



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Ministry Council

Follow-up Inspection Report

Wycliffe Hall, Oxford

May 2016

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Senior Reviewer's Follow-up Report to the May 2015 Periodic External Review

May 2016

Introduction

I was once again made very welcome by the staff at Wycliffe Hall (WH). Following the review in May 2015, senior members of staff were allocated responsibility for fulfilling each of the recommendations made in the reviewers' report. On my return visit I met with each of these members of staff, as well as meeting with the Principal. I would like to thank all the members of staff for giving of their time to enable this stage of the review to take place.

The Recommendations and Continued Observation

WH continues to be in good heart and to be a community enthusiastic for the Gospel. The Principal shared the Mission Aims newly agreed by the Council:

'Christ's love compels us:

- To Train Lifelong Disciple-Makers
- In Community
- With excellent Bible-Centred Teaching
- In a Thought-Provoking City'

And the Vision Aims, also newly agreed by the Council:

'Christ's love compels us:

- To renew Christian prayer
- To renew Christian character
- To renew Christian preaching
- To renew Christian thinking'

Admissions are not yet complete for this year but already show an increase above the number of leavers and, within this, the number of female ordinands has also increased. The increase in numbers is small but probably significant. A strategy for the future of the college has remained on the Council's agenda with decisions being taken in key areas that would leave a variety of future scenarios possible as the wider church continues to work through the *Renewal and Reform* agenda.

The pattern and content of worship in college chapel was reviewed, as promised to the students, late in 2015. The result is that the present pattern will essentially remain into the future with a few minor changes. The Principal expressed the hope that WH would now be able to develop a regular and agreed style of leading worship with expected posture etc.

WH have been assured by Oxford University that it will continue to be possible to deliver Common Awards through the University of Durham for the foreseeable future.

Recommendation 1

The reviewers recommend that ways are found to increase exposure to and dialogue with other faiths through an appropriate means, either within the assessed curriculum or otherwise.

One of the WH associate tutors has worked systematically through the Common Awards material to enable staff to identify inter-faith vocational opportunities within modules eg assessments that relate to interfaith experience. The opportunity now exists for the placing of curates for short periods of time on placement in multi-faith areas, alternatively students can record experiences that they themselves have arranged to engage with other faiths. This is to ensure that all ordinands meet the requirements of the House of Bishop Formation Criteria that relate to interfaith provision. The Common Awards Module “Mission and Apologetics” will include an introductory lecture on Judaism; guided reading in the sacred text of either Buddhism or Hinduism; and attentiveness to the apologetic questions raised in multi-faith mission. The leavers’ programme this year will include a session on dialogue with other faiths but this will be integrated in the normal teaching programme in future years. The Islam Integrated Study Week will include a session on contextualization with Judaism and Islam.

Recommendation fully implemented, no further action

Recommendation 2

We recommend that tutors use the Student Handbook to explain the way time is allocated on CA courses and help students on CA to direct their own time.

A page has now been added to the student handbook to explain the structure of the Common Awards modules and the way that the allocated time should be used. To make this even more explicit, each module now has a 'module overview' designed to a consistent format across the Common Awards modules. This begins by explaining the aims and the content of the module, as well as learning outcomes, the lecture/seminar timetable, the subject skills and key skills. The overview explains in detail the time allocation for such matters as pre-reading, assignments, seminars, placements.

Recommendation fully implemented, no further action

Recommendation 3

The reviewers recommend that provision be made for theologically-grounded training for students in issues of diversity.

The response to this recommendation was fully implemented by the start of 2016. Lectures related to race, disability and sexuality have been included within the Common awards provision eg 'race' will be covered in the CA 'Mission and Apologetics' module, disability and ethics will be dealt with in the ethics module. Further coverage of the topics, as additional provision, has been arranged and was delivered last Friday. Outside lecturers are used with relevant areas of expertise. The diocesan safeguarding officer was invited to offer a day's training for staff and students. The multiplicity of pathways, the Oxford and the Common Awards pathways mean that the issues around diversity are covered in a variety of ways in each programme. From 2016 onwards, the Ministry and Formation Handbook will contain a grid indicating where provision is provided in the area of diversity and ensuring that students attend (even if they are not taking the particular module).¹

Recommendation fully implemented, no further action

Recommendation 4

We recommend that teaching in the area of pastoral care is strengthened as soon as possible

Teaching in the area of pastoral care has been redefined as in the area of pastoral theology, so as to make clear the interlinking of pastoral care and

¹ This has now been included in the *Ministry and Formation Handbook 2016/17*.

theology. Teaching is delivered wholly by outside experts, including an Associate tutor with considerable experience in medicine and the teaching of pastoral theology and a psychiatrist, skilled not just in the treatment of mental illness but also offering teaching on boundaries and the signs of mental illness likely to be presented within the church setting.

Following the appointment of a new member of staff, an improvement in the allocation and monitoring of placements has now been achieved.

Recommendation fully implemented, no further action

Recommendation 5

The reviewers recommend that the review of the staff handbook is completed as soon as possible.

The review of the staff handbook remains a work in progress but with a clear expected timetable to publication. Working with staff of another TEI, the Bursar intends to buy-in HR help to re-write the handbook over the course of the summer, with consultation with staff taking place in September and presentation to Council for their approval expected in late September. If Council are able to approve the document, publication could take place within a few weeks. A new Council member is being sought with expertise in the area of HR².

Plans in place to ensure full implementation of this recommendation – no further action

Recommendation 6

The reviewers recommend that monthly meetings between the support staff and the Bursar or Assistant Bursar are put in place to facilitate the detailed understanding of the requirements of WH.

This was recommended by the reviewers following comments from some staff that they were not sufficiently briefed in some areas of their work. Termly meetings that spell out strategy and ethos have taken place but the Bursar does not believe that these have fulfilled what was requested by the staff. This was consistent with the Senior Reviewers' memory of conversations with non-teaching staff. The Bursar aims to find ways of communicating on what are essentially detailed practical

² A new member of Hall Council with significant HR experience has now been appointed.

matters. The Senior Reviewer continues to recommend that this is by way of meeting with non-teaching staff as the original request appeared to contain a desire for the human element in communication and the opportunity for question and answer. It is clear that attempts have been made to fulfil this recommendation and that attempts will continue.

All Staff Meetings at the beginning of each term have been reworked to include reports from different departments in the Hall.

Plans in place to ensure full implementation of this recommendation – no further action.

Recommendation 7

The reviewers recommend that the Council include oversight of all responsibilities relating to human resources within the remit of a Council committee and agree the appropriate terms of reference for that committee.

It has been agreed by Council that the Governance and Nominations Sub-Committee will take responsibility for HR issues. Amended terms of reference are being drawn up. But were missed from the meeting of 17th Nov and therefore this will be rectified and the action completed at the meeting of Hall Council on 8th June 2016. This will now be the body to which the revised staff handbook will be taken.

Plans in place to ensure full implementation of this recommendation – no further action

Recommendation 8

The reviewers recommend that Wycliffe Hall continue to upgrade its teaching and living accommodation, in line with current discussions, as the shape of the future becomes clearer.

Some carefully chosen repair and refurbishment work continues to take place, which will be useful to WH whatever the future brings through the reform and renewal agenda. Recognizing that the refurbishment of buildings is a continual piece of work, this recommendation has been met.

The Bursar reported that ‘new kitchen and bathroom facilities have been provided in the main building over summer 2015. Major repair work was done to the roof of the main building and, whilst the scaffolding was in place, repointing work and window painting was done. The Seminar Room in 2 Norham Gardens was upgraded over the same period. A Feasibility Study has been commissioned which will outline the potential to upgrade student bedrooms with en suite bathrooms’.

The Bursar will be asking the Hall Council in June to approve next steps of a major investment in Wycliffe’s Banbury Road site. He states that ‘the key requirements from the existing Strategic Plan are:

- Reinforce the importance of zoning of functions
- Demonstrate the importance of “community living”
- Highlight a sense of being “welcome” at the Hall

The Hall’s priorities towards achieving these goals above will be to:

1. Improve student (and visitor) accommodation experience
2. Improve student permanent and temporary study spaces and experience
3. Improve the Hall’s reception and “welcome” facilities’

Therefore, the Bursar is proposing Phase 1 of the Masterplan to:

- Refurbish existing bedrooms in No.2 & No.4 Norham Gardens to include “en suites”
- Upgrade first and second floor areas of the ‘Old Building’ to introduce better shower and student “shared living” areas
- Improve and reconfigure the Hall entrance / “welcome” area (including a possible new lift location for access between levels
- Improve study rooms and introduce a (better) vertical link between basement study rooms and the main Library level(s).

Recommendation fully implemented, no further action

Revd Lesley Bentley, Senior Reviewer
6 June 2016