



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Ministry Council

Follow-up Inspection Report

Lindisfarne Regional
Training Partnership

March 2012

**Ministry Division
Church House
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3AZ
Tel: 020 7898 1412
Fax: 020 7898 1421**

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LINDISFARNE REGIONAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP

Follow-up Report of the Senior Inspector on Response and Action Plan from the Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership to the Recommendations of the March 2011 Report of the Inspectors

March 2012

INTRODUCTION

As a follow-up to the Lindisfarne Inspection Report, March 2011, the Senior Inspector visited the Lindisfarne Regional Training Partnership (RTP) on Tuesday 27 March 2012 to meet the Principal, the Chair of the Board of Trustees and other key people. These included the Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GPC), a new member of the Board of Trustees and of the F&GPC, three of the core staff, including the newly appointed Director of Studies, three members of the newly formed Development Group from the Newcastle Diocese and one new lay associate tutor in Old Testament Studies for the Durham teaching base. The Senior Inspector also had a phone conversation with a trustee from Durham Diocese who is also a member of the Development Group.

The original Inspection took place only one year after the start of Lindisfarne RTP. Since then the Quality in Formation Panel has made a decision not to inspect new courses until they have been operating for three years. In Lindisfarne's case the Follow-up Report is being written in a context where three years of its existence has not yet elapsed. Furthermore, Lindisfarne RTP, like every other theological institution sponsored by Ministry Division, now finds itself caught up with the implications of the Church's response to the withdrawal of HEFC funding and the subsequent project to adopt a common curriculum and to move to two providers for academic validation. It continues to be an unsettling time. Nevertheless, Lindisfarne is making excellent progress and staff and colleagues gave gracious and full support to the Follow up process and I am grateful to them.

The recommendations from the Report (2011) are printed below in **bold** type. Action point are boxed The Senior Inspector's comments appear in normal type and are drawn together in the conclusion.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the aims and objectives of the institution are articulated more consistently, clearly and succinctly in order to provide both an overarching aim which focuses and encompasses Lindisfarne's shared vision and also necessary differentiation with respect to the education and training of ordinands, Readers, Education for Discipleship and IME 4-7 for curates and Readers.

Action:

Collate and refine expression of aims and objectives as currently expressed in a number of documents.

Satisfactory. Working from a number of papers, Lindisfarne F&GPC produced a document for the Board of Trustees' meeting in January 2012 entitled 'Principles and Purpose' which clearly states Lindisfarne's Founding Principles, Mission and core Aim. Its shared vision is aptly expressed in one sentence and leads in to its five key objectives which accurately differentiate the categories of education and training from one another and also up-fronts the importance of financial security and stability. The document is set for final approval at the next Board of Trustees meeting in April 2012. It will then be included in the Business Plan, inserted into Student Handbooks from Autumn 2012, placed on the web-site and used in publicity materials. It was clear from a number of conversations that the document is thoroughly owned by the trustees whom I saw and by the Principal.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that within the next 12 months Lindisfarne demonstrates progress in its partnership with the colleges and the university in order to ensure that the particular needs of its part-time students are adequately addressed within the academic provision

Action:

The theological partners and University are actively engaged in reviewing student representation. The theological partners have agreed to seek the approval of the University for a reduction in their teaching hours to 28 hrs per 20 credit module. Indications from the University thus far are that this is likely to gain approval. This change has been facilitated by the impending closure of Ushaw College.

Satisfactory. The recommendation has been addressed in two ways. First the three partners: Lindisfarne, Cranmer Hall (CH) and Wesley Study Centre (WSC) have agreed a Policy on Student Engagement in the Learning Process, dated 15/12/11, which identifies four formal mechanisms for receiving, considering and using student feedback. For Lindisfarne these are: representation on the Lindisfarne Board of Studies, representation on the Staff-Student Consultative Committee, student representation on the Joint Management Committee and student module evaluation forms for each module. This policy embeds and safeguards the student voice in formal processes without negating the value of informal feedback.

The second highly significant action has been to reduce the teaching hours per 20-credit module to 28 contact hours. This is evidenced in module handbooks

and the generic timetable for weeknight and weekend teaching for 2011-2012. On my visit, it was recognised by one of the Old Testament associate tutors that it would be necessary to further revise content for that module in order to ensure that skills for textual reading were in place rather than seeking to cover all texts in a reduced hourage. I was satisfied that this was indeed the intention of the tutors and that they were skilful in this task and also in applying their work into ministerial contexts.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that all Lindisfarne staff (core and associate) access the University's CPD programme, including its teaching and learning qualification, and that staff development in pedagogy becomes an annual expectation and is monitored through the annual staff appraisal.

Action:

Lindisfarne was granted access to Durham University's CPD programme at the end of 2010. Lindisfarne core staff are looking forward to taking appropriate opportunities to engage with this. Lindisfarne will discuss with the University access to this programme for its associate tutors and will continue to hold its own staff training events for them.

Satisfactory. Lindisfarne has prepared a comprehensive booklet entitled Staff Development 2011-2012 which details the cvs of all core and associate staff, together with the dated evidence of mentoring provided to new staff by a number of core staff, and the staff development of core staff at more than five training days, provided at various locations in the university, covering areas such as: use of DUO - the university's learning platform, supervision of dissertations, assessment types, placements, teaching methods and contact hours. Additionally, on three separate occasions each year Lindisfarne holds training days for all of its core and associate staff. It is also important to note that three new associate staff employed by Lindisfarne who are doctoral students have already completed the university's teaching qualification. There is therefore good evidence of excellent progress in this area of staff development. If however, Lindisfarne were to lose its link to the University of Durham, it would need to find alternative arrangements for its staff development programme.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that Lindisfarne does all it can to improve the quality of the relationships and the structures for relating and working between the two dioceses and itself in order to provide evidence of effective communication and planning for the short, medium and long term future of Lindisfarne within 12 months.

Action:

Lindisfarne will form a Development Group to include core staff and people drawn from the dioceses/church partners. Two meetings have been held to discuss Reader provision and another will be arranged to discuss ordination training. Likewise, a scheduled review of *Faith & Life* is underway. The Development Group will identify and manage other such pieces of work.

Satisfactory and ongoing. There was Notes and Action Points from a productive meeting between Lindisfarne and the two Dioceses held on 9 March 2011. These clarified supervision for training incumbents, the method of reporting on trainee Readers in 2011 and changes for 2012. There was also a note about plans for differentiation in Reader and ordination training by separating residential in the Autumn term and providing two further weekend residential for Readers.

The Board of Trustees has set up a Development Group comprising the five core Lindisfarne staff and currently 5 Diocesan representatives, two of whom are Lindisfarne Trustees. The Group has appropriate guidance about membership, terms of reference, purpose, culture and configuration. It is not to be a decision-making body but will advise the Board and be chaired by the Principal.

At the time of the follow up visit, the first meeting had been held. The Notes and Action Points indicated opportunity to share impressions of Lindisfarne from members' local perspectives, and to review and make changes to the proposed terms of reference. Well-balanced working groups were set up to explore appropriate initial priorities, and dates for the next two meetings were agreed. Conversations with four members from the Dioceses indicated their commitment, satisfaction and enthusiasm for this work.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that, following consultation with denominational authorities, summaries of Lindisfarne's understanding of the different ministries and roles of the various groups of students are added to the curriculum approval document.

Action:

Summaries added to the curriculum approval document

Satisfactory. Lindisfarne has added summaries of its understanding of the different ministries of Ordinands/Clergy, Reader Trainees/Readers and Methodist Local Preachers to its curriculum approval document which differentiate between the different ministries and roles clearly and appropriately.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that:

- (a) the work on the categories which describe parts of the programme is completed
- (b) formal connections are made between the categories and the theological rationale of the course and are added to the curriculum document.

Action:

(a) The inspectors saw this work at an interim stage when it appeared that a new curriculum would need to be developed to meet the requirement for reduced contact hours. Work on the categories was already complete for the existing curriculum. Lindisfarne will retain the 5 categories as set out in the 2010/11 timetable.

(b) Added to the curriculum document

Satisfactory. Formal connections made between the categories and theological rationale can be found in the curriculum document.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the new programme should be based on a ratio of contact hours to credits close to 25 contact hours for a 20 credit module.

Action:

The Theological Partners anticipate that teaching hours will be reduced to 28 hours per 20 credit module.

Satisfactory. Evidence from module handbooks and the time-table demonstrate that contact hours for 20 credit modules have been reduced to 28 hours.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that an audit of approaches to learning and teaching is conducted across the curriculum once the new curriculum is being delivered, which leads to the formulation of policy to ensure there is a variety of styles and an appropriate balance of learning and teaching across the programme, and at each residential.

Action:

Lindisfarne will conduct an audit of the varied approaches to teaching and learning taken by its staff and tutors. The reduction of teaching hours means that there is no need for the development of a new (and separate) curriculum.

Satisfactory and ongoing. A thorough and fascinating audit of approaches to learning and teaching has been undertaken and analysed by the new Director of Studies. The analysis of detailed responses of core and associate staff demonstrate a preference for informal lectures supported by a range of media, such as powerpoint, Prezi (a cloud-based presentation package), dvd, handouts, flip chart/whiteboards, question and answer, and student presentations. Equally respondees confirmed the place of the formal lecture at times within their teaching. The findings included suggestions for further in house staff development events and indicate a strongly developing expertise in learning and teaching. One associate staff member commented that reduced teaching hours might lead to a more didactic approach in order to meet the learning outcomes. The comment may suggest that either the learning outcomes might be revisited if it is judged that they are too content-laden, or that further selected reading might be given to students, since every 20 credit module carries an agreed total learning time of 200 hours, balanced between contact time, directed learning, non-directed learning and assessment.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that careful thought is given to developing the potential for the education for discipleship programmes to contribute to vocational development.

Action:

The Board of Trustees has given careful consideration to this matter and has concluded that the current policy serves Lindisfarne well. People are strongly encouraged to think about God's call on their lives, and indeed many of Lindisfarne's public ministry candidates have come via EfD. The Board considers that a change of emphasis here is neither necessary nor desirable.

Satisfactory.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the staff

- (a) continue to seek a wider range of types of assessment within the accredited programme, including those that will test the practice of ministry and reflection on it**
- (b) guide students to those assignment titles that will enable them to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the Church of England's learning outcomes.**

Action:

- (a) The core staff will discuss assessment types with the theological partners and the University
- (b) Noted

- (a) **Ongoing.** It is clear from documentation that an audit of types of assessment has been carried out, giving attention to, for example, the number of essays, presentations, case studies etc. It would be helpful if this work could be further refined to indicate the percentage marks awarded to the different methods of assessment, and a clear indication of whether work is written or oral, and whether it tests the practice of ministry. The point of this is two-fold. It is to ensure integration of theology and practice in the accredited programme and to encourage fitness for purpose of methods of assessment for public ministers.
- (b) **Satisfactory.** It was clear from two handbooks that the attention of students training for public ministry had been drawn to those assignment titles that will enable them to demonstrate that they have fulfilled the Church of England's learning outcomes.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the policy relating to ministerial formation is revised to give clearer articulation to the distinctiveness of the formation of both ordinands and Readers in training.

Action:

A new section has been included in the curriculum document.

Satisfactory. A new section, added to the curriculum document clearly articulates the distinctiveness of the formation of ordinands and Readers in training.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that, by the beginning of the 2011/12 academic year Lindisfarne staff revise the portfolio to give greater emphasis to its use as a record of personal spiritual/ministerial growth and formation and re-title it Ministerial Formation Portfolio.

Action:

The portfolio will be revised and will be divided into two documents, with each part given greater weight. It is intended that these will play a significant part in the two new ministerial modules being developed. These must not, however, be permitted to undermine the ethos of integration upon which the whole of the programme is built.

Satisfactory and ongoing. Two Ministerial Formation Portfolios have been prepared, one for Ordinands and one for Trainee Readers, each focussing as a record of personal spiritual/ministerial growth and formation. Each helpfully includes in Part 3 the Church's criteria as a framework for development, with guidance on how to use the different criteria; one set given for the point of licensing/ordination and the other for selection for training. These together assist in identifying development. Part 3 is a particularly good development in an already enhanced portfolio which might be further enhanced in the future by making more reference to it in the earlier parts of the portfolio.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that students IME 1-3 to 4-7 do not receive the same or similar teaching on the same topic from the same tutor.

Action:
Noted

Satisfactory. Following further conversation with the Principal, there is no doubt that the practice was exceptional and is being monitored to ensure that it does not happen again.

Recommendation 14

We recommend that by the beginning of October 2011 the RTP should be delivering a Theology and Ministry programme with modules requiring around 25 hours teaching contact time in order to enable the RTP to re-balance its formational activities and model a less frenetic experience of ministerial life.

Action:
See responses to recommendations 2 and 7.

Satisfactory. See responses to recommendations 2 and 7.

Recommendation 15

We recommend that Lindisfarne take up the opportunity for some staff and all students to gain access to the University's e-learning platform in order to develop and use e-learning and e-resources.

Action:
Durham University is in discussion with the theological partners about this.

Satisfactory. All core staff have access to the University's e-learning platform *DUO* and have received training in its use. However, given uncertainties about future validation, it is pleasing that the Principal of Lindisfarne has pioneered the use of a different database and e-platform *Prezi*, which operates in a way similar to *Moodle*. Lindisfarne staff and students will receive training in the use of *Prezi*.

Recommendation 16

We recommend that the forthcoming Reader review process pays careful attention to ensuring that the resulting programme for Readers is balanced between academic work and spiritual formation and practical training.

Action:

From autumn 2011 the residential programme will have two separate weekends for Readers and one for Methodist Local Preachers. The final residential weekend in each academic year will be attended by all Lindisfarne's Anglican public ministry candidates. In addition it is intended that the two new ministerial modules being developed will draw greater attention to the process of formation and to practical training. As stated above, these must not be permitted to give the impression that 'formation' is a discrete enterprise; formation will continue to be integral to the whole process of training for ministry in both its validated and non-validated constituent parts; in formal and informal learning; in classroom contexts and in engagement in Church, world, home and the whole of life.

Satisfactory. Without doubt, Reader training at Lindisfarne has been greatly enhanced by the provision of two Reader-only residential weekends. The residential programme provides for a Reader focus in accredited modules such as Theological Reflection as well as a focus on two specific modules on Reader ministry. Feedback from students and staff from these weekends indicated enjoyment, challenge, stimulation and learning. It is clear that they had achieved their aim of addressing Reader formation and practical training in a way that is integral to the whole process of education and training.

Recommendation 17

We recommend a review of the subject-specific expertise of those teaching for Lindisfarne in order to increase the use of subject experts, including:

- (a) drawing in subject-specific expertise for residentials, including from outside the region.**
- (b) altering the way in which the Lindisfarne core staff are deployed to ensure that all students benefit from their subject-specific expertise.**
- (c) the careful use of the appointment of a new Director of Studies to increase the subject expertise of the teaching team.**

Action:

- a) Experts are brought in from outside the region – as per the November 2010 weekend on *Ecclesial Identity* at which the inspectors were present.
- b) The Principal has raised this with the Board who will give it full consideration.
- c) The person appointed has a PhD in Old Testament studies and is Chair of the Jesus Seminar of the British New Testament Society.

Satisfactory: a) The Senior Inspector recognises that experts are brought in for the mainly ministerially focused weekends.

b) It is clear from discussion with the Principal that there is genuine openness towards the wider deployment of Lindisfarne core staff according to their specialisms and skills. A document detailing their wider deployment was provided. One example is the work on supervision done by one of the staff who has recently completed a Masters degree on Supervision.

c) The new Director of Studies has considerable academic specialism in biblical studies combined with considerable ministerial experience.

It is clear from staff cvs for 2011-2012 that additions to the Associate staff have also increased the subject specialisms and teaching experience available to Lindisfarne.

Recommendation 18

We recommend that the opportunities for a significant lay contribution to the teaching team, and the availability of role models for Reader candidates, are pursued.

Action:

Since its inception Lindisfarne has sought suitably qualified lay people to join the teaching team and we continue both to seek them and to identify students who in the longer term might grow into tutors.

Reader role models are being introduced alongside the teaching team in appropriate modules and in Reader weekends. Likewise for Methodist Local Preachers.

Satisfactory and ongoing. The Principal is actively seeking to include lay people among the associate staff. For example two of three new associate tutors for biblical studies are lay. Additionally, the Principal has planned for lay tutors to lead and teach at the Reader-only residential weekends for 2011-2013. Further, Reader role models have been introduced alongside the teaching team at Reader-only weekends as evidenced both in the programmes and in appreciative student feedback.

Recommendation 19

We recommend that the Lindisfarne Board strengthens the membership of the Financial and General Purposes Committee in order to share the workload of the Board more equitably.

Action: Noted

Satisfactory. The FGPC has been strengthened by the addition of a committed colleague experienced in Business planning.

Recommendation 20

We recommend that the Lindisfarne Board urgently reviews its membership to ensure that all members have both the necessary expertise and commitment to make a demonstrably effective contribution to the Board.

Action: The Board will review its skills audit and will seek to identify suitable candidates for Board membership. A role description for Board members will be developed.
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Satisfactory. The Board of Trustees has completed a skills audit and has strengthened its skills base by the addition of two women with expertise *inter alia* in legal and HR matters, organisation change and development, and business planning. It is also commendable to see a role descriptor setting out the expectations of what it is to be a member of the Lindisfarne RTP Board.

Recommendation 21

We recommend that all associate tutors should receive an annual appraisal and have an identified plan for their professional development which Lindisfarne will support.

Action:

Associate tutors are observed by the core staff. Further consideration will be given to tutor development during 2011/12.

Satisfactory and ongoing. Observation and mentoring of associate tutors is in place, well-documented and appreciated, especially by less experienced tutors, as evidenced in conversations during my visit. All tutors attend three Lindisfarne in-house staff development sessions per year. From conversations with the Principal and Director of Studies, it is clear that enhancement of teaching and learning continues to be a key priority for the Principal and core staff. Action and evidence showing the findings of mentoring raised in staff appraisal and carried through into in-house staff development would be a further commendable development.

Recommendation 22

We recommend that, in its Business Plan, Lindisfarne identifies clear and achievable aims and objectives over the short and medium term and how it intends to achieve them.

Action:

To be acted upon by the F&GP. The Business Plan will be reviewed each summer at the same time as the budgeting process is undertaken.

Satisfactory and ongoing. It is a wise decision, in these changing times, for the FGPC to review the Business Plan annually. The statement of Principles and Purpose to be included in the revised Business Plan helpfully sets out clear and achievable aims and objectives for Lindisfarne's different programmes (EfD, IME 1-3, IME 4-7, CMD) and for its finances. All of these in turn include a section about how the objectives will be achieved and also provide further short and medium term objectives.

In the future, it will be helpful to relate the short and medium term objectives above to the Statement of Strategy and Priorities which is already in the Business Plan. The latter is necessarily wider than the focused aims and objectives, but the mention of EfD, CMD and Finances in 'Priorities for the next two years' shows the overlap between the two statements. The Senior Inspector recognises that Business plans are never static and the revised plan already shows a marked enhancement.

Recommendation 23

We recommend that the Board acts urgently to adopt its Financial Regulations.

Action:

The Financial Regulations were distributed to Board members with the papers for the October 2010 meeting, at which meeting members were advised that adoption would be sought at the following meeting in January 2011. This duly happened according to plan.

Satisfactory. The Minute from the meeting of January 2011 evidences this action.

CONCLUSIONS

The Senior Inspector is satisfied with the significant progress made over the last year in implementing the recommendations made in the Report (2011). She fully acknowledges the challenge of an inspection after only one year of existence and highly commends the speed of implementation and quality of the responses made to the Recommendations.

Revd Professor Ruth Ackroyd, Senior Inspector
08.04.12