



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

## Ministry Council

# Follow-up Inspection Report

Ridley Hall

November 2013

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## Ridley Hall

### Senior Inspector's follow-up Report on the Response by Ridley Hall to the Recommendations of the November 2011 Report of the Inspectors

November 2013

#### INTRODUCTION

1. I visited Ridley Hall on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and met the Principal, Canon Andrew Norman, The Chair of the Cambridge (Management) Committee, the Ven. Hugh McCurdy, the Bursar, Mr. Colin MacRae, five of the tutors, and a group of six students. I am very grateful for their helpful and honest replies to my questions and to their additional comments. I am also appreciative of the generous hospitality extended to me on my visit.
2. I received in advance of my visit an updated Ridley Hall 2011 Inspection Action Plan in response to the fourteen recommendations from the Inspection Report. The updated Action Plan revealed significant progress in responding to the recommendations and demonstrated a genuine and earnest institutional commitment to responding to the recommendations.
3. In responding to the recommendations, Ridley Hall was also dealing with two significant external pressures. First, Ridley Hall is a full member of the Cambridge Theological Federation and the Federation is re-configuring various dimensions of the Federation organization and life in response to the change in theological education funding and the move to Common Awards with Durham University. Secondly, Ridley Hall in accordance with the introduction of Common Awards is developing new curriculum pathways to be introduced in September 2014.
8. Turning to the specific recommendations of the Inspection Report, which follow in bold, Ridley Hall has made progress on all of the matters raised and their most recent comments, which incorporate what had been reported at earlier stages, follow each recommendation in italics. The comments of the Senior Inspector follow on for each recommendation.

## **Recommendation 1**

**We recommend that the College consider enhancing the facilities provided for students at the weekend in order to facilitate the community life.**

*A number of steps have been taken to improve the facilities that can be used by residents for social occasions. Taking account of feedback from students, the Simeon Centre kitchen has been refitted with a new cooker, shelves and flooring. Utensils and crockery have also been upgraded. The adjacent Simeon lounge can now accommodate up to a dozen people for dinner parties using tables stored there. In the Common Room, new and improved lighting has been installed along with a new boiler, improved storage arrangements and a better coffee-bar facility. In the Lecture Hall, a new table tennis table is being proposed, as part of phased improvements within budgetary constraints.*

*The email group for resident students has made it easier for any who feel isolated on their staircases to find out quickly who else is present in college and arrange ad hoc gatherings. Extra informal social events were organized this year in various venues, including an American election night party in November, fire-pit back garden parties, regular mid-week gatherings for live music in Dashwood House, and an afternoon country walk followed by tea at the Principal's house. 'B-Bar', an informal weekly social gathering run by students on Friday evenings in the basement of 'B' Staircase has come into its own this year, and some residential staff have been frequent participants.*

*At the time of the inspection, the two social deacons (student volunteers who organize events) were married students who lived off site. This year, one of the social deacons is a resident; the student body will be encouraged to continue this practice (and to clarify expectations) so as to ensure representative leadership in these roles. There are also hospitality deacons whose role encourages social interaction between residents and non-residents. Consideration was given to introducing a new residential student's deacon, but after consultation it was concluded that the interests of residential students were best promoted by other means.*

*Staff and students are conscious of a delicate balancing act between facilitating social activities and acknowledging that students are adults who will want to accept responsibility for their own social lives. We rejoice in the variety of life experience and personalities represented by our student body each year and recognise that preferences and expectations for social activities will vary from person to person. In addition to any social activity organised 'in house', Cambridge offers a wide variety of events and activities. This includes choral, sporting and social activities in the matriculating colleges of BTh and Tripos students. We nonetheless remain committed to enhancing the experience of community life onsite, regarding this as an important aspect of our longer term plans for developing our buildings.*

I had the opportunity to physically inspect the improved facilities. They were all completed to a high standard. Both staff and students commented that the steps

taken above have improved the community life on the weekends. Students who are resident are most appreciative of the steps taken and have no further concerns. The Hall is clearly committed to ensure the community life is as positive as possible and to monitor the situation.

## **Recommendation 2**

### **We recommended that a regular pattern of Evening Prayer be more firmly established in the weekly worship pattern..**

*All students are inducted into the required disciplines of the Daily Office in the introductory weeks of their first term. The discipline of Morning Prayer is corporate; in chapel or in fellowship/staircase groups. Because the majority of our students live offsite, and the Federation timetable is complex, the discipline of Evening Prayer and worship, also required of students, is provided by a range of services.*

*On Mondays and Wednesdays, Evening Prayer is always available in chapel. Because this office is used formally by the ecumenical Centre for Youth Ministry as well as Anglican ordinands and clergy, we necessarily permit a liturgical range. Students who are offsite are encouraged to develop their discipline in their attachment parishes or at home as appropriate.*

*On Tuesdays, there is either Federation Worship, with its ecumenical range, or Holy Communion in chapel. On Thursdays we have our Hall Communion, the principal focus of the week's worship.*

*On Fridays, because of the dispersal of the community, the discipline is personal. We have also periodically observed a weekly Midday Office with optional fast in Lent. We propose to reintroduce this for Advent as well.*

*In addition:*

- Compline will be given renewed emphasis.
- Students will be encouraged to make the most of opportunities to attend choral evensong in Cambridge Colleges; this builds on the practice of Ridley Hall fellowship/staircase groups attending Morning Prayer in Cambridge College.
- The tutorial staff have committed themselves to increase their participation in afternoon worship this year, as timetables allow.

It is clear from this response and from the initial inspection visit that worship and prayer is a priority in the life of the community. The response to the recommendation shows creative efforts to develop the worship pattern to ensure a bespoke daily office of morning and evening prayer within the constraints of the weekly pattern in the Hall and in the Federation. The students commented that they felt their personal tutors encouraged each ordinand to develop a daily discipline and held them accountable. The staff felt that it was not possible to provide the Common Worship evening prayer each day but that a pattern of morning and evening prayer was in place and encouraged. The concern of the

inspectors on the initial visit has been significantly addressed by the actions taken and by the evidence discerned in conversation with students and staff.

### **Recommendation 3**

**The inspectors recommend that Ridley provide further training for tutorial staff, especially those with less teaching experience, in order to develop their adult education skills.**

*All of Ridley's teaching staff will continue to attend termly Staff Development days in the Cambridge Theological Federation, the aim of which is to foster greater awareness of best practice in teaching. The programme already planned for 2013/14 includes a session on supervision (September) and on marking (December). Ridley's Vice-Principal currently serves on the committee giving direction to Staff Development, and he has proposed that communication skills in adult education and different modes of teaching be themes for following training days in the coming year. This will be accompanied by a Federation-wide evaluation of the kind of teaching facilities best suited to these various modes of teaching, as part of the continuing Federation Estates Review.*

*In the meantime, the quality of teaching at Ridley is monitored in several ways. Student feedback forms for particular courses are normally read, not simply by the tutor who taught, but also by at least one other tutor in the same discipline. Peer review of teaching with written evaluation is a standard requirement of those who teach on the ARU awards. Course group review meetings for Ridley students take place at least twice per year and provide an opportunity for students to speak freely about the quality of teaching or lack thereof; they are fully minuted by the Principal's PA and all Ridley staff are given copies of the full minutes of feedback sessions. These are subsequently discussed in staff meetings. Tutorial staff regularly encourage their tutees to speak freely about the education they are receiving, and expressions of dissatisfaction are taken seriously, receiving attention in staff meetings.*

*With the arrival of a new member of staff on the teaching team this year (the Revd Dr Rob McDonald), the Vice-Principal has devised a formal procedure for induction, including the process of mentoring. Dr Thompson is acting as a tutor mentor for Dr McDonald, and they have already had extensive discussions about expectations and good practice. In addition, Dr McDonald will work closely with Professor Richard Bauckham and Dr John Bradbury in preparing for his first experiences as a Federation teacher. He will team teach with Dr Bradbury for his first module, and no doubt will find the peer review and student feedback helpful.*

The provision for staff development by the Hall and by the Federation in conjunction with the University of Cambridge is more than adequate. It is evident from conversations with the Principal and Staff that they participate regularly and conscientiously. The staff take the feedback forms and course reviews seriously and make every effort to respond through the provision of staff development to address any perceived issues. The induction and mentoring provision recently

put in place is well received and is to be commended. It is evident that concerted effort is being made to meet this recommendation and that progress has been made since the initial inspection visit.

#### **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend that the teaching spaces be reconfigured before the new building is finished so that the lighting, furniture and seating arrangements are more suitable in these rooms for the learning experience.**

*During Lent term 2013, a survey of Ridley students and staff, along with Federation teaching staff, was carried out to establish the opinions held about the three Ridley teaching rooms – the Lecture Hall, Seminar Room 1 and Seminar Room 2. Questions were asked regarding the quality of lighting, the comfort and practicality of the furniture and whether participants felt that the room met the need of their group.*

*On the whole the rooms were felt to be good teaching spaces that are suited to their use, particularly when compared to other rooms used for teaching in the Federation. While only a minority were dissatisfied with the chairs in Seminar Room 1, none of whom were students, the chairs and tables in both seminar rooms have been upgraded and replaced with more comfortable and practical alternatives.*

*Following the survey, brighter lighting has been installed in Seminar Rooms 1 and 2. In addition, clearer instructions have been provided about the optimal use of the new energy efficient lights in the Lecture Hall.*

I was able to inspect the rooms on this follow-up visit. The actions taken, especially the new chairs, improved lighting and new tables, have improved the rooms as a learning environment. I was distinctly impressed by the steps taken and the commitment by the institution to provide a good learning environment in the three teaching rooms.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**We recommend that the College review the practice of developing skills in theological reflection.**

*A number of steps have been taken to ensure all ordinands develop confidence in theological reflection. In particular, we have recognised that some ordinands, who already adopt a reflective approach, benefit from greater attention to the technical language of theological reflection.*

*Steps have been taken in the following areas:*

*i. Briefing for block placement report.*

*A key assessment tool for competence in theological reflection is the presentation and written report which ordinands prepare after undertaking the month long block placement. The process of theological reflection which is required for the*

*presentation and written report will be explained in much greater detail before ordinands begin their placements.*

*ii. Assessing of block placement report.*

*The presentations and reports on the block placements undertaken during the summer are received in October. The staff marking these presentations and reports will pay particular attention to the quality of theological reflection presented in order to identify areas where further work is required.*

*iii. Missional mapping*

*An exercise on missional mapping has been introduced as part of the Life and Service module. The teaching of this in the year 2012-13 was presented by a guest teacher. This needed to be supplemented by an additional session taught by the Director of Pastoral Studies. Future sessions on missional mapping in the Life and Service module will be taught by the Director of Pastoral Studies.*

*iv. Ordained Pioneer Ministers*

*In order to ensure that ordinands training for Ordained Pioneer Ministry become familiar with the technical language of theological reflection, the Director of Pastoral Studies takes sessions on the Pioneer track of the Life and Service module.*

*v. Social Context Placements*

*All ordinands, regardless of the academic pathway they are on, undertake a variety of Social Context Placements organised by different Directors of Pastoral Studies in the Cambridge Theological Federation. The Director of Pastoral Studies for Ridley Hall has asked those DOPS who organise SCPs to monitor and report on the quality of theological reflection offered by Ridley Hall ordinands in SCP seminars.*

*vi. Common Awards*

*Common Awards validated by Durham University will be introduced in September 2014. There has been a strong emphasis on an integrated approach to learning in the design of these awards. They should therefore reinforce other efforts to build confidence in theological reflection.*

It is evident from the actions identified and the steps taken that Ridley is making a concerted effort to address the recommendation. The commitment to these steps was evident in the conversation with the tutors. These steps will enhance the teaching of and practice of theological reflection in the Federation curriculum. The response and steps outlined show a creative and thoughtful response.

## **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that the Ridley Hall Council progress the appointment of a doctrine tutor when it is able to do so.**

*Six shortlisted candidates for the post of Doctrine Tutor were interviewed in November 2012. The Revd Dr Robert McDonald was appointed to the role and began in August 2013.*

The action taken has fully met the recommendation.

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend that the Council consider the appointment of an experienced and qualified member of staff to assist the bursar during the period of construction.**

Mr Guoliang Zhang has been appointed. The Bursar is very pleased with this appointment and with the support he is receiving in order to deal with the additional work created by the building project.

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend that the Council resolve the issue of the constitution of Ridley Hall as an unincorporated trust as soon as practicable.**

*Prior to the appointment of a new Chair of Council and Principal at Wycliffe Hall, Ridley Hall Council gave preliminary consideration to legal options for the constitution, drawing on the legal expertise of Council members. Following the appointment of a new Principal of Wycliffe Hall in April 2013, a joint working group has been sent up by Ridley Hall and Wycliffe Hall to explore this further. As a result, seven legal firms have been invited to submit proposals for assisting in this exercise. Initial estimates for legal services range between £40,000 and £80,000 each for Ridley Hall and Wycliffe Hall. In parallel to this, consideration is being given to governance issues and detailed provisions of the Deed of Trust which might require revision.*

In conversation with the Principal and the Chair of the Cambridge Committee, significant progress has been made and there is likely to be a specific solution offered to the Council in the near future. The Council has been keeping this matter under close review and is earnestly seeking to bring the matter to a conclusion which will address the recommendation and which will be mutually beneficial for the ongoing mission of Ridley and Wycliffe Hall.

### **Recommendation 9**

**We recommend that the Council provide the Bursar with more assistance in the area of strategic financial planning through the expertise and assistance of appropriate Council members.**

*Completed. In addition, in 2013, Ridley Hall Council set up a Finance Committee, comprising two Council members with financial expertise, the Bursar and the Principal. This Committee reports to the Cambridge Committee.*

From conversations with the Bursar, the Principal and the Chair of the Cambridge Committee, it is apparent that all are in agreement that the actions

taken have put in place strategic assistance the recommendation was suggesting. I would agree that with the word, 'completed'.

### **Recommendation 10**

**We recommend that as the development plans progress the Council in consultation with the Principal and staff consider the organisational and management structure so that it facilitates appropriate workloads and more effective management of the full life and business of Ridley Hall.**

*A programme of preliminary staff discussions took place in April and September to consider how Ridley Hall's collegial management structure might evolve with the increased complexity associated with the proposed new building. The business plan for the new building currently envisages two additional teaching staff and a buildings manager. This provides scope for a more segmented organisational structure, though it is hoped this might be achieved without losing Ridley's tradition of collegial decision-making and shared discernment. Attention is also being given to exploring an enhanced role for a senior management team. This process will eventually feed in to terms of reference for new staff appointments.*

*A staged approach is thus being taken. Stage one includes a general consideration of Ridley's evolving ethos and its relationship to management structure and staff modes of working. It also includes exploring scope for amending organisational and management structure prior to the construction of the new building. Stage two begins in earnest once authorisation has been given to begin construction. It will bring together job descriptions for new staff with a revised management and organisational structure. It will also take account of revised workloads associated with the introduction of the Common Awards in parallel to Cambridge University awards.*

*In addition to steps already taken, as indicated above, further incremental adjustments have been made to Ridley's organisational and management structure. These include an enhanced role for the Senior Management Team, subdivision of the responsibilities of the Director of Studies and the introduction of a Finance Committee (see Recommendation 9). As envisaged in the Action Plan, a decision to commence construction of the new building will trigger the next stage in organisational development. Plans for restructuring will therefore take account of new staff appointments associated with the new building and the revenue it will generate. The timescale for construction of the new building is two years, which is ample time for implementing changes to organisational structure.*

The action taken and planned demonstrate a full commitment to meet the concerns of the recommendation. According to the Principal and staff, the actions already taken have made a positive impact in sharing out responsibilities and have not impacted upon the collegiality. The planned actions demonstrate a genuine commitment to addressing the long term challenges.

## **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that the management provide additional secretarial support for the placement schemes.**

*The new Doctrine Tutor, Rob MacDonald, has taken over the previous work of Jill Chatfield in assisting Ali Walton, the Director of Pastoral Studies, in the administration of the month long summer placements, video sermon classes for ordinands in their second year of three, and sermon classes for ordinands in their final year. Rob MacDonald and Ali Walton will collaborate closely in the setting up of suitable placements for all ordinands. The Principal's PA now provides support to Ali Walton for other areas of work such as Training Incumbents' Days, the administration of the January Federation Intensive Courses, some administration in connection with the end of term short course programme and other occasional administrative tasks, with the agreement of the Principal.*

The staff involved in placement work agree that this arrangement is working well and is an improvement upon the situation that was present at the initial inspection. The recommendation is being met by these arrangements

## **Recommendation 12**

**We recommend that the Handbook provide students with an appropriate summary of the safeguarding policy and instructions for how to deal with a safeguarding incident.**

*The safeguarding policy and instructions for how to deal with a safeguarding incident have been included in the 2012/13 Handbook.*

I have seen the new Handbook and the safeguarding policy is included and instructions for action provided. The policy is now easily accessible to the students.

## **Recommendation 13**

**We recommend that provision for off-site backup for all data is put in place as soon as possible.**

*Arrangements for off-site back-up are being made with Cambridge University Computing Services.*

The off-site backup is in place and working. This recommendation has been met.

## **Recommendation 14**

**We recommend that a comprehensive contingency plan be prepared in order to address the present perceived accommodation inadequacies in case insufficient funds are raised for the new building project.**

*A contingency plan was approved by Ridley Hall Council at its meeting on 5th March 2013. It encompassed works prioritised at three levels. These would improve the College for the existing size of community. In contrast to the main building project, they would limit scope for further diversification, restrict growth in student numbers and contribute only modestly to improved Federation teaching facilities.*

*Work has already been undertaken on some aspects of this contingency plan:*

- Common room refurbishment (see Recommendation 1)
- Simeon Centre kitchen refurbishment (see Recommendation 1)
- Improved lighting and furniture in seminar rooms (see Recommendation 4)

*Preliminary architects' plans have been prepared for other aspects of this contingency plan:*

- Dining room extension
- Disabled access to dining room, including lift
- Extension to chapel, including new vestry and entrance area
- Additional student rooms from attic conversion (G and H staircase)

The contingency plan is a thoughtful and constructive document which embodies a clear strategy for immediate improvements and for improvements should the development project not go forward in the immediate future. It sits alongside the full development plan which continues to be taken forward in an appropriately cautious manner contingent upon funding. Having discussed the contingency plan with the Principal, Bursar and staff, it is clear that it is fully embraced in the ethos of the business plan of Ridley Hall. This document meets the recommendation in a most helpful way.

## **CONCLUSION**

Ridley Hall through its Inspection Action Plan has demonstrated a full commitment to deal with the recommendations, and it has responded very effectively to the recommendations in the actions taken. A good number of the recommendations have been met by the actions already taken. The actions taken have been thoughtful and constructive. The ongoing action plans are considered and creative in order to meet the recommendations. From my visit I discerned a commitment at all levels to address the recommendations in the most operative way possible.

D L STAMPS  
The Revd Canon Dr Dennis L Stamps, Senior Inspector  
06 February 2014