne out by student comment. Students are actively encouraged to explore their own tradition and to experience churches differing in tradition and/or context during their training, particularly through the placement programme.

91 Although there are some possibilities for residential students to experience worship in a different denomination, the ecumenical dimension is quite limited and we *suggest* that the institution explore this more fully in order to prepare both residential and non-residential students to work ecumenically in the future (see also F.iii above).

G.iv The institution should provide corporate and individual guidance and supervision for candidates. There should also be encouragement to seek confidential spiritual counsel.

92 All students, whether residential or non-residential, are encouraged to have a spiritual director, or equivalent. Help is offered to find an appropriate person. For residential students and spouses a chaplain is available two days a week in term time and external spiritual directors visit the college regularly. For non-residential students a chaplain is attached to each year group and to Tuesday evening. Frequent, and appreciative, comment was made by students and staff as to the value of their work in holding a confidential space within the community. Where circumstances indicate that counselling may assist students in dealing with particular issues, the institution works with dioceses to enable that support to be accessed.

93 The institution is to be commended for the level of care offered in this area. We would encourage the institution to maintain and continue to develop an integrated provision of chaplaincy and spiritual direction for the well being of all.

G.v The institution should enable candidates to reflect on the breadth of Christian spiritual tradition and its engagement with the world, and to work with the personal issues arising out of the whole process of training.

94 The Christian tradition is explored explicitly by non-residential FdA students in a spirituality module. Residential students are offered a six week introduction to spirituality in their first year which is valued highly. It provided tools for establishing a sustaining prayer life (see G.vii) but is not intended as a broad

coverage of the tradition. It appears that engagement with the tradition depends on a student's pathway; information may be absorbed through church history and other modules, alongside worship reflecting different traditions from time to time. We therefore *suggest* that staff review this provision across the board for residential students.

95 With regard to personal issues, see Gii and Giv above.

G.vi The institution should enable candidates to develop as people, as future public ministers and as life-long learners, able to look forward to working effectively in the context of traditions other than their own, both within and beyond their own church.

96 As mentioned above, the Formational Theology Handbooks set out a structure which supports integrated personal, ministerial and educational development during training. The profile completed at the start of training and reviewed regularly during training is a key tool to enable students to reflect on, and take responsibility for, their ongoing development and learning. It is a process that students can adapt and take into curacy and later ministry. The FdA pathway explicitly works with this model.

97 Meeting the formational needs of mixed-mode students during training is a challenge, as each individual pathway is different. Mixed-mode students are currently rooted in the OMC within a year group. There can be issues for those who work across different year groups, or with both residential and non-residential students. Some mixed-mode students enjoy the diversity of their belonging, some sense a lack of continuity. In terms of personal, spiritual and ministerial formation very careful attention needs to be given by staff and Local Tutors to each of these areas, taking into account each student's perceived needs, experience and expectations for ministerial formation (see G.ii above). Effective development of a rule of life may assist at the outset, with formational needs monitored and reviewed regularly. We **urge** the staff to review the formational dimension for mixed-mode training in order to ensure that coherent aims are identified for all on this pathway and a defined process is set out to enable students to work towards this.

G.vii Candidates should be encouraged to make time for private prayer and to explore the expectations on the ordained in the areas of corporate and individual prayer, of general conduct and of lifestyle.

98 For residential students, the timetable is very full and the combination of workload and community responsibilities can be heavy. The daily office, Eucharist and Compline provide a structure for corporate prayer which is anchoring for many, but demanding for some. A time of silence is expected in college from 8am until breakfast at 8.30am, which at least provides a bounded time for those who wish to claim it for private prayer, and there is relative peace in college. There have been opportunities for accompanied time for those who have taken part in a six week structured 'retreat in daily life', as well as occasional quiet days. Some single students commented that the relative lack

of privacy, during term time particularly, meant that the solitude that grounded their spirituality was difficult to find.

- 99 For non-residential students the demands are different but pressure of time is an issue for many. Developing sustaining patterns of prayer is a challenge and we would encourage course tutors and chaplains to continue to look at ways to help non-residential students to do this, thereby enabling them to nourish their future ministry and relationships, once training is over.
- 100 See comment at G.iv above, regarding support for non-residential and residential students and spouses in developing private prayer.
- 101 Material in the final year for both residential and non-residential candidates in modules such as Pastoral Practice, Leadership and Ministry and Leavers' Weeks/Weekends complements reflection on student's own expectations and those of others concerning prayer, conduct and lifestyle.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion G, Ministerial, Personal and Spiritual Formation.</p>

H TEACHING AND LEARNING: CONTENT, METHOD AND RESOURCES

Inspectors will attend a representative sample of different teaching and learning activities, noting their quality and effectiveness and the methods used. They will examine the adequacy of educational resources, especially libraries, and will look at samples of students' written work.

H.i. The content and process of the educational programmes should equip candidates for beginning public ministry, in line with denominational guidelines.

- 102 The institution offers a wide range of educational programmes. The main ones lead to Foundation Degree (FdA) in Ministry and the Masters Degree (MA) in Ministry at Oxford Brookes University, and to the Bachelor of Theology and Bachelor of Arts (BTh and BA) degrees and the Master of Theology in Applied Theology (MTh) at the University of Oxford. The content of these programmes satisfies denominational guidelines and is appropriate for candidates preparing for public ministry.
- 103 At the time of the inspection most students who were in residence at the college were studying for the BTh, although a small but increasing number were registered for the FdA. The OMC and mixed-mode generally leads to the FdA, and most of the students following that pathway are therefore non-residential.
- 104 All students follow a 'core programme' in Mission and Ministry, which includes tuition in ministry and pastoral theology, development of ministerial skills and experiential learning through placements. In the case of the Oxford Brookes degrees, these elements are fully integrated with academic study through the

design of the curriculum, which focuses on the development of ministerial 'gifts and competences' and the preparation by the student of a reflective portfolio to show how they have been achieved.

- 105 At the time of the inspection the institution was still developing its familiarity with the portfolio approach and some minor modifications were planned. There was a general view, however, expressed by staff and students alike, that the design of the FdA programme promotes continuous theological reflection and maintains a consistent focus on ministerial practice. In contrast, the design of the BTh and related programmes were felt by some staff and students to be unhelpfully fragmented and to have an inherent risk of separation between academic and practical elements.
- 106 The inspection team learned that there is a willingness on the part of the University of Oxford to consider modifications to the BTh degree, and the team recommends the institution to explore with the University and with its partner colleges in OPTET ways in which theological reflection and the development of practical theology can be integrated more seamlessly across the BTh curriculum.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the institution explore with the University and with its partner colleges in OPTET ways in which theological reflection and the development of practical theology can be integrated more seamlessly across the BTh curriculum.

H.ii Principles concerning what is included in pre-ordination/authorisation training and left to post-ordination/authorisation training should be available and consonant with any denominational requirements.

- 107 The FdA course has clear guidelines for how prior experience is evaluated and credited through an AP(E)L method. This is less clear for the Oxford University courses. The institution carefully assesses candidates with regard to prior learning and experience in order to determine the most effective course for their training. The institution makes clear in its Draft Validation Document the principles (aims and objectives) for its educational and formational programme. In particular, the core 'Mission and Ministry' programme offers practical training and preparation for ordinands in line with the learning outcomes set out in 'Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church'. Mindful of the move to integrate IME 1-3 and 4-7 more fully, the FdA is constructed carefully to offer clear coherent and reflective pathways through training. Staff describe ongoing and close collaboration with the Diocese of Oxford (who currently supply the majority of candidates for OMC) in the way that core areas of theory and practice are developed creatively. This enables an excellent transition for such candidates as lifelong learners and is a fine model of good practice in this regard. The use of the portfolio method of assessment in this pathway, structured around gifts and competencies and learning outcomes has benefits in enabling learners to integrate their past and current experience and training needs.

108 Some concern was expressed to inspectors from diocesan representatives regarding expectations from students that they might complete degree work post ordination. As policy, and funding for this, varies from diocese to diocese, we encourage the institution to make this position clear to students when a place is offered and when title posts are being negotiated.

H.iii Teaching and learning programmes should serve the aims and objectives of the institution and of the educational programmes of which they form a part. They should demonstrate a proper balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training.

109 The programmes offered by the institution contribute effectively to its aims and mission and to preparation for ordained ministry. The FdA and BTh programmes embody a satisfactory balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training, although (as noted in section H.i) there is a perception that these could be better integrated within the BTh. The University of Oxford BA programme is recognised to be inherently more academic; the inspection team learned that the teaching of practical theology within that programme is unevenly distributed across the different years of the degree course, being concentrated in the final year, and we *suggest* that the institution in its discussions with the University of Oxford explore whether more even coverage of practical theology can be achieved.

110 The OMC training is now based on the FdA in Ministry award as of 2008/09. The programme entails a mixture of residential weekends, a residential week and termly weeknights (Tuesdays at Cuddesdon). The adoption of the FdA with its portfolio means of assessment and a gifts and competences approach for learning has brought some challenges to the staff as they switched from the OUDCE three year diploma in theological education and ministry (the final cohort is finishing this course in 2009). But the transition has gone remarkably well. However, Tuesday evenings has a traditional didactic model with dinner, rushed worship, and two hour-long teaching sessions broken by a quick coffee break. We *suggest* that OMC review its Tuesday evening pattern in order to see how the evening can be more effective in facilitating the model of reflective learning that is at the heart of the FdA and in order to see if a new pattern might enable greater integration of OMC and RCC through worship and other joint learning opportunities.

111 Two years ago the institution introduced (in close consultation with Ministry Division, who currently approves each application) a mixed-mode pattern of training to enable candidates to combine elements of non-residential training with residential elements. Essentially this allows those with a background of theological study to complete their training in less than three years. The take up has been larger than expected and has attracted some particularly able candidates. Following the first year and in response to feedback, adjustments were made such as the introduction of a regular mixed-mode seminar. The inspectors were satisfied that this pattern of training was as rigorous as any other pathway. Staff have responded well to trying to ensure each individual mixed-mode student has a well-rounded formative training. The mode of

training will be reviewed in a year's time. We **urge** the institution to create a detailed policy of the mixed-mode pathway so that candidates have a clear understanding of the particular aims of mixed-mode and how this mode of training is negotiated.

H.iv Units of teaching and learning should have clear and appropriate aims, be well structured and enable students to achieve appropriate learning goals. Teaching programmes should introduce students to the appropriate knowledge and learning processes, while drawing on student experience.

- 112 Units of teaching and learning have clear aims and planned learning outcomes. The levels of different units are differentiated, and appear to align with the national Framework for Higher Education Qualifications, although this is less clearly articulated in the BTh than the FdA. The aims and outcomes are appropriate for ministerial training.
- 113 We observed many excellent teaching sessions with a clear lesson plan and well-planned use of the available time. However, a few teaching sessions had an emphasis on content with insufficient regard for the education or learning process. In some of these sessions, the tutor struggled to engage the students even through the simple use of discussion. This said, the content was usually excellent and delivered in interesting and engaging ways. Students on the whole spoke very highly of the quality of teaching. We *suggest* the staff explore staff development opportunities to learn more about how to structure teaching sessions which deliver content with appropriate adult education methods.
- 114 Overall, the content and process of the programmes are generally appropriate for ministerial training, but the inspection team detected some weakness in the use of student experience. Several students commented that staff did not always draw on students' previous experience of church work or their relevant experience in previous employment, and that they would welcome more opportunity to contribute their experience to the process of teaching and learning. The inspection team observed some classes which could have made more use of student experience, although there were others which were exemplary in this respect. The team therefore recommends that the institution should undertake staff development in relation to this issue.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the staff should take steps to integrate consistently, in teaching and learning, the professional and ministerial experience which students bring.

H.v The educational methods employed, and the balance of methods within the educational programme, should underpin the stated aims of the programme.

115 The educational methods observed by the inspection team were appropriate for the stated aims and objectives of the programmes and for the age and maturity of the candidates in training. The course handbooks for the Oxford Brookes programmes include a clear statement of educational methods and approach, but the handbooks for the University of Oxford programmes make no mention of this: the inspection team *suggests* that this omission should be rectified either through dialogue with the University or through the provision of additional statements by the institution.

H.vi Teaching programmes should be complemented by structured opportunities for students to learn, as individuals and as groups.

116 The programmes of study include numerous structured opportunities for students to learn in groups. Often these take the form of seminars, sometimes with students introducing topics for discussion, and there is some project work where students collaborate on set tasks. Students also learn in groups when they plan and conduct worship.

117 The FdA programme promotes a structured approach to individual study through its focus on the preparation of portfolios to evidence the attainment of gifts and competences. Although some FdA students felt that this adds to their workload, they acknowledged that it helps them work in a directed way and to good effect. This structure is not inherent in the BTh programme, and some BTh students – especially those at the beginning of their course, and those with less experience of previous study in higher education – reported that they had initially experienced difficulty in making the best use of their private study time. The inspection team *suggests* that the institution consider how it can help students to plan and manage their study times effectively, and to bear this need in mind during its discussions with the University of Oxford about future development of the BTh programme.

H.vii Staff should provide formal and informal feedback to students and assessment of work and of candidates' progress, both in terms of academic progress and in terms of preparation for beginning public ministry. There should be both affirmation and constructive criticism, as appropriate, of students and of work.

118 The institution provides feedback to students in a variety of ways, both through written reports on their academic work and other aspects of their progress and through individual meetings between students and staff. Students generally felt that there was ample feedback, and stressed that they felt able to approach staff and ask for more if they needed it. A few students felt that some staff have a tendency to be too affirmative, and they would welcome more criticism and 'pointers' for development.

119 Some students in the first year had not fully understood the role of their personal tutor at the outset of the course – in particular, the role of their tutor in writing the Bishop's Report. The inspection team noted that although the college handbook lists some of the matters on which students should turn to their tutor (e.g. authorised absence) it does not contain a clear statement of

the role of the personal tutor, nor of the roles of other key staff who provide advice, guidance and support (e.g. the Chaplain and the Director of Studies). The team **urges** the institution to remedy this in the context of revising the student handbook (see below, section N.i) and to consider whether these matters are covered adequately during student induction.

H.viii Published assessment criteria should be used by the teaching staff and be available to students.

- 120 The course handbooks for the various degree programmes include statements of the assessment criteria, and students confirmed that they generally understood how the marks on their work were determined.
- 121 The inspection team was provided with a varied sample of marked students' work. From this it was able to confirm that students' work is normally returned to them with detailed and helpful comments. In many cases, the comments used a proforma which refers to the published assessment criteria (content, structure, presentation etc.), but that was not always the case. There were instances where assignments with apparently similar comments had received very different marks, and some students reported being puzzled by this. The inspection team *suggests* that the institution address this issue through staff development, in order to ensure that published assessment criteria are referred to more consistently when comments are written on students' work.

H.ix The educational programmes offered should be supported by an appropriate learning environment. This should include adequate provision of resources, library and ICT, placements and practical opportunities to learn.

- 122 The learning environment offered by the institution, in conjunction with the universities, is generally a rich one, and in many ways outstanding.
- 123 The college has its own library with a book stock of around 30,000 volumes; there is an electronic catalogue and reservation system. Students spoke warmly of the facilities offered by the library and in particular of the helpfulness of the librarian, through whom they were usually able to obtain less easily accessible materials. They were also very appreciative of the library support available to them through the two universities; Oxford Brookes University, in particular, is able to deliver books and materials to its local campus only a mile from the college. Staff go to considerable lengths to ensure that adequate materials are available, e.g. by providing photocopied handouts and even by lending their own books, and this is greatly appreciated by the students.
- 124 The college has an internal ICT network that is used for administrative and educational purposes. Although it is slow at times, students find it adequate, and there is widespread use of email within the college. There is limited use of ICT for the provision of learning resources (e.g. copies of handouts distributed by email) and one module is currently taught online, using the Moodle system (an internet virtual learning programme) hosted by Oxford Diocese.

- 125 The inspection team formed the view that the institution would benefit from more extensive use of ICT to support students' learning. In particular, non-residential students expressed frustration that they were unable to continue informal discussions with each other between classes, and that in this respect they were disadvantaged by comparison with their residential colleagues: an online discussion forum would provide a means for them to maintain contact with each other and continue their debates. There is also the potential to make more widespread use of ICT for access to reference copies of handouts and course materials, and to facilitate learning, although extensive use across the institution for these purposes would require a considered, strategic approach and investment in reliable software.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that the institution should explore the potential for wider, more systematic use of ICT, drawing in particular on the advice and expertise of its partner universities in this area of work.

- 126 Formal classes and seminars are supplemented by a wide range of placements and practical learning opportunities, and the teaching of theological reflection helps to ensure that students derive maximum benefit from these experiences.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion, H, Teaching and Learning: Content, Method and Resources.</p>

J PRACTICAL AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Inspectors will consider the way in which the institution understands the relation between theory and practice, how it enables students to develop skills in their integration, and how the overall programme of training is effective in preparing candidates for ordained ministry.

J.i The training institution should have a policy on how the curriculum integrates theory and practice and should communicate it to students.

- 127 The Draft Validation Document sets out how the institution is seeking to integrate theory and practice in training as a whole. This is most explicitly formulated with regard to the 'Mission and Ministry' section of the draft Validation Document. This is communicated to students via the aims and learning outcomes of each module and in the Formational and Practical Theology Handbooks. The FdA pathway is constructed to integrate theory and practice wherever possible.

J.ii The structures for learning - courses, seminars, groups, placements, private study, marking, feedback - should be configured so as to facilitate this integration.

- 128 Beginning with the Core Programme 'Mission and Ministry' which all residential students take, there is evidence of thoughtful engagement by staff in choosing a variety of structures for learning which enhance the students' experience, stimulate integrated thinking and suit different learning styles. Observation of the teaching and learning on Mission and Ministry modules offered evidence of explicit and implicit connections being made between biblical understanding, theology, theory and practice. For OMC students, following the FdA course, the modules offered and the portfolio approach ensures integration.
- 129 A particular strength of the training is the importance placed on and the help provided to enable students to discover their skills as reflective practitioners. Students are given tools right from the beginning of training to give them confidence in this discipline, through theological reflection groups in the first two terms (residential) and the weekend programme (non-residential). Early training in theological reflection thus prepares students to take a constructively critical approach to all other elements of their training. There was evidence of these skills in the quality of the theological reflection observed during the weekends and in Monday morning groups.
- 130 In terms of the learning pathways offered in the FdA, BA, BTh and Masters programmes the experience varies. Inspectors recognise that there is a tension between fulfilling the academic and assessment demands of the institutions in which it is in partnership. However, concerns were expressed both by staff and students about the way that the BTh, validated by University of Oxford, struggles at times to make this integration possible in a way that is most helpful to students in their learning. (See comments above in section H.i)
- 131 Placements are a particularly important part of the programme. The teaching programme of Mission and Ministry modules is structured in order to help students reflect constructively on their experience in a number of settings. Considerable care is taken in organising community placements, church placements and long summer placements taking into account the training needs of the student, previous experience and family situation. Feedback from students, both residential and non-residential, was positive in the main, particularly regarding the range of community (non-church) placements and benefits of the long summer placement. Sometimes the learning opportunities for residential students on Sunday placement are limited, but inspectors are aware of the constraints that college are working with.
- 132 Inspectors observed community and church placement presentations by OMC second and third years. There was ample evidence in the quality of these presentations that many students had absorbed the principles of theological reflection and were confident in applying them to their own experience.
- 133 Placement supervisors indicated that the placement programme is generally well-organised and carefully delivered. There is good communication between supervisors and college and support from college staff where necessary if problems arise.

J.iii The institution should demonstrate how it is enabling candidates to develop an appreciation of the pluralist and multifaith/cultural society in which we live. There should be evidence in the work of students that they are becoming theologically reflective practitioners within it.

- 134 One of the aims of the institution is to enable students to become 'prophetic and constructive theologians, able to interpret the world to the church and the church to the world'. There is evidence that opportunities for gaining such an understanding and doing appropriate theological reflection happens naturally within the community, and specifically within the context of Themed Study Weeks, placements, corporate worship and assessed work.
- 135 The inspectors suggest that the institution develop its links with different faith communities in order to allow students to engage more fully with the diversity of faith expressed in this country and in the world.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion, J, Practical and Pastoral Theology.

K TRAINING IN PUBLIC WORSHIP

Inspectors will note the ways in which students are trained to plan, prepare and conduct public worship.

K.i The institution should have a policy, available to candidates, on Training in Public Worship. It should ensure that candidates plan, prepare and effectively conduct public worship, including preaching.

- 136 For OMC the policy on training in public worship is partly enshrined in the worship handbook, which sets out how students are guided and supported in preparing and leading course worship, and partly in the documentation which they and their incumbents receive in relation to what they should do at their home church, since this also is a focus of their training. The OMC course handbook states that 'it is usual for students to preach and lead worship three or four times a year (in their home church) during their training', but there needs to be flexibility: some are experienced Readers, others have never led worship or preached.
- 137 Teaching on communication and preaching has clearly-stated aims and objectives, and students are expected to preach on placement, as detailed in the Placement and Practical Theology handbook.
- 138 The RCC worship handbook makes clear the aims and purposes of students' participation in college worship, and gives very detailed guidance about the various roles - reading, leading services, assisting and serving at the Eucharist - and the systems for planning and reviewing worship. Final-year work on communication and preaching culminates in sermon classes, where all students preach to their peers and a tutor, with feedback. They are required to preach twice on placement.

139 An introductory course on worship covers, in effect, 'what we (as church, and in this particular place) do, why, and how'. Most teaching on liturgy takes place in the final year, with an eight session course taught by an associate tutor, who also makes input into various themed study weeks and other modules. (MA and MTh students may also take liturgy options.) He also provides input at various points, mainly the residential week, for OMC. We understand that on the arrival of a new staff member with a responsibility for liturgy it is intended to review the whole area of how worship is taught. We suggest that the institution review how worship and liturgy is taught with a view to achieving a better integration of liturgical study and practical training in worship.

140 We note that although the college worship handbook states that 'the selection of hymns must take into account the College practice of using inclusive language', there is no similar statement in OMC documents. We observed several occasions where language was inappropriately gender-exclusive in readings and liturgy used. Not least because some imagine that this is now an 'old' issue, we **urge** that the policy on inclusive language should be more clearly spelt out in both RCC and OMC handbooks as a matter of policy rather than practice - and not just in relation to hymns. It should cover choice of biblical versions and prayers.

K.ii The institution should ensure that the policy is adhered to and that proper oversight is exercised over this part of the programme of formation.

141 Staff involvement in the planning and review of student-led worship through college groups, and the feedback arrangements for OMC, ensures that the policy and guidelines are followed, and that wider monitoring takes place. The Vice-Principal has oversight of RCC worship, and a designated staff member of OMC worship; both worship committees also have a role. Oversight of preaching, and of placements insofar as they affect public worship, is also exercised by staff members.

142 Voice and singing training is provided by an experienced associate tutor. She sees all new residential students in groups and offers regular ongoing sessions for any who request them: some who would benefit from this do not so request. There is an expectation that all final year students will book to see her, but there is no 'signing off' procedure, or formal link into staff meetings. She is available to OMC students by arrangement, but not as a matter of course. Since her work involves wider issues of self-confidence and how people 'present' themselves as ministers, we **urge** that all these issues be reviewed, so that all students, residential and non-residential, have the benefit of professional input and feedback.

K.iii There should be an appropriate policy and practice for reviewing and assessing the leading of worship.

- 143 The policies mentioned at K.i, found in the respective worship handbooks in relation to leading course worship, and in placement documents in relation to leading worship and preaching elsewhere, include appropriate arrangements for review and assessment.
- 144 The practice on OMC is for the group responsible for all student-led services over a weekend, and for the Sunday Eucharist planned in consultation with the president and preacher, to meet with a staff member at the end of the weekend for a brief review; we observed two such sessions. They cover the structure and style of the services, the content including musical and other options, and how they were led. A similar review takes place at the residential week. Review of Tuesday evening worship is more cursory, and takes place at the coffee break, though if serious issues are raised another time is found.
- 145 The RCC group responsible for worship on a weekly rota basis (including Creative Worship and the College Eucharist, which is planned with the president and preacher) makes an assessment at its meeting on the following Tuesday. Staff members of the group ensure that one of them is present at all relevant services.
- K.iv The student should receive critical and constructive comment, attending to performance, content and process from staff and peers.*
- 146 Both in RCC and on OMC, students receive detailed comments on matters of performance and content from staff and from the relevant student group (see K.iii), and also on occasion from other individuals such as the sacristans or worship co-ordinator. We were told that staff handle situations where detailed and potentially sensitive criticisms need to be made. We observed a good deal of affirmation and constructive feedback, both of worship and preaching, by staff and peers.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion, K, Training in Public Worship.

L TEACHING STAFF

Inspectors will consider the provision of teaching staff and the policy underlying it, the procedures for appointment of teaching and other staff, and provision for staff development.

- 147 The present core staff is composed of twelve persons, nine full-time including the Principal and four part-time. There are eight persons listed as associate tutors. There is a staffing plan of maintaining at least nine full-time tutors clustered in groups of three in three general subject areas: biblical studies, mission and ministry, and theology. This will allow tutors to support each other and to share the work demands of residential and non-residential training. A recent full-time appointment will bring the staff up to ten full-time with this appointment effectively replacing two part-time core staff.

148 The teaching staff works well as a team and the relationships seem very healthy. There are weekly staff meetings and as well as informal meetings of small groups of staff to discuss student and community life issues and to mentor new staff. Staff members speak of being cared for.

L.i Appointments should involve appropriate consultation with the relevant sponsoring Churches and partner institutions, and the method for making appointments should be clear and fair to all concerned.

149 In discussion with all teaching staff and especially recently appointed staff, the process of appointment was clear and fair, involving appropriate partners. The induction of new staff happens somewhat informally and was vague to new staff. We **urge** the institution to put in place a formal induction process that is included in the post appointment process.

L.ii Recruitment and selection should be in line with current good practice. Job descriptions and conditions of service should be clear at the time of appointment and should be revised at regular intervals.

150 Recruitment and selection reflect good practice.

151 Since the previous inspection, the services of an HR consultant have led to all the core staff now having contracts. Most staff have job descriptions. Some staff that have moved from part-time to full-time were not clear if they had an appropriate job description for their new appointment. It did not appear that there was a regular practice of revising job descriptions.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that through the appraisal process (see section C.iv above), all job descriptions are reviewed and regularly updated.

152 Several associate staff were concerned and even disturbed that they did not have a contract/statement of arrangement or job description. Others were very content with their working arrangements. In addition, some who have been at the institution for a number of years felt that once they were included in the wider staff community through various means, like a weekly staff lunch, but now this was not the case. The institution is dependent upon associate staff in a number of areas and has a number of talented and qualified persons assisting in this capacity.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that all part-time teaching staff and associate tutors have, as a minimum, a formal agreed statement of arrangements and, where appropriate, a job description, and that these are reviewed regularly especially when changes are made.

L.iii The number, field of expertise, scholarly and teaching competence of the staff should enable the educational programmes of the institution to

be offered at the appropriate levels, both in terms of academic achievement and of preparation for public ministry.

- 153 The institution has a well balanced staff across the required subject areas and disciplines with appropriate expertise and experience. It is a very competent staff with high academic achievement appropriate to its Oxford setting, yet with a high commitment to connecting all learning with preparation for public ministry.

L.iv The gender, lay/ordained and denominational balance among staff members should enable the institution to offer appropriate models of learning and of ministry, and should comply with denominational guidelines. (For Church of England Guidelines see Inspections Handbook, Appendix E.)

- 154 Among the ten core full-time staff (including the recent appointment not yet in post), six are male and four are female; seven are ordained and three are lay. The staff are more than able to offer apposite models of learning and ministry.

L.v The institution should have in place an effective framework and programme for the continuing professional development of its staff. All staff are to have annual appraisals.

- 155 Annual appraisals happen, but informally (see section C.iv above and Recommendation 7). Continuing professional development of staff also occurs, but again informally. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills through sabbaticals and research. With the growth and complexity of the institution, training resident and non-resident students, students from a broad variety of church traditions, students with a variety of academic abilities, and students charting different learning pathways, staff, individually and corporately, need to assess their professional strengths and weaknesses. In so doing, there will be a need for a stated framework and programme for continuing professional development. The recently introduced staff seminars once a term are commendable and will help in this regard. Rich resources for staff development are available through partner institutions, especially Oxford Brookes, and should be used more than at present.

Recommendation 17

We recommend that individual professional staff development needs are formally identified through the appraisal system and that a corporate staff development programme is established to aid in equipping staff for the complex learning communities they are serving.

L.vi Staff should model an appropriate pattern of spirituality, continuing learning and reflection on practice.

- 156 Staff reflect a genuine seriousness about their role as examples. In the teaching we observed there was an overt effort to connect learning with ministry and personal discipleship. Non-ordained staff are encouraged to

share, as appropriate, in leading the worship or preaching. All students commented on the high level of pastoral care offered by the staff in their role as personal tutors. Staff are involved in service to the wider church, the outside community, and the academy.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion, L, Teaching Staff.
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M ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Inspectors will consider the provision of administrative staff, the policy underlying it, and procedures for their appointment.

M.i There should be an adequate number of administrative staff for the type of institution and its way of working.

157 Members of the inspection team interviewed the administrative staff and were assured that, although they are very busy at certain times of the year, their workload is not excessive. It was acknowledged, however, that because nearly all the administrative staff are part-time they face a challenge in ensuring that there is appropriate continuity of support. This concern was echoed by some of the academic staff and contributes to the team's recommendation for a review of administrative support that appears at section C.i.

M.ii The institution should establish and make known clear lines of responsibility and accountability for its administrative staff.

158 Administrative staff confirmed that they have clear lines of responsibility and accountability, and expressed the view that these are effective. The OMC secretary normally reports to the Vice Principal, OMC, who was on long term sick leave at the time of the inspection, but in his absence she was reporting to other OMC staff.

M.iii Recruitment and selection should be in line with current good practice. Job descriptions and conditions of service should be clear at the time of appointment, be revised at regular intervals, and include opportunities for professional development. Staff contracts should be provided.

159 Administrative staff who had been appointed recently confirmed that they all have clear job descriptions. This did not appear to be the case with longer-serving administrative staff. All administrative staff have contracts of employment. There did not appear to be a formal scheme for the professional development of administrative staff, but the staff were confident that the institution would help them to undertake relevant training where it was necessary for the fulfilment of their duties, and in one case it had done so.

Recommendation 18

We recommend that all job descriptions of administrative staff are reviewed in the next cycle of appraisals to ensure they are up to date and in place.

M.iv The institution should ensure that administrative staff know how they can contribute to the decision-making processes of the institution.

- 160 Administrative staff were aware that they could contribute to decision-making in the institution through the regular Administration Meetings, through their representation by the Bursar on the Executive Committee, and through direct contact with the Principal, which was warmly appreciated.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion, M, Administrative Staff.</p>

N STUDENTS

Inspectors will examine procedures for admission and suspension or dismissal, for assessing progress during training, for reporting to the sponsoring Church, and for arranging first appointments.

N.i Written information for students about admission, welfare, complaints, discipline, assessment, reporting to sponsoring Churches and arrangements for first appointments should be publicly available.

- 161 The inspection team found that information for students about admission, welfare, complaints, discipline, assessment, reporting to sponsoring Churches and arrangements for first appointments is contained in course handbooks and other documentation. However the manner of presentation is inconsistent: for example, the OMC handbook comprises most of the relevant information within a single document, whereas BA and BTh students need more than one document for the same purpose. It was also not clear whether university or institutional documentation was intended to be definitive when the same matters were addressed in both. The team recommends that the institution should review the handbooks given to students in order to achieve greater consistency, and should give thought to the possibility of combining material that is common into a single document, not only for clarity and efficiency but also to promote a sense of community across the institution, residential and non-residential.

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the institution should review the handbooks given to students in order to achieve greater consistency and should give thought to the possibility of combining material that is common into a single document.

N.ii The Institution should show evidence of compliance with its own policies, and denominational policies where they exist.

162 The inspection team received evidence that the institution was complying with its own policies with regard to students and with denominational policies where relevant. The team was able to meet with two students who were being considered for admission to the college and was briefed confidentially about disciplinary action that had been taken in particular cases, from which it was further evident that published policies were being adhered to.

N.iii The decision-making structure of the institution should enable students to take an appropriate part in the institution. Students should take responsibility for their own participation in the institution.

163 The institution has a number of student appointments (year and course representatives, Student Common Room officers, etc.). Although staff are sometimes instrumental in encouraging students to volunteer for these roles, all student appointments are subject to election or ratification by the student body. Students were very positive about these arrangements and felt that they were encouraged to play a substantial role in managing and developing the life of the institution.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion, N, Students.

O CONCLUSION

164 The inspection team once again would like to express its appreciation for the courtesy and cooperation of all staff and students which made the inspection task all the more easy and pleasant.

165 Ripon College Cuddesdon and the Oxford Ministry Course combine to make a thriving, vibrant single institution providing excellent residential and non-residential theological education and training for ministry. The institution is distinguished by the rich community life, the pastoral care of students, and the quality of theological learning and ministerial training. It is also outstanding in preparing future ministers who are effective reflective practitioners.

166 The inspection team has made a number of recommendations in this report, but the majority of these are offered in order to improve a healthy and flourishing institution. It is the considered opinion and careful judgment of the inspection team that the institution is fit for the purpose of preparing men and women for ordained and licensed ministry in the Church of England.

Overall outcome: The inspection team has confidence in Ripon College Cuddesdon and the Oxford Ministry Course for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the institution should conclude its negotiations with University of Oxford about admission to the Conference of Colleges as soon as possible. (para 19)

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the institution maintain its involvement with and commitment to OPTET and continue to work collaboratively to develop and extend the work and resources of OPTET for enhancing the ecumenical and inter-church experiences of theological education and ministerial training. (para 24)

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the Governors review the job description of the Principal so that it reflects the reality of the institutional situation and the complexity of the job required for the present and any future principal. (para 30)

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the institution review the administration structure and provision in order to ensure that it is resourced to cope with an expanding institution and with the academic and administrative complexity of residential and non-residential training with multiple course pathways. (para 35)

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the institution review its committee structure and community life in order to ensure maximum efficiency and to continue to establish a more unitary management structure that is reflective of its goal of a fully integrated academic institution. (para 36)

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the Governors and Principal review the administrative support for the Bursar and ensure that there is adequate and long term provision provided for in an agreed administrative structure for the bursarial department. (para 38)

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the present appraisal practice be formalised with appropriate documentation for each yearly appraisal. (para 41)

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the governors should develop a programme to improve the teaching, learning and living space of the existing site, that is distinct from or complementary to the development programme, with specific reference to issues related to single accommodation, the library teaching space, staff offices in the Gore building, and disabled access. (para 52)

Recommendation 9

We recommend the student handbook include a policy statement on gender, ethnicity and inclusivity with regard to community life. (para 54)

Recommendation 10

We recommend that specific opportunities for theological reflection on the diversities within the life of the community should be created, so that experience of diversity may be integrated into learning and formation. (para 61)

Recommendation 11

We recommend that arrangements for corporate worship at OMC weeknights, weekends and residential schools should continue to be reviewed, in order to achieve a pattern which better equips students for public ministry in the Church of England. (para 67)

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the institution explore with the University and with its partner colleges in OPTET ways in which theological reflection and the development of practical theology can be integrated more seamlessly across the BTh curriculum. (para 106)

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the staff should take steps to integrate consistently, in teaching and learning, the professional and ministerial experience which students bring. (para 114)

Recommendation 14

We recommend that the institution should explore the potential for wider, more systematic use of ICT, drawing in particular on the advice and expertise of its partner universities in this area of work. (para 125)

Recommendation 15

We recommend that through the appraisal process (see section C.iv above), all job descriptions are regularly reviewed and updated. (para 151)

Recommendation 16

We recommend that all part-time teaching staff and associate tutors have, at minimum, a formal agreed statement of arrangements and, where appropriate, a job description, and that these are reviewed regularly especially when changes are made. (para 152)

Recommendation 17

We recommend that individual professional staff development needs are formally identified through the appraisal system and that a corporate staff development programme is established to aid in equipping staff for the complex learning communities they are serving. (para 155)

Recommendation 18

We recommend that all job descriptions of administrative staff are reviewed in the next cycle of appraisals to ensure they are up to date and in place. (para 159)

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the institution should review the handbooks given to students in order to achieve greater consistency and should give thought to the possibility of combining material that is common into a single document. (para 161)