



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Ministry Council

Inspection Report

**St John's College,
Nottingham**

February 2013

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GLOSSARY

BAP	Bishops' Advisory Panel
CBT	Context Based Training
College	refers to St John's college, Nottingham
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CYM	Centre for Youth Ministry
DDO	Diocesan Director of Ordinands
MCYM	Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry
Moodle	On-line learning platform
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
UKBA	United Kingdom Border Agency

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 has been 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.

THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTION OF St John's College, Nottingham February 11 – 15, 2013

SUMMARY

Introduction

St John's College Nottingham was founded in 1863 in Kilburn with a founding purpose:

'To provide education and training particularly (but not exclusively) education in doctrinal and pastoral theology for candidates for holy orders in the Church of England, or in communion therewith; and for such other purposes as may appropriately be educated together with such candidates provided that the theological teaching shall always be in conformity with the unique and supreme authority of Holy Scripture and with the doctrine of the Church of England.'

This remains incorporated in the revised (2009) Memorandum and Articles of Association. St John's currently describes itself through its website as 'a charismatic community, rooted in the Bible and critically engaging with emerging trends'. The latter are both cultural and theological trends.

The College celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, marked by a programme of events including a service of thanksgiving in Southwell Minster, a preaching festival and a theological conference. A history of the college, written by former principal the Rt Rev'd Colin Buchanan, in conjunction with the college, will provide a lasting memorial to the anniversary.

At the time of the inspection St John's had 72 Church of England ordinands engaged in training, of which 7 were training for assistant status ministry (including 1OLM ordinand). 13 Methodist students are listed and 2 Baptist. 11 students are recorded from other Anglican Provinces or churches. A total of 251 students are recorded including those listed above, 2 awaiting a BAP and independent students.

St John's College, Nottingham works in partnership with the University of Chester to provide a number of recognized pathways for ordination training.

The Inspection took place in the week beginning February 11th 2013, although inspectors made a number of visits prior to the inspection.

Summary of outcomes

Our overall conclusion is

CRITERIA	OUTCOME
A. Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution	Confidence
B Relationships with other institutions	Confidence
C Curriculum for formation and education	Confidence with qualifications
D Community and corporate life	Confidence
E Worship and training in public worship	Confidence
F Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation	Confidence
G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources	Confidence
H Practical and pastoral theology	Confidence
I Teaching staff	Confidence with qualifications
J All staff	Confidence with qualifications
K Students	Confidence
L Governance, management, constitution and organisation	Confidence
M Business planning and risk management	Confidence with qualifications
N Financial policies and cost-effectiveness	Confidence with qualifications
O Reserves policy and statutory liabilities	Confidence
P Accommodation	Confidence
Overall Outcome	Confidence with qualifications

General observations

The Inspection took place at a time of considerable change for St John's College, Nottingham. In April 2012 the Rev'd Dr David Hilborn succeeded Canon Dr Christina Baxter as Principal. Dr Baxter had been on the staff at St John's for 33 years and had served as Principal for the last 15 years. The Council set the following priorities for the new Principal (agreed at a Council meeting on 28.02.2011), listed on the job description and summarised by the Principal in the Inspection document:

- Upholding, developing and implementing St John's vision, together with staff colleagues and Council;
- Nurturing and encouraging new initiatives and creating new developments within the institution;

Working with senior staff to promote the coherent and efficient management of the institution and the maximising of its resources, and developing, and implementing the strategic plan;

The House of Bishops' Inspection was also the last of a number of inspections of the College by other bodies, QAA, UKBA, University of Chester for the annual monitoring and programme report, partnership review and inspection. The first Ministry Division annual self-evaluation report was also completed in January 2013.

The Inspectors are very grateful for the hospitality extended to them during the inspection week and the willingness of staff and students to spend time in interview. The Inspectors were also grateful for the openness and candour in the self-evaluation report sent to Ministry Division by the College prior to the inspection and for the approach mirroring this in conversations with staff during the inspection week. The Inspectors found much to support the self-evaluation of the college, including many strengths, a considerable amount of evidence that efforts were being made to address areas of weakness and some evidence to show that the college had already moved forward in these areas from the time of the self-evaluation completed the previous month. In addition, the Inspectors were able to make some recommendations, mainly for enhancement of practice in the self-identified areas of strength.

The Report is written in relation to the Criteria set out in the *Inspection, Curriculum Approval, Moderation*, Handbook June 2012. The paragraphs follow the Criteria which are printed in *italic* type. The inspectors' comments are in normal type and the recommendations in **bold**.

Strengths

The list below affirms much of what was written in the self-evaluation report:

- Doctrinal and spiritual commitment, shown through attention to founding purpose and attention given to spiritual life of the College.
- Openness to other traditions, shown actively in recruitment and ethos.
- Developing core purpose and values, under active development.
- Pastoral care, through formation groups and support for their leaders.
- Community life, including resident and non-resident members and families of members.
- Integration of learning through acquisition of knowledge, experience and reflection.

- Dedicated faculty and staff, evident in conversations during the inspection.
- Ordinand and independent student recruitment, which continues to be in good numbers.
- Attractive grounds, with proximity to the city.

Areas for attention

The list below affirms much of what was written in the self-evaluation report. All of these areas were noted by the Inspectors to be receiving rigorous attention:

- The identity of the college as a whole, until recently split into different entities.
- Management Structure, needing better representation of staff to Council.
- Student Recruitment, both to serve local needs and to provide the critical mass needed for viability.
- Worship, Chaplaincy and Formation, including vacancy for chaplain/liturgist.
- Governance, including the lack of an appropriate range of skills on Council, identified through a skills audit in Autumn 2012.
- Finance, including overspend on annual budgets and pensions deficit.
- Development, necessary to protect the long term future of the College.
- Communications, identified in the last inspection as needing improvement.

FULL REPORT

SECTION ONE: AIMS AND KEY RELATIONS

A Aims and objectives

Inspectors will consider whether the institution's aims are appropriate, clearly articulated and understood.

A.i Its aims, objectives and policies should be appropriate to the preparation of students for ordained/lay public ministry within the breadth of the traditions of the sponsoring churches.

1. The founding purpose of St John's College, as described in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, is clearly focused upon the training of ordinands within the Church of England with provision for those who might suitably be trained alongside them. The aims and objectives of St John's College, Nottingham, are set out in the Vision, Mission and Values in section one of the inspection document. At the January 2013 meeting of the Standing Committee of College Council the Principal reported a 'growing consensus' over these. The Inspectors concur with this judgement and would *urge* the Council to formulate and agree in a single document, for clarity, all the statements currently in use concerning the aims of the College. This will then facilitate the Recommendation 2 at Ciii.
2. The statements are clearly appropriate for the preparation of students for ordained/lay public ministry within the evangelical and charismatic traditions of the Church of England. Given the changing face of the Church of England where clergy are often responsible for a number of churches, which can be of a variety of traditions, the Inspectors asked the question, How would the St John's vision, mission and values aid in the training of ordinands and laity for the wider Cof E and other churches? The Principal was very clear that the open nature of the evangelical stance made it possible for a wide variety of ordinands and independent students of the Anglican tradition and other traditions to feel able to study at St John's. The inspectors met ordinands of other traditions and those training from other denominations. The beginnings of some discussion about how the College can serve the wider Church of England in its training of ministers were noted in the Strategy Group minutes for February 2013.
3. However, the ways in which the College trains ordinands for other than the open evangelical traditions was less clear beyond the Church Hopping observation placement. A recommendation (2iii) about a review of how

the training it offers also fits the ordinands for ministry in the wider Church of England is to be found in section C.

A.ii They should be consistent with the current published policy statements of the sponsoring churches.

4. The Vision, Mission and Values of the College are consistent with the House of Bishops' Learning Outcomes and the wider Church of England.

A.iii The institution should show that it has built on earlier learning, including through action in response to: previous inspection, curriculum approval and follow-up reports; other external bodies' evaluation; and self-evaluations.

5. The House of Bishops Inspection was the last in a long line of inspections of St John's Nottingham. The Inspectors can therefore report on the findings of recent inspections by other bodies, on the action plans following the inspections (where relevant) and progress upon these.

6. QAA: The recent Review for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, June 2012, was very affirmative of St John's College, Nottingham. QAA expressed **confidence** in 'how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers' from the various universities and 'how the provider manages its stated responsibilities for the quality and enhancement of the learning opportunities it offers' whilst placing **reliance** upon the accuracy and completeness of the information that the provider is responsible for publishing about itself and the programmes it delivers.

7. The recommendations were discussed at the College Council meeting in July 2012. An undated action plan was provided for the Inspectors. It is not clear when this was agreed by Council but it is clear that it is being acted upon to address the recommendations both the 'advisable' and the 'desirable' substantially by the summer of 2013. The Inspectors saw evidence that this plan was being implemented particularly in reference to the major areas of:

- 'clarifying management responsibilities' and 'simplifying organisational structures'
- 'developing a simplified and more strategic approach to staff development'
- Public information
- student representation through regular meetings with the Principal

8. UKBA: The successful inspection (see above) by the QAA on behalf of UKBA in November 2012 has led to restrictions on numbers of overseas

students at the College being lifted. At the time of the Inspection, the formal report was awaited but informal notification of the result has been received.

9. *University of Chester:* A successful review of the partnership, by the University of Chester, in December 2012 led to recommendation that the partnership be renewed. Recommendations with reference to student feedback, communications and staff development are similar to those in the QAA report. Inspectors saw evidence that they were being implemented. A recommendation with reference to teaching at non-adjacent levels is under consideration but this will probably be superseded by the transfer to Durham for Common Awards.
10. *2007 House of Bishops Inspection:* The College has sought in the most part to fulfil the recommendations of the last House of Bishops' Inspection report, although some of this has occurred very recently or is still in process:
 - The College has made several attempts to address the 'frenetic culture' described by the 2007 Inspection team (recommendation 1) including some very recent modifications to the timetable described in section I.
 - The College contributes to both the co-ordinating group and the practitioners group of the RTP (recommendation 2).
 - It is no longer possible for closer links to be made with EMMTC (recommendation 3) as this course has now dissolved, although offers of assistance were made before the course reached this point.
 - A review of the management structure of the College is now reaching its conclusion under the new Principal (recommendation 4) described in section L.
 - A director of communications has been appointed (recommendation 5) as part of the restructuring in response to recommendation 4.
 - The burden of assessment for the leading of worship has now been taken away from College worship (recommendation 6) and a pattern encompassing evening prayer on two days of the week has been established. The Inspectors took part in morning worship that reflected the lectionary and the liturgical season.
 - The move to a partnership with Chester in 2011, for academic elements of the course, led to some simplification of the course structure (recommendation 7). Further development now awaits the new Common Awards.
 - All students continue to undertake a fresh expressions placement (recommendation 8).
 - Documentation in respect of worship is thorough and available to students on Moodle (recommendation 9). Opportunities are provided for feedback in worship (see section E).

- The college is currently attempting to appoint a Chaplain/liturgist (recommendation 10).
- Staff attend research seminars at Chester and the recent timetable revisions mentioned in association with recommendation 1 aim to increase research time available to staff. The College policy is that staff take part in appraisal every 2 years and for the most part this is now happening (recommendation 12). However, there is, as yet, no provision for annual appraisal (see section J).
- Administrative support has again been reviewed with the appointment of the new Principal and further amendments have been made (recommendation 14 and 15).

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion A, Aims, Objectives and Achievements of the Institution.

B Relationships with other institutions

Inspectors will look at how well the institution engages with partners:

- B.i There should be evidence of the institution's commitment to partnership with the other providers of theological education in the region.*
11. College staff attend the RTP practitioners group and the principal attends the RTP co-ordinators group. Discussions are currently taking place with the Bishops of Southwell and Nottingham, Derby and Leicester with reference to an evening and weekend programme to allow for ordinands training part time.
 12. The college has a long standing partnership with the Centre for Youth Ministry whereby the Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry (MCYM) operates as part of St John's, the College being the employer of the staff of MYCM. The Director of MCYM is a part of the St John's College Faculty, a full member of the directorate and line managed by the Principal of the College. Regular reports are brought to the College Council. However, the Centre offers University of Staffordshire and University of Gloucester degrees and also trains students to professional youth work accreditation through the Joint Negotiating Committee – the professional body for youth work training. Explorations are currently taking place with Ministry Division and the University of Durham with a view for academic accreditation through the Common Awards scheme.
 13. MYCM see their location within St John's College as important because of the wider community of practice it offers, the services the College provides that it could not itself provide and because of the good reputation of the College. MYCM offers St John's College a broader profile, research and

teaching and skills in facilitation and education. There is potential for greater working together in the future.

14. Members of the College teaching staff are taking a full part in the development of Common Awards, working with Ministry Division staff and colleagues from other courses and colleges in the development of modules for accreditation within the University of Durham.
 15. Discussions are currently underway with neighbouring dioceses concerning the possibility of evening and weekend ordination training at St John's, using existing programmes and those to be developed through Common Awards. Clearly sufficient commitment on the part of the Diocesan Bishops needs to be established to enable this to happen in a way that will be an effective use of resources for the College. At the time of the Inspection the Inspectors were unclear about how far this commitment had been offered.
 16. The nearest institution offering ordination training is within the Diocese of Lincoln. It is currently in a state of change. No formal relationship exists with the College. The All Saints Centre for Mission and Ministry, offering ordination training as part of the South North-West RTP has also started to operate within the diocese of Derby and Southwell and Nottingham. Under current proposals for evening and weekend teaching at St John's College, within the present House of Bishop's policy for sustainability of colleges and courses, this institution can only be seen as a potential competitor rather than partner.
 17. Although not within the region, the Inspectors noted the relationship with the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (previously for the training of ordinands and latterly for the preparation of candidates for ministerial training) and the recently formed link with Edgehill College, Belfast.
- B.ii The institution should draw fully on the resources of universities in teaching, quality assessment, staff development and the promotion of research.*
18. The College has a partnership with the University of Chester for its validation. A dedicated partnership manager, with appropriate administrative staff, in the Theology and Religious Studies Department facilitate the link. The partnership is reviewed and evaluated through the annual partnership review (APR) and the twice annual monitoring forms (AMR) resulting in a regular quality assessment.
 19. The Inspectors uncovered no evidence that the relationship with the University of Chester extends to staff development, rather, these have been pursued within the College (see I and J). The University of Chester

is too distant to offer teaching. However, research seminars are open to staff who do attend.

20. A significant difficulty with this partnership, noted in the inspection papers and by QAA, is the lack of online access to electronic resources at the University, noted in the external examiner reports and the AMR and APRs. Whilst students have access staff do not and are therefore unable to see what the students can see, unable to update reading lists and unable to engage in an evidence-led teaching environment. The Inspectors recommend that this access is pursued with the University in the period prior to the commencement of Common Awards.

Recommendation 1

The inspectors recommend that the staff pursue with the University of Chester the provision of online access to electronic resources at the University.

21. The College continues a relationship with the University of Nottingham for the remaining students completing their courses. The University has generously extended reading rights to faculty staff for their continuing research.

B.iii It should engage effectively with local churches, other faith communities and secular organisations so as to enhance formation for public ministry.

22. The College has made links with local churches for placement. There are also significant links with local chaplaincy teams which enable placements.
23. Links are also made with local clergy through study days and teaching offered to local churches. Local placement tutors reported on this positively. Efforts are also being made to build stronger links with local Directors of Mission and Ministry in the Dioceses of Southwell and Nottingham and Leicester.
24. The joint appointment with the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham of a part-time tutor in mission/part-time development of pioneering within a parish has also strengthened links.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion B, Relationships with other institutions.
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SECTION TWO: CURRICULUM FOR FORMATION AND EDUCATION

C Curriculum for formation and education

Inspectors will consider the curriculum's design and content.

- C.i There should be a theological, formational and educational rationale for the institution's approach to mission and to formation for ministry and discipleship.*
25. St John's has a clear core purpose 'to inspire, equip and grow Christians to serve and lead in God's mission'. Its taught programmes seek to contain a balance of 'Biblical Studies', 'Christian Thought and Worship' and 'Practical Theology' and are designed to promote reflection. Alongside this there are a large number of placements – some students will engage in four placements in their first year, 'church hopping', 'hospital placement', 'fresh expressions placement' and 'main church placement' – which to a greater or lesser extent connect with a taught module. The College also puts much emphasis on its formational programme, principally driven through the formational groups, its spirituality programme on a Wednesday morning, and corporate worship and life. Here it draws on the work of J. Mezirow and his understanding of transformational learning.
26. However, there does not appear to be a clearly expressed 'theological, formational and educational rationale' broadly shared within the faculty team. Staff were generally able to articulate a rationale for the individual elements within this programme for which they were responsible, although in some cases simply stated that the programme was what they had inherited. However, there was little articulation of an overall rationale beyond a commitment to balance. There seemed to be an underlying difference of opinion between some tutors describing the rationale as deliberately not contextual – that it was a great benefit for students to step back from ministry for a few years to focus .while the college also sets out a theological vision statement which speaks of a 'focus on contextual training'.
27. It was also reported that previous consideration of the shape of the curriculum was on the basis of: 'Is there anything we can dispense with?', to which the answer was 'no'. We sympathise with the sense of ever increasing demands on curriculum, but this calls for a clearer, overall rationale, if it is not to be inappropriately shaped by the particular interests of the current faculty. Discussion with longer-serving faculty suggested that five years ago there was a clearer articulation of a rationale, but that

this has been lost through the move to Chester validation, and the turn over of staff in recent years. This is confirmed by the documents provided for the Inspection which stated that “the ongoing strategic review led by the new Principal ... is set to include a thorough reappraisal of the College’s rationale for ministerial training. This process is still in its early stages ...”. Discussions with students highlighted the need for this work with few of them expressing much of a sense of why the programme has the shape it does.

28. Our recommendation relating to the whole of section C and picking up the concerns expressed in this section is given at the end of Ciii (34).
- C.ii *The institution should offer, and periodically review, a set of programmes that will enable candidates to be prepared for their ministries and/or meet their learning needs.*
29. St John’s offers a range of different pathways to allow students without previous qualifications, with a prior degree in another subject, and those with a theology degree, to get a grounding in core principles for ministry while acknowledging their academic experience and knowledge. At the heart of this is a Foundation Degree, which can be built upon with a third year BA programme, and a graduate diploma / MTh pathway. There are also further pathways (such as the LTh and MA) and exit points (e.g. certificate level) to add flexibility. Alongside this there is a procedure for ‘advanced standing’ to allow appropriate students to enter these programmes at a more advanced point, e.g. into the second year of the Foundation Degree. These programmes ensure that there is good preparation for ordinands to enable them to meet the appropriate learning outcomes set by the Church.
30. The set of programmes is well-designed to offer flexibility for students, which is appreciated by many of them. However, it comes at the cost of a high degree of complexity. Although some staff feel that this idea of complexity is over-stated; others expressed a concern that the flexibility and complexity did unhelpfully increase the burdens across the College (e.g. on registry as well as on tutorial staff). Many students articulated a concern that the way the programmes worked was ‘complicated’; some explaining that they didn’t know what was coming next in their programme, and had experienced significant confusion in the months approaching the start of their study, and in their early months at St John’s.
31. The work of the academic Academic Board, and partnership reviews with Chester University, while ensuring the quality of the existing programme and its elements, do not carry out the work described as ‘*periodically review, a set of programmes that will enable candidates to be prepared for their ministries*’ in the sense of reviewing the overall curriculum. We were

informed that there used to be a “programme review group” which did undertake this work but that this hasn’t met for several years. Particularly given the recent staff turn over, it was confirmed to us that this means that most of the current teaching staff have not engaged in a broad review of the programme within which they are teaching, and why the curriculum offered by St John’s to prepare people for ordination contains the elements it does, and not others. In part this is understandable because of the burdens of the recent move to Chester validation, and the forthcoming introduction of Common Awards.

32. The college formed an ‘Academic Development Group’ in the Autumn of 2012 specifically to prepare it for the transition to Common Awards, and to assess the logistics involved in establishing a part-time evening and weekend pathway. This is important work. The transition to Common Awards will bring many challenges and opportunities to the college; the college is to be commended for the proactive stance it has taken towards this, not only through the formation of this Group, but in encouraging many staff to participate in the groups working nationally on the structure and content of common awards. The possibility of establishing a part-time evening and weekend pathway could be significant for the college and surrounding dioceses, and it is right that this is given careful thought. However, as mentioned in the previous paragraph regarding the Academic Board and partnership reviews, this Academic Development Group is not tasked to “*periodically review, a set of programmes that will enable candidates to be prepared for their ministries*”.
33. There is currently no distinctive pathway for those who have been selected as Ordained Pioneer Ministers. While St John’s suggests that it is preparing all its ordinands to be pioneering, and the guidelines for the training of pioneer ministers emphasises that much of their training will be the same as for regular ordinands, it is not appropriate that the Church’s selection of these candidates for a distinctive ministry is given so little focus. However, a pioneer minister was appointed part-time to faculty less than a year ago, and a new distinctive pathway has just been agreed, and should be in place for the next academic year, which should address this concern.
34. Alongside these programmes used by ordination candidates, St John’s also offers extensive programmes for distant learning, both university accredited and not. These provide an excellent resource to the church, and are used by some ordination candidates as a form of pre-theological education. These are also in need of review and potentially simplification, and clear thinking as to the target market, though this is outside the scope of this report.

35. Our recommendation relating to the whole of section C, picking up the concerns expressed in this section, is given at the end of Ciii.
- C.iii The academic and formational assessment methods should enable the institution to advise church leaders on the suitability of candidates for their ministry.*
36. Each module within one of the programmes has a single assessment which is submitted after the end of the modular teaching (generally three weeks after) and is returned with a feedback sheet within a month. Approximately two thirds of these assessments are essays; the others covering range of modes of assessment such as presentations, sermons, a plan for a bible study etc. There is a robust system for feedback from placement supervisors, tied in both to the student's own learning objectives and the broader learning objectives and reporting framework established by the Church. The Director of Ministry and Formation provides training for placement supervisors, and maintains close contact with them, to ensure this feedback is appropriate and of a consistent standard. There are cases of supervisors no longer being used when feedback is not satisfactory. The formation group tutor acts as the central point for assessment of formation, within systems for ensuring the sharing of information and insight from other staff.
37. In general this provides good evidence to allow St John's to advise church leaders on the suitability of candidates for their ministry. However, there appears to be little rationale for the balance of modes of assessment with the modules other than a sense of 'variety', and the choice of mode of assessment lies with the module leader. Similarly there does not appear to be a clear rationale as to why certain placements but not others are formally assessed, and why some are assessed for some students and not others. Thus there is a danger of a lack of overall coherence in the experience of individual students in the range and timing of the modes of assessment they experience. It was reported that there used to be an Assessment Review Group but this has lapsed. Concerns about each module having a single assessment completed after it is concluded are expressed in section G.v..

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the College Council completes its process of clarifying its vision, mission and values and that this is then used to by the Principal and faculty to:

- i produce a clearly articulated and shared theological, formational and educational rationale for the curriculum, programmes and assessments;**
- ii conduct a thorough review of the curriculum on this basis; and**

iii ensure that such a curriculum will prepare ordinands for ministry in the whole spectrum of the Church of England.

38. We recognise that the forthcoming implementation of Common Awards will greatly affect this, but since Common Awards is not a fixed common curriculum, this work is remains important; indeed the approach of Common Awards provides a critical opportunity for this review.

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion C, Curriculum for formation and education.

SECTION THREE: MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

D Community and corporate life

Inspectors will consider the institution's quality of common life. Is it a good place in which to live, work and study? In particular:

- D.i The institution should offer a clear statement of how it understands corporate life, reflected in its training for ministry and the working relationships between members.*
39. The Inspection Document, pages 27-28, sets out the understanding that community is at the heart of the college's processes of personal, spiritual, theological and ministerial formation. The expectations of and opportunities for learning through community are disseminated in the College's life in a variety of ways, including in a number of the documents indicated in the index pages 3-5 of the Inspection Document. We found this information to be helpful and well set out.
40. We found many instances of the ways in which corporate life is integral to the formational objectives of the college: corporate worship, formation groups, the Wednesday spirituality programme, classroom learning groups, placement groups, preaching groups etc. In broader terms, the corporate life is earthed in eating together, shared leisure and many informal networks of mutual care and support and interaction of ideas. Feedback from students to the inspectors gives every evidence that St. John's is a warm and inclusive community.
41. Partners and children are brought into the corporate life in many positive ways- including sharing in chapel services and meals. The College's own nursery (Little Peaches), which can take children from the wider community when there are spaces, is very popular and typically over subscribed. Many of these children will also be seen during the day in the dining hall or the chapel crèche area. There is a group for partners which has a female and male membership.
42. There is a Community Board with staff and student representation which meets twice a year to discuss matters relating to the community as a whole. It is chaired by the Dean of Ministry and Formation (formerly the Dean of College). The Chapel Council (see below) is a sub committee of this Board.
- D.ii There should be a clear statement of the institution's understanding of issues of gender, ethnic grouping and disability, and other matters of natural justice; its training, governance and community life should reflect this.*

43. There are clear written statements of the College's understanding of inclusiveness and justice - see index page 5 of the Inspection Document (see below, section K).
44. The College has at present three students with serious visual impairments and one student who is confined to a wheelchair. Our conversations with three of these individuals (including the member of College whose mobility is wheelchair dependent) disclosed a range of issues which they have experienced through using the College's buildings and accessing its programmes. They were uniformly positive about the helpful attitudes of administrative and teaching staff and about the kindness of fellow students. In practical terms, there were many evidences of the community's commitment to inclusiveness in this area:
- the recent installation of a stair lift in the academic block (funding: College and Ministry Division);
 - significant building work to facilitate wheelchair access (College took architect's advice in undertaking this work, funding as above);
 - the extensive use of large print handouts (black on yellow) for use in chapel and classes and sensitivity in announcements about expected posture;
 - implementing flexible ways of accessing academic programmes;
 - re-ordering of class locations and timetable.
45. The disabled students we talked to felt that there had often been a significant delay between their distinctive needs being brought to the attention of College staff and practical responses being implemented, although these were made. They felt that this was inevitable because a college of this size will often be inexperienced relative to the wide range of potential disabilities which it might encounter. They suggested an enhanced role for ABM in alerting colleges to the particular issues which they are likely to face once it is known that a particular student will be joining the community. Students with disabilities are well represented in the College's committee structure.
46. The College has evolved strategic responses to students with dyslexia.
47. We saw nothing to indicate, and picked up no feedback to suggest, that the College community is anything other than inclusive and sensitive in relation to issues of ethnicity, gender and age.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion D, Relationships with other institutions.
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E Worship and training in public worship

Inspectors will look at whether the arrangements for common worship and the policies underlying them are satisfactory. In particular:

E.i The institution's policy and practice in corporate worship should reflect the tradition of the wider church and the liturgical inheritance of faith.

48. The College's pattern of worship reflects current liturgical provision within the Church of England (see below). Throughout the week, we found chapel worship to be reverent and well prepared. The congregations were always engaged and responsive. The Wednesday evening Holy Communion service for Ash Wednesday included the imposition of ashes. Students are expected to attend Morning Worship (Monday- Friday, 8.00) and the tea time Holy Communion service on Wednesdays. Morning Worship on Fridays takes place in formation groups. There is a tea time service of Holy Communion on Mondays for students arriving 'late' from weekend placements. Sometimes students organise a service of Compline/Night Prayer. We concurred that this is an appropriate pattern of worship for the college.

49. The expectations of students in terms of chapel attendance are clearly set out. Formation group tutors quietly monitor the attendance of their own tutees. It was reported to us by staff that attendance is good.

E.ii There should be a policy on, and provision for, a balance of worship, including authorised and innovative forms, which recognises and equips candidates to work within a variety of practice within the sponsoring church.

50. The pattern of worship is planned by the faculty and the chapel council- on which there is student representation. The overall pattern is carefully planned so as to create a balance of worship. This includes:

- Common Worship
- BCP
- Opportunities for some experience of alternative liturgies - for example, Celtic, Taize and of innovative forms.

51. We noted that while, within this pattern, students experience BCP Morning Prayer, they do not experience BCP Holy Communion. We recommend the College to address this issue because BCP Holy Communion is still an important element in the worship of many parishes.

52. We found a genuine diversity of worship styles and emphases. Members of College whom we talked to who do not come from an evangelical/ charismatic background indicated that they felt fully able to 'be

themselves' in the context of College worship. Given the diversity of worship styles, and the genuine spirit of openness within the community, this did not surprise us.

53. The Episcopal Ministry Act of Synod 1993 is introduced to students in the context of taught modules - either *Understanding Anglicanism* or *Church and Ministry*.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the College's pattern of worship be amended to ensure that students have an experience of Holy Communion from the BCP.

- E.iii Ministerial candidates should be effectively trained to plan, prepare and conduct public worship and they should receive critical and constructive comment from staff and peers.*
54. In addition to the opportunities for leading worship on placement (see below, section H), students are given systematic opportunities to lead worship and occasional opportunities to preach in chapel. Formation groups take responsibility in turn for leading worship through the week.
55. There is good support for students as they prepare to lead chapel worship, through:
- helpful written guidelines, available on Moodle
 - corporate planning in the context of formation groups
 - the individual support of the formation group tutor.
56. Similarly, there is a well organised system of review and reflection incorporating:
- formation group review, including the tutor
 - the *Leading Worship Scrapbook* or a 2000 word reflective essay
57. All students undertake this work. The scrapbook (chosen by most students) requires them to reflect systematically on the worship which they have experienced within college, and on their various experiences of leading worship - including the staff and peer reviews which they received. It is an assessed piece of work.
58. Throughout the week, we saw strong evidence of how seriously students take their preparation for leading worship. There was consistent specific evidence of College guidelines being put into practice: for example, in relation to the selection of material in order to create a unity, co-operation between leaders, timing. We believe that services were led in such a way as to encourage an encounter with God.

59. While there is good faculty support and feedback for students leading chapel services, we felt that it was somewhat anomalous that such support and feedback does not extend to students who, by rota, lead the children's and youth ministry that runs alongside the Wednesday teatime Eucharist. We recommend the college to provide such support and feedback.
60. The Inspectors concluded that worship is a strong area within the life of St John's. They noted with approval that provision has been made within the budget for a Chaplain and Tutor in Liturgy and Practical Theology. The Inspectors believe that this will both further enhance this area and also reduce some of the pressure on other tutors. Concern is expressed below (section G) that none of the spirituality programme is accredited. This is taken up into the current recommendation with the reasoning being given in section G

Recommendation 4

The Inspectors recommend that the College pursues its plans for the appointment of a Chaplain and Tutor in Liturgy and Practical Theology as soon as possible and that the following are considered:

- i the inclusion of elements of the spirituality pathway in accredited modules; and**
- ii support and feedback for those leading the children's and youth ministry.**

E.iv The liturgical space should be adequate for its purpose..

61. We found the chapel to be a pleasant and appropriate environment.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion E, worship and training in public worship.

F Ministerial, Personal and Spiritual Formation

Inspectors will consider how well the institution helps learners in their ministerial, personal and spiritual formation and self-awareness. In particular:

F.i The institution should enable candidates to be immersed in the traditions of their own church and to gain an empathetic understanding of church and faith traditions other than their own.

62. We believe that a combination of factors - the balance within the chapel worship pattern, the wide-ranging placement system (see below, section H), the Wednesday spirituality programme, and particular units within the

- teaching programme (for example: *Understanding Anglicanism, Leading Worship, Living Sacraments*) - do give students every opportunity to secure a good understanding of the Church of England and the wider church.
63. The culture of St. John's 'feels' very contemporary There is a clear and commendable desire to be abreast of current thought. The question was put to us whether the formation processes here equip candidates to minister within more traditional contexts. In respect of students for whom this might be an issue, the choice of location for their major placement (see below) seems particularly important.
- F.ii The institution should offer corporate and individual guidance for learners, including encouragement to seek confidential spiritual counsel and to maintain a regular private prayer.*
64. The Inspection Document, pages 27-29 highlight the importance of formation groups and the role of formation group tutors in the College's strategies for personal, spiritual and ministerial formation. Formation groups meet twice each week- one of these is peer led. Groups discuss a range of theological, spiritual and ministerial issues. They plan and review their participation in leading chapel worship and follow up in group discussion issues raised by the Wednesday spirituality programme.
65. In their one to one work with their formation group tutors, students are required to engage openly with a range of formational issues: their understandings of vocation, ministry and mission, prayer life and spirituality, personality, character and relationships, theological development. In turn, a student's developing self awareness and thinking in relation to these issues are written up in the Personal Development Portfolio (PDP) which he/she is required to work on throughout their time at college. The work on the PDP generates formational goals and feeds into the self assessments which are part of the procedures for producing end of year and final year reports (see below). The templates for the PDP, self assessment and end of/ final year reports are all synchronised. Within this formational process there are opportunities for students to be put in touch with a spiritual director and, if appropriate, to receive counselling.
66. This focussed programme of formation makes significant demands on both students and tutors. Our feedback from students about how this process works in practice was generally very positive but there was evidence of some degree of variability. We do not believe that this variability reflects any fundamental systemic weakness. And, of course, on occasion there will always be some issues of personal chemistry in tutorial relationships. We welcome the fact that there is ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of formation groups- including an opportunity for written

- feedback by students. There is evidence that these processes of monitoring are rigorous and have effected change in the past. We would recommend, however, that consideration be given to whether there could be the facility for review at a point during the first year - and for responding to instances where the student-tutor relationship is not proving effective. We realise that this is a delicate matter; and also that both tutors and students often need time to grow into these roles and relationships.
67. We also note here that this role makes considerable demands on tutors in terms of both time and emotional energy. We urge that careful watch is kept on the size of formation groups and on their implications for staff workload.
68. We found evidence in documentation (see page 3 of the index pages of the Inspection Document) and in staff and student feedback of a carefully thought through and implemented process for producing end of year and final year reports in a way that meets national guidelines.
69. The formation group tutor is responsible for producing the report. The process incorporates:
- strong linkages with the students work on the PDP and in self assessment..The latter also includes encouragement of a degree of informal peer assessment
 - coherence of templates: PDP, self-assessment, House of Bishops
 - faculty discussion and input
 - rigorous timetabling to facilitate all facets of the process.
70. The College is careful to adhere to national guidelines in assisting candidates to secure their first appointments. Feedback indicated that students feel well supported in this area.
71. We were made aware , in the context of a tutorial staff meeting discussion on formation, of some variance between members of staff in their understandings of collegial confidentiality in dealing with students' pastoral and ethical circumstances .We recommend that the staff clarify and maintain a careful policy of collegial confidentiality in relation to this; that the policy include major placement supervisors; and that students are kept aware of such a policy.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that:

- i staff, including major placement supervisors, clarify and maintain a careful policy of collegial confidentiality and that students are kept informed of this policy; and**

ii consideration is given to a mid-year review of the suitability of placements in formation groups, where appropriate.

F.iii Its common life and the guidance offered should enable students to grow in Christian discipleship with a view to exercising a public role in ministry and engaging with the world.

72. We believe that the formational processes outlined above are sufficiently rigorous to assist students to reflect on the ethical and professional implications of representative ministry. We were also able to identify a number of aspects of the teaching and placement programmes that require students to engage specifically with the social and moral complexities of an increasingly diverse society: for example: *Faith seeking understanding, Personal and social ethics, Theology after modernity, Faith, formation and discipleship, contextual (secular) placement, hospital placement.*

F.iv The teaching and ministerial staff should model an appropriate pattern spirituality, continued learning and reflection on practice.

73. We saw evidence of the above in a variety of contexts:

- spirituality: in staff participation in chapel services and formation groups and in their gathering for staff prayers on a Monday morning;
- continued learning: in the classroom and in the ways in which faculty develop and draw from their own research interests. The importance of faculty having time for their own study and research has been emphasised in recent changes to the weekly timetable. This allows teaching staff to focus on these aspects of their work on Fridays;
- reflection on practice: in integrating theology and ministerial/mission practice in the classroom and in assessments (see below, section H).

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion F, Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation.
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SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources

Inspectors will consider the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning activities, methods and resources.

G.i The units of teaching and learning should be well structured, with clear and appropriate aims.

74. We experienced many examples of very good or excellent teaching, which was well structured with clear and appropriate aims. The students appeared to enjoy learning at St John's, and testified with warmth to the quality of the learning experience and the skill and dedication of the teaching staff.
75. Students who are granted 'advanced standing' allowing them to enter the second year of a programme report experiencing some difficulties because of the progression which exists between first and second year modules in the same subject area. This means that tutors often refer back to foundational first year work, which advanced standing students, a small minority within a class, have not covered. This was also noted in the 2012 QAA review. This is an unavoidable result of the 'advanced standing' status; and we recognise that the possibility of 'advanced standing' is a useful tool in ensuring the best fit between student and programme. We would encourage the College to review the way in which the needs of advance standing students are accommodated in course delivery.
76. In a significant number of cases modules are taught to non-adjacent levels occasionally 4 - 7, more frequently 4 – 6 or 5 – 7, through common lectures and differentiated seminars and assessment. This is an unusual practice, and was highlighted as a concern in the 2012 partnership review by the University of Chester. Tutors explain, however, that the practice is not illogical, since both sets of students are at the beginning of their study of theology for ministry. The difference of level is the result of different amounts of prior study in subjects other than theology. There would also be serious timetable and tutor workload implications of splitting these groups, as well as disruption to the sense of student cohorts. We observed that tutors handled this phenomenon thoughtfully and skilfully in class, and that differential was clearly made in both prior reading and seminars, as well as assessment. We recognise that the move to Common Awards will clarify whether this split level teaching is appropriate and therefore make no recommendation for review at present.

77. The College has a clear vision for being a research-active institution, with all of its faculty being encouraged and supported to engaging in research and scholarship and to bring that into their teaching. We saw evidence of tutors' research work helpfully influencing the shape and content of modules, adding value to teaching, and demonstrating life long learning to students.
- G.ii There should be a proper balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training.*
78. In practice there is an observable balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training within the experience of a student at St John's, regardless of which precise programme they are on. Placements and the development of ministerial competencies are highly valued, and in appropriate ways are linked into the more academic programme. Similarly the importance of both formal and informal formational development is recognised alongside the module-driven learning.
79. However, there are anomalies in which elements of training are credit-bearing, or assessed. The spirituality teaching, for example, is not; and certain placements are for some students but not for others. This runs the risk of a culture developing among students in which credit-bearing or assessed elements of training are seen as a higher priority when time is pressured. We expect that recommendation 2 above (criteria C), together with the move to Common Awards, will significantly address this concern.
80. Concern was expressed by a number of students that St John's encouraged them to complete one or more Master's degrees, which they felt brought so great an academic burden as to detract from formational and practical aspects of training. However, tutors suggested that the issue was more that both candidates themselves and DDOs favoured colleges offering Master's qualifications, and hence it was difficult for the College not to respond accordingly. We have some sympathy with this, but we urge the College to monitor this situation carefully.
- G.iii Learning programmes should be varied in format and method, with use of student experience, courses, seminars, tutorials, one-to-one, groups, placements and private study.*
81. The learning programmes include significant variety in the format and method of learning, in particular lectures, seminars, group work, presentations, placements, reflection on student experience and private study. This variety was present not just in the overall programme but within individual teaching sessions. This produces an impressive learning environment which is fresh and stimulating, which caters for differing

learning styles and which is flexible to the needs of the learning objectives in view. The 'Timeline' multimedia resource being developed by St John's and available to enhance both distant and on-site learning is innovative and of very high quality.

82. The documents supplied by the College mention a teaching and learning strategy. However, upon investigation it emerges that while it has an HE strategy required by Chester University, which is presented in an appendix to the partnership review document, this teaching and learning strategy has not yet been completed. We recommend that this strategy is produced to further enhance the learning experience at St John's and to safeguard the excellence and variety which we observed.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the College's excellence in teaching be further enhanced by the completion of its teaching and learning strategy, which will provide pedagogical complement to the outworking of the theological, educational and formational rationale envisaged in recommendation 2.

G.iv There should be an appropriate learning environment, with adequate resources including library and information and communications technology.

83. Consideration of the teaching rooms is included in section P. The learning environment provided by placements is included in section F.
84. The library provides an excellent learning resource, and was commended in the recent QAA inspection. Approximately £19,000 is spent each year on new books, journals, access to electronic resources and the library management system. It is open from early morning to late at night. Most material is borrowable using a self-checkout system; the regulations for the number of books which can be borrowed and the loan length are generous, with appropriate priority given to part-time students and research students. The procedures for book purchasing and movement of books into, and out of, the short-loan section, demonstrate a successful, close, working relationship between library and tutorial staff, and are appreciated by students. Electronic learning resources are available through the validating university; the library is also developing its purchasing of e-books in a thoughtful fashion.
85. There is a good provision of working space for students within the library and in other locations across the college. This continues to be developed. Internet access is provided throughout the site by wireless; computers are also available for student use.

86. Moodle is central to the provision of information within the College. This works well for both staff and students. The College has recently, and successfully, moved to the electronic submission of assignments which brings significant administrative benefit. Both of these are well supported by the registry.
87. The library has become cramped and, since it purchases or acquires approximately 1000 volumes a year, only functions by continuous weeding out. If plans to increase the numbers of students are successful then it will be important that the well developed plans for a new learning resource centre are carried through to address this issue.
- G.v *Staff should provide students with constructive formal and informal feedback assessment, against published assessment criteria, both in terms of academic progress and in terms of preparation for beginning public ministry.*
88. The College has well developed systems for both formal and informal feedback from placements, and on formational issues, which are closely linked to the learning objectives for beginning public ministry and personal learning objectives agreed by each student periodically with their formation group tutor.
89. Formal feedback on academic assessments is given almost always within the agreed timescale, and contains appropriate, constructive detail, structure and is graded according to public University of Chester criteria. However, each module only has a single assessment which occurs at the end of the module when this is written; and the standard pattern is that it is submitted within three weeks of the end of the module, and returned within a further four weeks. Thus there is effectively no formative assessment during a module providing feedback for students as to their progress within a module and to guide and strengthen their learning in that module. Feedback occurs after the module is completed. In general this also means that new students can be a significant way into their programme before receiving their first feedback on their academic progress, which is a source of student stress.
90. We recognise that to help address this issue the College has introduced a short assessment arising out of the induction weeks which is marked and returned relatively early in the first term. We also appreciate the concern that introducing formative assessment within a module runs the risk of adding complexity and burden to students and staff. However, we are aware that other institutions offering similar courses do manage to have processes for formative assessment within modules, which is often informal but greatly valued.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the tutorial staff examine the possibility of enhancing the feedback regime by the provision of formative feedback on academic progress on a module while that module is still being studied, and before the students submit their formal assessment for that module.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion G, Teaching and learning, content, method and resources.

H Practical and pastoral theology

H.i The institution's learning structures and formational activity should integrate theory and practice and enable students to grow as theologically reflective practitioners in the context of the developing and diverse society in which they will minister.

91. One of the College's primary strategies for integrating theory and practice rests on a broad triangularity which brings together, classroom learning, placements and written work.
- i *classroom learning*: particular elements within the teaching programme which are timed to take place immediately before or alongside a placement and are designed to enhance the student's ability for theological reflection during the placement experience;
 - ii *placements*: The College has a varied programme of placements including church hopping, hospital placement, major church placement (approximately one year in duration), fresh expressions placement, contextual (secular) placement, mission placement. Feedback to us suggests that students engage positively and enthusiastically with this element of their courses;
92. The decision about where a student should undertake his/her major placement is made by reference to a number of factors:
- a need to diversify a student's experience of church or society;
 - a specified learning need;
 - vocation: testing out a student's sense of calling to serve in a particular context.
93. There are mechanisms in place to ensure that identified learning needs are addressed.
94. The parish placement supervisors with whom we met reported good lines of communication between College and parishes. They indicated that they

felt well supported in their role and responsibilities. The College's expectations of supervisors are clear. The placement programme is backed up by helpful documentation, to be found on Moodle. There is a template for use by supervisors when writing reports on those on placement. The criteria and categories cohere with those used for end of year/final year reports. We appreciate that it is never easy to achieve a comprehensive consistency in placement reporting. However, given the full and detailed placement guidelines, and strong lines of communication between College and supervisors, this area appears to work in a satisfactory manner. Feedback from the relevant faculty member indicated that placement reports have, on the whole, proved helpful for formation and learning and reasonably consistent. They vary most in terms of the amount of detail which they supply.

95. There are detailed guidelines about students leading worship and preaching while on placement. Students preach their two assessed sermons while on their major placement. The assessment of these is undertaken by a tutor-led College preaching team. We noted from feedback that placement supervisors play an important role in stimulating theological reflection. They also impart critical contextual background: developing the student's appreciation of the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the placement context, be it a geographic location or a social institution.

iii. *written work*: undertaken as a way of reflecting on a particular placement experience.

96. Students to whom we listened were aware of the triangularity outlined above (para 90) and could share their experiences of how it had proved effective for them in practice.
97. In addition to the placement programme and specific teaching units on pastoral care, we were able to identify a range of tools within College which assist in the task of integrating theory and practice. For example:
 - hybrid assessments (assignments requiring more than one element: for example, an academic biblical exegesis followed by a sermon outline);
 - journaling; including classroom input and written guidelines on how to journal in the specific context of theological learning;
 - teaching staff modelling theological reflection - the various ways in which connections between theology and practice can be made - and thereby offering paradigms.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion H, practical and pastoral theology

SECTION FIVE: STAFF AND STUDENTS

I Teaching staff

Inspectors will consider the recruitment, expertise, resourcing, appraisal and development of staff.

I.i The gender, lay/ordained and denominational balance of ministerial and teaching staff should model appropriate patterns of learning and of ministry and comply with denominational guidelines.

98. The Church of England policy states that a residential college training women should have at least one full-time member of staff who is an experienced minister in orders. Currently St John's has one full-time female member of faculty but although she is ordained, her ordained ministerial experience is relatively limited. There are several other ordained women on the broader faculty team, a temporary part-time faculty member, two formational group tutors, and a staff member within the Midlands Centre for Youth Ministry. Nevertheless the Inspectors believe that this fails to provide sufficient role models of women who been the incumbents of parishes, particularly given that St John's attracts a high proportion of female ordinands (in recent years 35%-40% of St John's ordinands have been female). It also puts particular burdens on the female members of staff.
99. All of the faculty except one part-time member are ordained. Thus there is a risk of communicating that within the church lay people are 'support staff' for clergy, and that theological expertise resides solely within the clergy. It is also particularly unfortunate in a College with high numbers of 'independent' students not training for ordination.
100. One full-time faculty member is a Baptist minister; the rest are Church of England priests, though the principal was originally an ordained minister in the United Reformed Church and has a long experience of ecumenical working. For an institution whose students are primarily, though by no means exclusively, Anglican, this provides an appropriate, and beneficial, denominational balance including experience of the leadership of non-Anglican churches.
101. Faculty members are active in the life of churches in the diocese, through preaching, presiding, teaching and leading. Nonetheless, only two of the full-time faculty have experience as incumbents of parishes. Some feedback from students suggested that this occasionally undermined the tutors' credibility when speaking of ministry; some limited feedback from those receiving St John's ordinands suggested that their grasp of the day-

to-day realities of Anglican parochial ministry was limited. We recommend that the College seek to improve this situation as over time new faculty appointments are made.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the College improves the gender and lay/ordained balance within the core faculty team as a matter of priority, and that until this is achieved it takes concrete steps to provide exposure within its core programme to:

- i female priests with experience as incumbents of parishes;**
- ii lay people with expertise in theological education or ministerial practice; and**
- iii clergy with substantial recent or current parish experience.**

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications in regard to Criterion I, teaching staff.

J All Staff

J.i Staff recruitment and selection procedures should be transparent, fair and consonant with the policies of the relevant partner bodies.

102. Inspectors were shown the policy for the appointment of academic staff, which outlines the key steps to be made in the process. There is no comprehensively laid down policy for the appointment of non-academic staff. What procedure is followed depends on the level of the post concerned. For example, housekeeping, maintenance and catering appointments have been made via the Job centre or by e-mail through the local Church networks. Clerical positions have been agreed at EMG (now superseded since January 7, 2013, by the Directorate) and by department heads. Each post is therefore considered on its merits and a job specification and recruitment process set in place. Any new posts or variations are considered by the Directorate and, if necessary, (i.e. not a budgeted post) approved by Council. However, the Inspectors would recommend that a policy is set up to formalise non-academic staff recruitment and selection procedures.

J.ii Job descriptions, terms of service and reporting lines should be clear at the time of appointment and reviewed at regular intervals.

103. Job descriptions, terms of service and reporting lines were given to all staff on appointment. This was both by the wording of their contracts of employment and other documentation. There are separate *pro-forma* contracts for academic and non-academic staff. However, the regular

review of an individual's job description was patchy at best (see recommendation below). In some cases staffs' jobs had very radically changed since appointment. However it was clear that change had been worked out successfully but informally to the agreement of both parties.

J.iii There should be an effective programme for continuing professional development of staff, including annual appraisals for all staff.

104. The College has some processes in place for supporting academic staff development, and a faculty development committee. The provision of regular study leave, funding towards membership of professional bodies and attendance at conferences, and the purchase of books is at an appropriate level. The Inspectors noted that Fridays have now been set aside for the Faculty to do research. The Inspectors were also given a list of other training organised by the Principal, including disability training for all staff and Moodle training for academic staff.
105. However, the processes for developing individual tutors' skills, particularly external tutors, and the generation of shared pedagogical understanding, are very limited. While we recognise that the 'output' of tutors in terms of the standard of teaching is very high, we would still wholeheartedly support the College in the improvement identified within the self-evaluation document to 'develop a staff development strategy and improve all work in this area'. There is a process of regular appraisal for both academic and non-academic staff. This is mentioned in several documents. However its use is variable, with some staff being appraised annually, some every two years and some who the process has passed by. It would be fair to note that the lack of appraisals was not raised by staff as a major issue, and did not detract from the high level of commitment shown by them. Nonetheless, the normal policy should be for an annual appraisal.

Recommendation 9

The Inspectors recommend that:

- i a clear policy is put in place for the appointment of all non-academic staff;**
- ii all job descriptions are reviewed over the next six months and updated and that the regular review of job descriptions is tied to annual appraisal;**
- iii the College carries through as a matter of some urgency its commitment to develop a staff development strategy and improve work in this area, particularly drawing in the needs of external tutors, and the general of shared pedagogical understanding among tutors;**
- iv the College reviews its procedures for the regular review of continuous professional development and the recording of attendance; and**
- v annual appraisal should take place for all staff.**

J.iv Staff should be sufficient in number and expertise and resourced to fulfil their role adequately for the institution's and students' needs.

106. At a meeting with representatives of the support staff the view was expressed that the College was a good place to work in. 'The best thing about working here is the people; all get on well.' Ancillary staff said that they would be better paid elsewhere but would not change due to the camaraderie they experienced on a daily basis. Throughout the inspection, it was found that much was achieved by informal means rather than by formal channels. This reflects the Christian ethos of the place, the shared values, the closeness of working relationships and the institution's relatively small size. Communication with support staff was thought to be much improved over the last ten years although it was felt that there was still room for improvement in formal consultation processes but not at the expense of existing informal channels. Staff felt that they could easily go to more senior members of the College if they had any concerns. A regular meeting is held termly of all support staff, chaired by the Principal. Twice termly meetings are held with the heads of support staff departments with the Director of Formation.
107. The inspectors observed hard work and commitment among all staff, both academic and ancillary. They are all very committed to their work, the life of the College and their role within it. In a number of areas, notably admissions, registry and the library, the commitment was outstanding. When asked if there were sufficient staff employed, most suggested, not unnaturally, that more are needed! We heard from a variety of sources concern that there are simply not enough tutorial staff. We saw evidence of the impact of this in high tutorial staff turn over, staff pulling out of further study because of pressure of work, and staff illness. A number of sources suggested that this was because there was an imbalance of spending with too much spent on non-tutorial staff and other costs of the basic running of the college's life and facilities, and too little on the employment of tutors. While comparison between institutions is difficult, our judgement is that there are fewer tutorial staff at St John's, given its student numbers, than we would expect from other institutions.
108. We recognise the financial pressures on all theological colleges, and those particularly being faced by St John's. We were pleased to hear of plans for the appointment of new tutorial staff. Nevertheless, we are concerned that given the overall financial context and the hard work and loyalty of the faculty, the appointment of new tutorial staff may not in practice receive the high priority it needs.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Council reviews carefully how many FTE tutorial staff are appropriate for a College with St John's student numbers, and produces a timed plan to bring the faculty up to that level.

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion J, All Staff

K Students

109. *Inspectors will examine procedures for student admission, welfare and support, appraisal and discipline. In particular:-*

K.i Policies on students' admission, welfare, complaints, discipline, assessment, reporting to sponsoring churches and arrangements for first appointments should be publicly available; and there should be evidence that they are applied.

110. With regard to Church of England's policy requiring residential colleges to allocate 15% of their places to women, it is recorded that in 2011 43% of places for potential ordinands were so taken and in 2012, 35%.

111. Admission and other policies are contained in a year book. Policies such as those relating to welfare, complaints, assessment, reporting and first appointments are to be found online, in the student handbook and on Moodle. The Inspectors attended the presentations at an Open Day where much was explained. Information is also given on the College website and in the prospectus and other publications. Once arrived in College, such matters are discussed as necessary through various ways such as with Formation tutors and during Induction Week events.

112. Inspectors, in a number of conversations, found evidence that these policies are operated, but of equal use was the way in which actions often showed the value system of the College operating just as effectively and more humanely in an informal manner.

113. Conversations with students showed that there are strong procedures for first appointments in place. Much information is available in various ways, such on Moodle, and with strong and focused help from appropriate faculty staff and notably within Formation groups' discussions. Potential ordinands are expected to engage in a regular dialogue as they navigate this process leading to their curacy.

114. Recent developments in the Registry have made the reporting back to students of assessment grades much more regular than in the past.

Students told the Inspectors that this was most appreciated. This improvement also fulfils a QAA recommendation.

115. It is noted in the College's self-evaluation report for 2011/2 that policies will be updated and we would support the College in this.

K.ii The institution's decision-making structure should enable students to take an appropriate part in its governance, providing that students take responsibility for their participation.

116. There is an active and well-managed Student Association which, through its elected officers, maintains good links with College management from Council downwards. There are a number of student representatives appointed e.g. for vestments. Inspectors did, however, note that there are no formal links between students and the kitchen staff. The Inspectors would urge the College to consider the setting up of a formal process to allow catering staff and service users to engage in a dialogue. Recent developments include the setting up of regular meetings between the Student President and the Principal. The Student Association has also recently improved dissemination of the results of consultations by meetings, e-mail and informal conversation.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to criterion K, Students.</p>
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SECTION SIX: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

L Organisation and governance

Inspectors will examine the effectiveness of the institution's governance structures and processes.

L.i The institution should have clear financial, administrative and management structures and an up-to-date governing document, and the governing body should be constituted in line with it.

117. The structures for the governance and management of St John's are currently undergoing significant change, led by the Principal, in conjunction with the College Council and senior staff. The key governance changes have been discussed and agreed by the governing body (the College Council), but are still to be put to extraordinary general meeting. Some of the management structures have changed from January 2013, others are expected to be brought in over the next twelve months. These changes are being discussed and developed through suitable processes, involving appropriate people and timescales.
118. The Council is constituted in accordance with the College's memorandum of association and articles of association, which were most recently amended in 2009. The Council has just agreed to implement a process to amend the constitution to allow for more co-opted members and fewer elected members thus strengthening the Council's ability to ensure it contains a membership with an appropriate range of skills.
119. Currently the governing body has only one sub-committee, the 'standing committee' which historically has been a key decision making body, bringing together a small number of Council members, including its chair and treasurer, the Director of Finance and Operations and the principal. The Council has just agreed in principle to replace this with a new body called 'the executive', which effectively adds to this standing committee three senior faculty members, in attendance. The purpose behind this change is to improve the links between faculty and Council, and to avoid the principal being the sole link between the Council and the faculty. It is proposed that this executive, without the 'in attendance' faculty, meets as an employment group.
120. We recognise the careful thought which lies behind the proposed structures of the Council and executive. However we are also aware that the executive could run a risk of confusing governance and management; this was not helped by the words 'managing' and 'directing' being used of

the executive during the Council meeting where its formation was agreed. The existence of only one Council sub-committee (currently the standing committee, in the future the executive) also runs the risk of producing a dominant body which marginalises those Council members not on the executive, creating an inner circle and leaving little opportunity for the skills of the whole Council to be contributed. Alternative structures for a governing body might include a larger number of sub-committees (e.g. finance and/or audit, buildings, personnel) and thus draw more evenly on the skills and experience of Council members, and reduce the centralisation of power.

121. Therefore we recommend that the Council carefully review the new structure one year after it is implemented, for its effectiveness and fit with best practice in the governance of comparable charitable companies.
122. A key change to the structures of the College is the bringing together the residential training operation and the extension studies department, which have historically operated quite separately. This has already been implemented in the formation of a single registry, and it has been agreed that a single 'Director of Studies' should oversee both areas replacing the previous roles of 'Director of Studies' (who dealt solely with residential students) and the 'Director of Extension Studies'. We recognise the appeal of creating a more unified college by this move, particularly if the accredited extension studies programmes move to use the same Common Awards suite as the residential training. We also note the investment just proposed to the Council by the Strategy Group into Extension Studies to allow its work to be overhauled before this merger. However, we encountered significant concern from staff, which seemed well-founded based on the current workload of each post, that the new role of (combined) 'Director of Studies' may be overly burdensome.
123. Therefore we *urge* the principal to give careful attention to the workload and role of the new 'Director of Studies', to ensure that pressure of work does not undermine the strategic importance of this post for the College.
124. A further key change is the establishment of the post of Vice-Principal, which has recently been agreed in principle by the Council. We recognise the wisdom of this appointment, particularly in view of the need for the Principal to devote significant amounts of time to the fundraising campaign, and the significant work which the implementation of the emerging strategic plan will entail. We understand the financial constraints which require this to be an internal appointment, with an existing faculty member taking on this role and cascading some of their duties to others or new associate staff. However we encountered concern that this means that the potential pool of applicants for this important role is very small,

and that fundamentally the appointment does not add extra resource but simply shifts burden to other tutors.

125. Therefore *we urge* the Council to take seriously the need to ensure the post of Vice-Principal is established in such a way as to ensure that its potential significance for the strategic development of the College is not lost.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the Council carefully review the new governance structure one year after it is implemented, for its effectiveness and fit with best practice in the governance of comparable charitable companies.

L.ii There should be evidence that the governing body recognises and discharges its role and legal duties in respect of stewardship of the assets; setting and safeguarding the vision, values and reputation of the institution; operational and staff oversight and support.

126. The Council carries out its role in respect of the stewardship of assets; this is particularly evidenced by the thorough processes, including reference to the Charity Commission, through which the Council has developed and examined multiple options for tackling the current pension deficit. Similarly it is effective in its duties to set and safeguard the vision, values and reputation of the institution, as particularly evidence by the processes through which it established the key priorities for the successor to the previous Principal, found and appointed the new Principal and worked with him in the establishment of new aims, objectives and vision. The structures established and monitored by the Council provide appropriate operational and staff oversight and support.

127. However, we note that the Council minutes do not record proposer and seconder of proposals. While we recognise that this is perhaps unnecessarily bureaucratic for every point, *we urge* the Council to ensure this practice is followed for major decisions.

L.iii It should have the mix of skills and experience appropriate to its role; there should be a clear understanding of the respective roles of trustees and staff, with job descriptions for key officers; induction for new trustees; and ongoing training needs should be met.

128. The Council includes a broad range of members and has conducted a recent skills audit. There is induction for new members. The respective roles of Council members and staff appear to be understood and observed in practice. The Council has recently agreed to develop a new job description for its chair. The Council has noted that the existing rules for

its composition potentially restricted its ability ensure its membership had the correct mix of skills and experience and so has agreed to increase the number of co-opted members.

L.iv There should be evidence of a structured contribution made by all community members - teaching staff, ancillary staff, the student body and individuals - so that they play an effective role in decision-making.

129. There are clear structures through which all community members play a role in decision-making. The voice of students is well represented at the highest levels through the inclusion of the elected student president in the council and executive; students have a key role in the programmes committee which has effective processes for reviewing the feedback on teaching and learning, and in the community council. There are regular meetings between the principal and ancillary staff, and the ancillary staff spoke of being properly included in decision making through both formal and informal processes.

L.v The institution's audited annual reports should be produced in good time and filed with the Charity Commission/Companies House as appropriate.

130. This happens.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion L Organisation and governance.

M Business planning and risk management

Inspectors will look at evidence for the existence and implementation of the institution's strategic policies.

M.i There should be a regularly-updated long-term strategy document agreed by the trustees and, in line with it, a business plan covering 3-5 years which identifies short and medium term aims and objectives and identifies how the institution intends to meet them.

131. At present St John's College does not have an agreed long term strategy and business plan. The Inspectors noted that the new Principal had identified the need for a concise 'Vision for Development' drafted by a Strategy Group in his report to Council in July 2012. The Inspectors read the minutes of the subsequently formed strategy group, convened by the Principal and announced to Council in his September report, which reports to Council. The minutes showed a wide ranging attempt to address current issues within St John's College, notably the budget deficit, a pensions liability arising from 2 lay schemes and the perceived need for

refurbishment of existing accommodation. A business plan is not yet in operation, although Council minutes since July 2012 and a presentation by the Principal at the February Council meeting attended by Inspectors, show that this is in a thorough process of development, that has involved consultation with Council and will include wider testing and consultation. The Principal and Chair of Council expect a robust business plan to be agreed by Council in June 2013, ready for the finalisation of the 2013/2014 budget.

132. At the time of the inspection the inspectors noted a variety of views about the direction the plan should take although this was combined with a common sense of purpose (as agreed in the Vision statement). It is not the Inspectors' role to enter into this debate; although they did feel able to identify a number of issues:
- The tension between long term aspirations and the need for short and medium term steps within this;
 - The amount of staff time required for fundraising for capital developments and general income and the consequent effect upon the time available for teaching and formational support;
 - The limited size of the pool of ordinands and the need, under current C of E policies to compete for ordinands in training;
 - The reduction in reserves already incurred by the college over the last few years, the need to produce a balanced budget and to build up the reserves including the cash balance at the bank;
 - The size of the pensions deficit (see section N) and the smaller loans repayable to the Carbon Trust and Ministry Division.
133. It was noted from the Strategy Group minutes that progress had been made towards the outline of the plan in its February meeting. The Inspectors were pleased to note that the College plans to consider such a plan at the June Council meeting (see recommendation below).

M. ii Annual budgets should be prepared in line with the business plan.

134. As the business plan is not yet written it is not possible for the College to show evidence of this (see recommendation below). An earlier strategy (last revised in 2010) is not considered by the Inspectors or the Principal and Chair of Council to be robust enough to drive budgets.

M.iii There should be an effective risk assessment, review and management process, which should include physical (e.g. health & safety and fire), financial, business and reputational risks.

135. St John's College were able to provide the inspectors with a risk assessment document, including physical, financial, business and reputational risks. Risk and potential impact are recorded on an

appropriate matrix. Minor updates were required to take into account events over the last few weeks. The Inspectors *urge* that risks related to the Little Peaches nursery be included within the plan, to ensure smooth running of the College in the event of the unexpected: e.g. a flu epidemic. In association with this a limited business continuity plan was shown to the inspectors, dealing with the areas of highest risk.

Recommendation 12

The Inspectors recommend that:

- i the work on the Business Plan is pursued, taking into account all of the above and including appropriate research to check the viability of proposed ways of increasing income and so that this is in place for summer 2013; and**
- ii future budgets reflect a robust business plan.**

The inspection team has confidence with Qualifications with regard to Criterion M, Business planning and risk management.

N Financial policies

Inspectors will consider the effectiveness of day-to-day operating processes.

N.i The institution should have policies to control and manage investments, expenditure and borrowing, and the annual report and accounts should contain an appropriate reserves policy.

136. The Inspectors noted that the reserves policy of the College is an amount equivalent to at least 3 months operating expenses. This is described in the 2012 annual report as an 'aspiration' as the amount of unrestricted reserves represented by current assets are exceeded by the value of current liabilities, a state of affairs reported by the Chair of Council to arise from the Pensions deficit. This is to be paid in instalments over the next 10 years, so remains as an outstanding debt. The deficit on the two defined benefit pensions schemes (closed to existing and former employees 2 years ago) for domestic staff (the Church workers Pension Fund administered by the Church of England Pension Board Scheme) and for lay teaching and administrative staff (Pensions Trust scheme) has occurred through no fault of the College, rather because of prevailing economic and social conditions that have led to difficult actuarial reviews.

137. St John's College has limited cash reserves which have been invested in interest bearing accounts researched by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), who is a Chartered Accountant. Limited longer term reserves have been invested as agreed by Council. Annual budgets are set and reported to the Executive Committee and College Council by exception (ie

reports are made when there is variance from the budget) Non- budgeted items are agreed by Council.

- N.ii Management accounts showing performance against budget should be produced at least quarterly and reviewed regularly by the trustees.*
138. Management accounts are produced monthly, showing both performance against budget and projections of future performance for the remainder of the financial year. These are sent on a monthly basis to Council (as agreed at the September 2012 meeting of College Council) and reviewed at Council and Executive meetings.
- N.iii The institution should consider its sources of income and have strategies to identify and raise the funds it needs.*
139. The annual report for 2012 records a deficit of income against expenditure in general funds as do those for 2011 and 2010. The annual deficit has increased over the 3 year period. The Inspectors noted, from the Principal's reports, the careful consideration by College staff, that has gone into addressing the problem of the combined deficits of two defined benefit pensions schemes the Church workers Pension Fund and the Pensions Trust scheme, described above. It is proposed that this is managed by income generation. The trustees note, in the annual report (2012), that they are satisfied that they will be able to develop strategies for managing these commitments.
140. A Strategy Group was set up in September 2012 by the Council, comprising members of staff and Council, to advise on increasing revenue, cutting the budget deficit and moving into surplus, attracting more conference business and investing to secure the College's long term growth.
141. After considering various schemes to address the immediate shortfall at the September Council, the College has decided to enter into a leaseback scheme involving the sale of the Peache Way flats (which ensures their continued availability to students for the next 10 years at least). The money raised from this is to be used to pay at least this year's instalment of the pensions debt, to refurbish student accommodation and in other strategies to increase income. One of two off-site houses and a small parcel of land have also been sold and a second is earmarked for sale. (One is unpopular as student accommodation, the other is in need up upgrading.) This will not address the medium term shortfall arising from the commitment to meet the pensions deficit over the next 10 years. Strategies so far identified involve redoubling efforts to generate more conference, student fee and donor income whilst looking for cost savings in other areas.

142. An established firm of fundraisers have been engaged by Council, first of all to carry out a feasibility study into fundraising for the proposed Learning Resource Centre and to report in April. The 150th year anniversary will be used to launch any such appeal.

Recommendation 13

The Inspectors recommend that St John's College should take steps to ensure that the College moves from deficit to surplus in its income based upon the robust business plan recommended in section M.

- N.iv The institution should have adequate financial controls aimed at minimising waste and loss, and should be appropriately advised on tax-efficiency.*
143. The COO reported thorough research to enhance fuel efficiency in the College, which has been acted upon where appropriate. The Inspectors were shown new fuel efficient boilers installed with a loan from the Carbon Trust. The College has de-registered for VAT after consideration led by the COO who as a Chartered Accountant is appropriately qualified to advise.
144. The Inspectors struggled with the judgement in this section. The College has experienced a deficit in each of the last 3 years, where spending has exceeded income. Because of the pensions deficit, over which the College has no control, the College is in a far worse position in reference to its outgoings than it was 3 years ago. However, it is clear that at the time of the Inspection realistic steps were being made to address the shortfall of income versus expenditure. The present situation is clearly very unsatisfactory, although because of the capital assets of the college it is clear that it is a long way from insolvency. It is not clear where the extra finance required on an annual basis for dealing with the pensions deficit is to be found, as there is as yet no evidence that extra funds can be generated from conference business or increased student numbers. In fact the COO's forecast for the next year, recorded in the minutes of the Strategy Group, is that the cash in the bank will fall below what he described as minimum acceptable levels.
145. Working within the Inspections Framework, a judgement of confidence with qualifications indicates the Inspectors belief that proper steps are being taken that will put in place a robust plan within a year, meaning that the budget could move from loss to break even or surplus. At the time of the Inspection it was not possible for the Inspectors to be certain that this would be effective although this does not in any way reflect the amount of considered effort being put into this by staff. It reflects the size of the problem relative to the income of the College and its recent financial

history and the current economic climate. The Inspectors are recording confidence with qualifications, based upon the evidence so far that the new Principal, the Chair of Council, the COO and the College have grasped the severity of the situation and will be putting in place appropriate plans.

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion N, Financial policies.

O Statutory and operating policies

O.i Proper books of account should be kept, with computerised data regularly backed up and stored off-site.

146. The College employs a qualified accountant as Chief Operating Officer who is responsible for all aspects of financial management. Appropriate records are kept. Data is regularly backed up on the server and also on the virtual server supplied by the College's IT providers on an hourly incremental basis. It is also kept on disk at the COO's home (off-site).

O.ii Bank mandates should be up to date, with appropriate authority levels.

147. The Inspectors were shown the bank mandates set up for both cheque signatories and on-line payment arrangements. Nine names are listed, with a break point at £5,000.00. This list is kept up-to-date, taking note of staffing changes. It was last revised in February 2013.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to criterion O, Statutory and Operating Policies

P Accommodation

P.i The i) public, ii) teaching & iii) provided living accommodation should be fit for purpose and suited to students' needs.

148. The College occupies a large, open site in the western Nottingham suburb of Bramcote. The grounds contains a number of mature trees, with paths and occasional seats. The grounds include a football pitch. There is also a tennis court, not now maintained due to financial pressures. There is a car park, opening off Chilwell Lane. During the inspection, spare parking spaces were available. At the lower end of the car park, the surface is beginning to degrade. There are cycle parking places adjacent to the College buildings. On some occasions these were full but there is further parking in the bike shed in the car park. The grounds are well maintained,

neat and tidy. The trees are regularly inspected by an arboriculturist for safety.

149. The main building of the College - The Grove - is an eighteenth century building. This, as well as some other structures on the campus, is Grade II listed. The Grove houses administrative offices and faculty members' and others' studies. All other buildings are of 1970's construction. They are the Academic Block, which holds the Library, the Chapel, the Dining Room and kitchens, the Student Common Room and some lecture rooms. The Youth Wing holds the Little Peaches Nursery, lecture rooms and studies. Accommodation for students is provided in 40 single study bedrooms in Northwood and also as 14 one- and three-bedroom apartments in the Peache Way Flats. Although well-fitted for their task, a number of students referred to the quality of the decoration and fittings of these flats as 'tired' and in need of renovation. There are also two terraces of houses for staff on Peache Way, making a total of seven dwellings. A number of the buildings are linked by covered ways. All the buildings are kept internally and externally clean and tidy.
150. Arrangements for day-to-day maintenance are good. A record book is held at Reception. In the month prior to the Inspection there were about fifty entries; and all but four of them had been signed off as having been seen to. Financial pressures restrict more strategic maintenance work; the poor and degraded state of a number of wooden window sills was noted. Work on The Grove is made more complex due to this building's listed status.
151. A loan from the Carbon Trust has recently funded new, more efficient gas boilers for domestic hot water and central heating. It also funded some cavity wall insulation and some low energy lighting. This is reducing the rate of increase in energy bills. Other 'green energy' improvements have been investigated but are financially unattainable at present.
152. In addition to on-site rooms and flats, the College also owns or manages a number of off-site properties within the immediate area. According to the Admissions staff, non-availability of accommodation is very rarely an issue in students declining a place.
153. There appears to be just about enough accommodation available for potential levels of student entry although the size of some groups puts pressure on some spaces, such as Lecture Room 3.
154. The library is inadequate for current use. There is very little room for new books and other publications. The Reading Room was often full during the Inspection. The College is fully aware of this and its negative impact on College life. Plans have been drawn up for a new Learning Resource Centre. Local Authority (Borough of Broxtowe) Planning Permission has

been obtained for the work. The College Council has obtained professional advice and is about to start fund-raising.

155. The Lecture Rooms are generally clean, tidy, light and airy, although students mentioned issues over unresponsive heating, draughts and ventilation. Furniture is generally new and in good order. Lecture spaces are equipped with blinds, whiteboards and modern AV and IT equipment. There appear to be enough lecture spaces to deliver the timetable, although the space released should the library move will be useful.
156. The dining room seems adequate in size. The Inspection Team received a number of comments concerning the food. The general opinion is that it had improved of late, with the change to a cafeteria style of service being commended. Issues over the quality of the evening meal also appear to have been resolved. Although there was much informal and effective conversation between users and canteen staff and the Student Association having exerted some pressure, there is no formal committee within any structure to link users with the catering staff.
157. There are issues over the room facilities in Northwood. The majority of rooms (36 out of 40) do not have private bathrooms. Two ensuite rooms have been converted for disabled use. Whilst adequate as a Hall of Residence upon construction in the 1970s, this is not so now, as students expect 'private facilities'. The College is also keen to expand its conference income, which will require rooms with en-suite facilities. The college is aware of this aspiration and accepts it. The Council is keen to proceed and has identified some funding sources, as well as intending to undertake an appeal.
158. It was noted that Legionella testing was carried out in October 2009. The retest due in 2011 has not been carried out, but all work identified in 2009 has been completed and there is regular monitoring of water temperature. There is a fire risk analysis document from 2009 which was updated in January 2013. Regular tests are made weekly of the fire bells and automatic doors. Fire drills are also carried out, two or three times each year; the last in October 2012. There is an asbestos survey register, undertaken in August 2004, which is drawn to the attention of any who are required to consult it. Portable appliance testing is carried out as needed in-house. Fire drill procedure notices and public liability notices are widely displayed.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that the College continue to pursue the possibility of a new Learning Resource Centre and also to upgrade Northwood subject to funding being raised.

P.ii There should be adequate provision for the needs of disabled students.

159. The recent enrolment of two disabled students has driven the need for some major work at the College. A wheelchair lift has been provided to reach the Chapel and other facilities on the first floor of the Academic Block and a new entrance path and door has been made to Northwood to permit level access to the two rooms in Northwood that have been converted for use by wheel chair users. Elsewhere in the College ramps to alleviate door thresholds have been provided and automatic door opening equipment installed. Some of the finance for this work was provided by Ministry Division. This work was planned after consultation with the students concerned as well as taking other specialist advice.
160. Elsewhere, all lecture rooms have provided either with fixed or portable hearing aid induction loops. Also noticed were 'large print' orders of service for Chapel worship. Car parks have designated spaces for blue badge drivers.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to criterion P, Accommodation.

Overall outcome: The inspection team has confidence with qualifications in St John's College, Nottingham for preparing candidates for ordained and licensed ministry.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The inspectors recommend that the staff pursue with the University of Chester the provision of online access to electronic resources at the University.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the College Council completes its process of clarifying its vision, mission and values and that this is then used to by the Principal and faculty to:

- i produce a clearly articulated and shared theological, formational and educational rationale for the curriculum, programmes and assessments;**
- ii conduct a thorough review of the curriculum on this basis; and**
- iii ensure that such a curriculum will prepare ordinands for ministry in the whole spectrum of the Church of England.**

Recommendation 3

We recommend that the college's pattern of worship be amended to ensure that students have an experience of Holy Communion from the BCP.

Recommendation 4

The Inspectors recommend that the College pursues its plans for the appointment of a Chaplain and Tutor in Liturgy and Practical Theology as soon as possible and that the following are considered:

- i the inclusion of elements of the spirituality pathway in accredited modules; and**
- ii support and feedback for those leading the children's and youth ministry.**

Recommendation 5

We recommend that:

- i staff, including major placement supervisors, clarify and maintain a careful policy of collegial confidentiality and that students are kept informed of this policy; and**
- ii consideration is given to a mid-year review of the suitability of placements in formation groups, where appropriate.**

Recommendation 6

We recommend that the College's excellence in teaching be further enhanced by the completion of its teaching and learning strategy, which will provide pedagogical complement to the outworking of the theological, educational and formational rationale envisaged in recommendation 2.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the tutorial staff examine the possibility of enhancing the feedback regime by the provision of formative feedback on academic progress on a module while that module is still being studied, and before the students submit their formal assessment for that module.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the College improves the gender and lay/ordained balance within the core faculty team as a matter of priority, and that until this is achieved it takes concrete steps to provide exposure within its core programme to:

- i female priests with experience as incumbents of parishes;**
- ii lay people with expertise in theological education or ministerial practice; and**
- iii clergy with substantial recent or current parish experience.**

Recommendation 9

The Inspectors recommend that:

- i a clear policy is put in place for the appointment of all non-academic staff;**
- ii all job descriptions are reviewed over the next six months and updated and that the regular review of job descriptions is tied to annual appraisal;**
- iii the College carries through as a matter of some urgency its commitment to develop a staff development strategy and improve work in this area, particularly drawing in the needs of external tutors, and the general of shared pedagogical understanding among tutors;**
- iv the College reviews its procedures for the regular review of continuous professional development and the recording of attendance; and**
- v annual appraisal should take place for all staff.**

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Council reviews carefully how many FTE tutorial staff are appropriate for a college with St John's student numbers, and produces a timed plan to bring the faculty up to that level.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the Council carefully review the new governance structure one year after it is implemented for its effectiveness and fit with best practice in the governance of comparable charitable companies.

Recommendation 12

The Inspectors recommend that:

- i the work on the Business Plan is pursued, taking into account all of the above and including appropriate research to check the viability of proposed ways of increasing income and so that this is in place for summer 2013; and**
- ii future budgets reflect a robust business plan.**

Recommendation 13

The Inspectors recommend that St John's College should take steps to ensure that the College moves from deficit to surplus in its income based upon the robust business plan recommended in section M.

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