



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Ministry Council

Inspection Report

Yorkshire Ministry Course
and
Yorkshire Regional Training
Partnership

January – March 2011

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GLOSSARY

BATM	Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Ministry
CLAY	Christians Learning Across Yorkshire
CMD	Continuing Ministerial Development
CME	Continuing Ministerial Education
CMER	Continuing Ministerial Education for Readers
COR	College of the Resurrection, Mirfield
CR	Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield
FDTM	Foundation Degree in Theology and Ministry
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IME4-7	Initial Ministerial Education Years 4 - 7
MC	Mirfield Centre
MOLE	My Online Learning Environment
IME	Initial Ministerial Education
NOC	Northern Ordination Course
YICT	York Institute for Community Theology
YMC	Yorkshire Ministry Course
YRTP	Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership
YSJU	York St John University
UoL	University of Leeds
UoS	University of Sheffield
UTU	Urban Theology Unit, Sheffield
WCCE	Wilson Carlile College of Evangelism, Sheffield

LIST OF INSPECTORS

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THE INSPECTIONS FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

Confidence

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

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

Confidence with qualifications

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

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

No confidence

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

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

**THE REPORT OF THE INSPECTION OF
THE YORKSHIRE MINISTRY COURSE AND
THE YORKSHIRE REGIONAL TRAINING PARTNERSHIP**

January – March 2011

SUMMARY

Introduction

Whilst the primary focus of this report is the Yorkshire Ministry Course (YMC), it needs to be seen in the context of the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership (YRTP). The decision that the five Yorkshire dioceses should comprise one of the Regional Training Partnerships in the north of England, led not just to the creation of the YMC, but to seeing the Course as firmly integrated within the pattern of theological education and training in Yorkshire, including the College of the Resurrection (COR), The Mirfield Centre (MC), Initial Ministerial Education 4 –7 (IME 4-7) and Reader and other lay ministry education across the five dioceses, and the United Reformed Church province and four Methodist Districts.

Leaving aside the College of the Resurrection which is the subject of a separate report, at the time of the inspection there were 53 students on the YMC (51 Anglican ministerial students, 1 Baptist and 1 Independent), 105 Readers and 157 others (including 7 Methodist Lay Preachers), in training for lay ministries or exploring vocation, through diocesan schools of ministry or other diocesan arrangements. In addition clergy from the dioceses participate in the YRTP IME 4 – 7 programme (currently 184, some doing accredited courses, other attending as auditors).

The YMC is based alongside the College of the Resurrection and the Mirfield Centre on the site owned by the Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield in West Yorkshire. This also provides a meeting place for the YRTP. In addition to Mirfield, the YMC uses facilities at York St John University (YSJU) for week-night sessions.

In the dioceses of Bradford, Wakefield and Sheffield, Readers and others training for lay ministries are trained through Schools of Ministry, whilst the dioceses of Ripon and Leeds and York have separate arrangements for Reader training. The inspectors did visit all the teaching centres in the five dioceses, and speak to students, tutors and Wardens of Readers. We comment in this report on those aspects of Reader training with which we had contact.

Summary of outcomes

The inspection team regards the Yorkshire Ministry Course and the Reader training provision within the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership (YRTP) as fit for purpose for preparing candidates respectively for ordained a licensed ministry

CRITERIA	OUTCOME: Ordinands	Readers
A. Aims, Objectives and Evaluation of the Institution	Confidence	
B. Relationships with Other Institutions	Confidence	
C. Curriculum for formation and education	Confidence with qualifications	Confidence
D. Community and Corporate Life	Confidence	
E. Worship and Training in public worship	Confidence with qualifications	
F. Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation	Confidence	
G. Teaching and Learning: content, method and resources	Confidence	
H. Practical and Pastoral Theology	Confidence with qualifications	Confidence
I. Teaching staff	Confidence	
J. Ancillary staff	Confidence	
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	
O. Reserves policy and statutory liabilities	Confidence	
P. Accommodation	Confidence	
Overall Outcome	Confidence	

General observations

The YRTP was able to build on a number of institutions and networks for ministerial and theological education which already existed in Yorkshire. These included among many others the College of the Resurrection, the Northern Ordination Course and the Yorkshire Trainers. Out of these building blocks, and in pursuance of the vision behind the report "Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church" (Hind) came a proposal for a Covenant between the Church Leaders

and the Governing Bodies of Training Institutions in Yorkshire. The Covenant has at its centre a vision of the people of God “called to celebrate and participate in the missio Dei”, a “passion to support and develop local church congregations and their formation in Christian discipleship, wisdom, holiness, prayer and response to the needs of all people”, and of lay and ordained ministers as “reflective practitioners”, with a “crucial role in building up the life of the Church”.

The Yorkshire Ministry Course came into being as part of that wider vision. It shares the YRTP’s theological commitments. In practical terms it provides part-time training for ordination as the successor body to the previous provision of the Northern Ordination Course (NOC) east of the Pennines, and of the North East Ordination Course (NEOC) in north and east Yorkshire. It shares the site in Mirfield with the College of the Resurrection. They have a joint Director of Studies and Academic Registrar, and a joint arrangement with the University of Sheffield for the validation of a BA in Ministry and Theology. There is some joint teaching and shared meals and worship. Other aspects of the interweaving of YMC’s activities within the wider YRTP is the close relationship with three Diocesan Schools of Ministry, through which some YMC students are taught alongside those training for Reader and other lay ministries, on a Foundation Degree in Theology and Ministry (FDTM) course validated by York St John University.

We were very impressed by what has been achieved in the last three years within the YRTP. There is a considerable commitment to working together, sharing experience and approaches across the dioceses, and maximising the available resources. There is a wealth of coordinated activity taking place across the county in lay ministry development, IME 4 – 7, fresh expressions and rural ministry. At the strategic level the breadth of ecumenical commitment reflected in the Covenant is being maintained, whilst there is a recognition that more work needs to be done on the ground. We believe however it is important to maintain the momentum which has been created, and that this may be an opportune moment to take a fresh look at its future direction.

YMC has come into being within that wider context. After the period of transition from the previous arrangements, and with some staffing changes, we have no hesitation in saying that the new Principal and her team have created an effective new institution. Its relationships with the Community and College of the Resurrection, the new partnership with the University of Sheffield, its close links with the Diocesan Schools of Ministry, its new full-time contextual pathway for Ordained Pioneer Ministry, reflect something of the energy, direction, imagination and innovation which we felt to be driving the positive development of the Course.

Reader and other lay training has benefited hugely from the part played by York St John University. Since the inception of the YRTP, all five dioceses have used the Foundation Degree in Theology and Ministry course which has been

designed in close consultation with the dioceses to meet their needs. Further scope for sharing best practice and mutual learning continues to exist.

The opportunities for the further development of YMC, and for wider Reader and lay ministry training within the YRTP, are considerable, even if like many other institutions there are challenges to overcome, especially in the area of finance with the withdrawal of Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE) funding.

The recommendations, together with a number of other suggestions and comments we make in the text of the report, are designed to encourage the pattern of ministerial and educational provision in Yorkshire, which is already good, to become even better.

Strengths

The strengths of the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership are:

- The commitment of signatories to the Covenant and the progress made in building on and coordinating the existing provision;
- The commitment of the diocesan officers and staff of the training institutions to working together;
- The wealth of ecumenical activity in lay theological education;
- The coordination of IME 4 – 7 across the five dioceses;
- The enthusiasm of those attending the Schools of Ministry and other training opportunities.

The strengths of the Yorkshire Ministry Course are:

- Shared site with the Community and College of the Resurrection, Mirfield Centre and Wakefield School of Ministry and the sharing of Director of Studies, Academic Registrar, tutors, chaplains, spiritual directors;
- Network of links within the YRTP and the potential for mutual enrichment;
- Link with the strong Biblical Studies Department at the University of Sheffield;
- Variety of pathways offered to, and appreciated by students;
- Diversity and cohesiveness of the staff team and its modelling of ordained/lay collaborative working;
- The commitment to listening to the needs of the dioceses and being responsive to them;
- Responsiveness of and to students.

The strengths of Reader training within the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership are:

- The York St John Foundation Degree Course, together with the tutor support and the quality assurance which accompanies it;
- The quality of the teaching;
- The commitment and enthusiasm of the students.

Areas for attention

The areas for attention by the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership are:

- Consolidating the progress made so far and mapping the way ahead;
- Maintaining and developing the relationship with York St John University as a key partner;
- Developing ecumenical participation at the delivery as well as the strategic level;
- Responding to the risks involved in the loss of HEFCE funding for the coherence of the YRTP, and determining the consequent possible actions.

The areas for attention by the Yorkshire Ministry Course are:

- Monitoring the new relationship with the University of Sheffield Biblical Studies Department;
- Reviewing the theological and educational rationale, and the understanding of its corporate and community life in the light of the way the course has developed;
- Training in liturgical practice and leading worship;
- The role of placements in the educational programme, and communication about it;
- The development of a business plan in the light of the risk assessment and management strategy.

The areas for attention by Reader training are:

- The implications of the withdrawal of HEFCE funding;
- Exploring ways within the YRTP of sharing good practice and mutual learning.

FULL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. Whilst the primary focus of this report is the Yorkshire Ministry Course (YMC), the starting point must be the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership (YRTP). The decision that the five Yorkshire dioceses should comprise one of the Regional Training Partnerships in the north of England, led not just to the creation of the YMC, but to seeing the Course as firmly integrated within the pattern of theological education and training in Yorkshire, including the College of the Resurrection (COR), The Mirfield Centre (MC), Initial Ministerial Education 4 –7 (IME 4-7) and Reader and other lay ministry education across the five dioceses, and the United Reformed Church province and four Methodist Districts.
2. The development of the YRTP is well documented in ‘Drawn Together – the formation of the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership’ (published by the Ministry Division in 2008). An Enabling Group began work in 2005 charged with realising the vision of the report ‘Formation for Ministry within a Learning Church’ (Hind Report) within a Yorkshire RTP. A number of agreed objectives emerged: first, that any proposals should incorporate and build on all that was available in the region; second, that the provision of a level 3 honours or masters degree should be maintained for the majority of those training for ordination; third, that there should be an integrated, progressive and locally accessible route for ordination training, normally for those intending to minister in a permanent assistant role, alongside provision for authorised lay ministries and Education for Discipleship.
3. Already in existence in the region and providing the building blocks were: the College of Resurrection (COR); the eastern base of the Northern Ordination Course (NOC), which had a developing relationship with the COR especially in the joint delivery of a University of Leeds validated honours degree for ordination training; the Mirfield Centre (MC), established in 1997 by the Community of the Resurrection (CR) to serve the churches of West Yorkshire; Yorkshire Trainers, bringing together for information and sharing good practice those involved in education and training in the Yorkshire Churches and training institutions; Christians Learning Across Yorkshire (CLAY), an interdenominational co-operative providing adult education; the Wakefield Diocese Ordained Local Ministry Scheme; a Foundation Degree course validated by York St John University (YSJU), used by some dioceses as a basis for Readers and other lay ministers in training, and as a route for Methodist training for ministry through the York Institute for Community Theology (YICT), and the Urban Theology Unit (UTU) in Sheffield. In addition conversations

- were underway to explore closer working between COR, NOC and the Wilson Carlile College of Evangelism (WCCE), particularly in relation to developing training for ordained pioneer ministry. A further element was the emerging possibility of a University of Leeds (UoL) MA module looking at Leadership and Change in the Church as a feasible pathway for IME 4-7.
4. Out of these building blocks the Enabling Group created a proposal for a Covenant between the Church Leaders and the Governing Bodies of Training Institutions in Yorkshire. The Covenant has at its centre a vision of the people of God “called to celebrate and participate in the mission Dei”, a “passion to support and develop local church congregations and their formation in Christian discipleship, wisdom, holiness, prayer and response to the needs of all people”, and of lay and ordained ministers as “reflective practitioners”, with a “crucial role in building up the life of the Church”.
 5. The Covenant goes on to say that “formation and training within the Regional Training Partnership will:
 - a. Be grounded within a formational community and learning cohort, bearing in mind other formational and learning contexts to which the students may belong;
 - b. Value the creative partnership working already in existence in the region, and encouraging new initiatives to emerge;
 - c. Promote the principle of life-long learning and thus ensure the linking and coordination of training for Education for Discipleship, authorised lay ministries, ordination training (IME 1-7);
 - d. Be flexible in the level to which lay ministers/ordinands are trained, and in pathways through training. The expectation is that candidates attain a level which is appropriate to their ability, but which also stretches them and equips them for their focus of ministry;
 - e. Deliver training which is as dispersed and accessible as possible academically and geographically, bearing in mind the need to ensure a viable learning cohort, a high quality of scholarship, teaching and delivery, and adequate teaching and library facilities;
 - f. Be diverse and ecumenical, whilst also enabling students to be confidently formed in their own denomination or tradition;
 - g. Be innovative in developing new forms of training, mission and ministry to respond creatively to challenges and opportunities within the church and the world;

- h. Be of high quality, and meet national church standards and learning outcomes.”
6. The Governance structure for maintaining the Covenant consists of an Annual Meeting of the YRTP whose purpose is to develop policy and give oversight to the process and development of the YRTP, a Coordinating Group, including practitioners, meeting three or four times a year charged with the implementation of the Covenant, and Practitioners Groups taking forward specific areas of work.
 7. It was against this background that the Yorkshire Ministry Course came into being. Its list of theological commitments stated at the outset of the curriculum validation document is identical to that of the YRTP set out in summary in § 4 above. The elaboration of those commitments in the same document is essentially that presented by Stephen Spencer in ‘A theological vision for the region’ (Chapter 1 in Drawn Together (see § 2 above); In its operation and alongside other bodies in the network of which it is a part, it reflects in a variety of ways the aspirations set out for the YRTP in § 5 above.
 8. YMC has evolved in the light of the principles in § 5. It has built on the experience and presence of the NOC east of the Pennines, and on the relationship already established with COR and the joint validation with the University of Leeds - an arrangement which is in the process of being transferred to the University of Sheffield (UoS). It has established itself physically on the Mirfield site. It shares a Director of Studies and Academic Registrar with COR. Some joint teaching, sharing of meals and worship takes place between College and Course. YMC students meet once a week during term-time either at Mirfield or at York St John University and for six residential weekends, together with study days. The learning and library resources of the Community of the Resurrection are drawn on by both COR and YMC.
 9. Beyond the Mirfield location, COR and YMC staff collaborate with the IME 4-7 officers in the five dioceses to deliver two Leeds/Sheffield MA modules. As part of the YRTP development the decision was taken for those training for Ordained Local Ministry through the Wakefield Diocesan Scheme to become in future members of the YMC through an ‘OLM pathway’. This has led to the current situation in which normally those selected for self-supporting local ministry attend the Wakefield and Bradford Schools of Ministry. They pursue the York St John Foundation Degree in Theology and Ministry (FDTM), whilst joining in with the residential weekends for the students on Leeds/Sheffield pathway.
 10. The YMC currently has 51 Church of England ordinands, 1 Baptist, and 1 independent student.

11. This relationship with the Schools of Ministry opens a further connection into the YRTP and in particular Reader training. Currently three dioceses, Bradford, Sheffield and Wakefield have Schools of Ministry, whilst York and Ripon and Leeds have separate schemes for Reader training. The factor which they all have in common is validation by York St John University of a range of courses from a University Certificate, a Diploma, a Foundation Degree and a BA/MA in Theology and Ministry. The Schools of Ministry all cater for a variety of lay ministries as well as, in the case of Bradford and Wakefield, some ordinands:
 - a. Bradford, 16 Readers, 1 ordinand (included in YMC figures above), 8 pre-ordination explorers, 3 CME and CMER, 14 other lay ministry of an unaccredited nature;
 - b. Sheffield, 25 Readers, 6 CMER, 12 Pastoral Workers, 2 Parish Evangelists, 19 worship Leaders, 13 Children's Ministry, 2 independent students;
 - c. Wakefield, 20 Readers, 2 CMER, 5 Education for Discipleship/vocational exploration, 10 ordinands (included in YMC figures above), 14 Pastoral Ministers, 2 CME Pastoral Ministers, 2 CME, 15 studying theology for the first time.
12. It is anticipated that from the beginning of the 2011/12 academic year the Sheffield School of Ministry will become another centre for YMC ordinands studying for the YSJU Foundation Degree.
13. Numbers training through the other two Yorkshire Dioceses' provision are as follows:
 - a. Ripon and Leeds, 10 Readers, 2 Methodist Lay Preachers, 7 Independent students;
 - b. York, 34 Readers, 13 CMER and CME Methodist Lay Preacher, 4 vocational discernment, 4 Methodist lay training, 22 General interest.
14. A further strand which connects YMC and COR to the YRTP and thus to the dioceses is through provision for IME 4-7. There are currently 184 students across the four years, some on accredited courses, others attending events as auditors.
15. Prior to the inspection the Senior Inspector met with the Principal of the Yorkshire Ministry Course and the Coordinator of the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership on October 13th 2010. The inspection took place during January, February, and the first week in March 2011, embracing two YMC residential weekends in mid January and at the beginning of

- March. Three of the inspection team attended the first of these, and the whole team throughout the second.
16. During that period individual inspectors were present at the YMC evening teaching sessions in Mirfield (2) and York (2) and a Study Day at Mirfield; Sheffield and Wakefield Schools of Ministry (whole day), and the Bradford School of Ministry (evening session), Reader teaching sessions in Ripon, Leeds, Middlesbrough and Beverley.
 17. Between us we had individual meetings with the outgoing and incoming Chair of the Council, the Chairs of the Finance, Formation (also the Bradford Diocese representative), and Staffing Committees (also Chair of the YRTP), the Treasurer, the Methodist representative, the Wakefield Diocesan Representative (also the Director of the Wakefield School of Ministry), and the YRTP representative (also the director of the York Institute of Community Theology). One of us attended the Finance Committee. We had individual meetings with all the core staff team and observed a staff meeting and a staff/student consultative meeting. We had a number of conversations with individual students, and a more formal meeting with two groups of students at the second residential weekend. One of us met with a number of personal tutors, supervisors and incumbents, and observed a personal tutors meeting at Mirfield. All together we sampled a wide range of teaching of YMC students on both Pathways on weekday evenings, study days and residential weekends, and the formal and informal worship at both evenings and weekends, and saw a range of student's assignments.
 18. We heard the views of only four of the Diocesan Bishops (a new appointment to Bradford having only just been made). In three cases we met with or elicited the views of DDO's/Vocations Adviser. We met with the Ministry/Adult Education Officers in all five dioceses to gain their views about the YMC, but also about how their policies with regard to training for Reader and other lay ministry, and adult education related to the YRTP. One of us met with the Warden of Readers in three of the dioceses and the Director of Training in another. In addition to several meetings with the YRTP Coordinator, one of us was present at the IME 4-7 Officers meeting and the YRTP Coordinating Group.
 19. One inspector met with the Acting Head of Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield, whilst another met with the Centre Link Tutor and the Vice Chancellor at York St John University. Meetings were also held with the Acting Principal of the College of Resurrection and the Superior and Prior of the Community.
 20. The inspection team need to record their appreciation of the welcome and cooperation they received from the Principal and Staff of the YMC and the

Coordinator of the YRTP, and also from all those across the five dioceses who contributed to building a picture of the complex pattern of relationships within which the YMC is set. The documentation we received beforehand was outstanding, and any requests for further information were responded to fully and speedily.

21. The Report is written in relation to the Criteria set out in the Inspection, Curriculum Approval, Moderation Handbook of August 2010. The paragraphs follow the Criteria, which are printed in *italic* type, The Inspectors' comments are in normal type and the recommendations in **bold**.

SECTION ONE: AIMS AND KEY RELATIONSHIPS

A Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution

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

A.i The aims and objectives of the institution should be appropriate to the preparation of ordinands (ministerial students) and authorised lay ministers for public ministry within the breadth of traditions of the sponsoring church.

22. As indicated in the Introduction (§2) The Yorkshire Ministry Course is an integral part of the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership. The aims and objectives of the YRTP are to develop a comprehensive pattern of provision across Yorkshire for theological education and training, from education for discipleship to continuing ministerial education.
23. We were very impressed by what has been achieved over the last six years since the initial discussions which led to the formation of the YRTP. The outgoing Chair of the YMC who had previously also chaired the YRTP Enabling Group emphasised to us that they had taken the 'Hind' Report seriously in Yorkshire. The process was undoubtedly helped by the presence on the ground of a range of existing collaborative activity. The Yorkshire Trainers Group, the relationships already developing between some dioceses and York St John University on the validation of Reader training, the growing cooperation between the College of the Resurrection the Northern Ordination Course and the University of Leeds, cooperative activity such as Christians Learning Across Yorkshire, the development of the Wakefield Diocesan Ministry Scheme, and an initiative taken alongside the 'Hind' process to pull together a common approach to IME 4-7, were all elements which could be built on and brought together.
24. It was clear from the well attended meetings we observed of the YRTP coordinating group and the IME 4-7 officers, that there is a considerable commitment to working together, sharing experience and approaches across the dioceses, and maximising the available resources. The reports recorded at the Annual Meeting in September 2010 bear witness to the wealth of activity taking place across the county, both from the individual training providers, including the recently joined Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity, and through the YRTP practitioner groups on IME 4-7, lay ministry development, continuing ministerial development, fresh expressions, rural ministry and regional trainers. The latter raising the

possibility of a representative from one of the black ethnic majority churches making a presentation to the YRTP.

25. In our discussions the inspection team became aware of three areas of concern. First, regret was expressed that doing things ecumenically had proved difficult. Attendance at the Annual Meeting demonstrates that at the strategic level the breadth of ecumenical commitment reflected in the Covenant is being maintained. The difficulty comes at the more practical level. It was put to us by one key member that it is easier to have joined up thinking about what should be done, but more difficult to have joined up thinking about what should be delivered and how. Varying church structures dictate methods of delivery. Certainly the YRTP meetings we attended were more weighted towards Church of England both in terms of membership and content. But there is no doubting the willingness of some members of the YRTP to encourage growth in ecumenical participation, and there are some signs of that happening. Reader training in the Ripon and Leeds Diocese is now shared with Methodist Lay Preacher training with an equal number of Methodist and Anglican tutors. The Director of the Institute for Community Theology, who is also Vice Chair of the YRTP, said that he would like to see continuing encouragement for ecumenical access to the various YRTP initiatives and activities.
26. The second of the concerns was around future funding. In some respects York St John University's validation of the courses upon which the Schools of Ministry and Reader training depend provides a key aspect of the infrastructure of the YRTP. Funding for that comes through the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) which with the proposed government changes in funding of Higher Education, is under severe threat. It is probable that most of the dioceses will not be able to absorb the extra cost to maintain the present level of provision. In several discussions between them and the inspectors the continuing commitment of York St John University to the Foundation Degree and to the churches in region has been emphasised. The YRTP Coordinator has attended meetings to explore the options for enabling YSJU's contribution to continue when the present source of funding ceases.
27. The third of our concerns was about the importance of maintaining the momentum achieved in this first phase in the life of the YRTP. The Constitution of the YRTP sees the Annual Meeting as being responsible for policy and oversight with the Coordinating Group as implementing the Covenant under the direction of the Annual Meeting. The danger in this arrangement, borne out by the minutes of the last two Annual Meetings, is for them to be occasions more about reports being received on the range of existing activity, rather than exploring future policy and strategy. The coordinating group, on the other hand, has clearly done an excellent job in

coordinating, facilitating working together, and encouraging a regional consciousness amongst people on the ground. In the light of this we began to ask ourselves if the present structures were sufficiently robust in determining the future direction of YRTP, requiring a drive equivalent to that so evident in its initial formation in 2008. The current Chair of the YRTP, soon to pass on this role, made the point strongly to us that the YRTP must never be satisfied, it must always be pushing on.

28. This issue of the future direction was raised for the inspectors in a different way. The expressed ideals of the YRTP, echoed by the YMC, are to deliver training that is dispersed and as accessible as possible, academically and geographically, diverse and ecumenical, whilst also forming students confidence in the identity of their own denomination or tradition. In the Coordinating Group we observed the acknowledgement of a growing tendency for some large evangelical churches in the county to look to external providers such as St Milletus, which they believe offers a training of a character that resonates with their approach to mission and church life. This provides a sharp challenge to the YRTP's and YMC's effectiveness in responding to the needs of all local churches, and their aspiration and capacity to value and work with diversity. Some present felt that the external providers should be represented on the Coordinating Group. Others, however, were of the view that, whilst it was important to maintain good relationships with them, more robustly it is important to discover what are the aspects of their need which they believe the YRTP and YMC do not currently meet. In the discussion at the Coordinating Group there was recognition of the tension between a more market-led approach which can lead to fragmentation, and an approach based more thoroughly on mutual learning across traditions, respect for difference, and dialogue with the range of local contexts; the latter being one of the fundamental ecumenical principles underpinning both YRTP and YMC. (§ 5)
29. In the light of these considerations, at the end of this first three year period when so much has been achieved, and when a new Chair is shortly to be appointed, we recognise an opportune moment for taking a fresh look at the future direction of the YRTP.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Annual Meeting of the YRTP consider how to give leadership in conceptualising and articulating the further development of its vision for the future mission and ministry of the churches in Yorkshire.

30. The Yorkshire Ministry Course sits within this broad context. As recorded in the Introduction the YMC is the successor body to the Northern Ordination Course in its existence east of the Pennines. Accordingly there has been a transitional period during which some students from Yorkshire who originally entered as NOC students, have been absorbed into the new YMC. There have also been a few remaining students of NOC west of the Pennines whose needs had to be catered for when the pattern of provision changed there. This transition, together with two changes of Principal in a short period made for an initial time of uncertainty. The current Principal started with YMC in September 2008. Everyone to whom we have spoken, the diocesan bishops, DDOs, Council members, staff, students, is full of praise for the way in which the Principal has pulled things together in a whole variety of ways, so that those days of uncertainty are now firmly in the past. She has also built a staff group who work well together and are committed to building creatively on the foundations that have been laid.
31. The YMC shares the same theological rationale as the YRTP, and within that has adopted its own specific Statement of Vision and Strategy:
- “God loves the world and calls us to respond in service. All are called, but some have a vocation to ordained ministry in the Church of God. In the light of this, the object of the Course shall be the training of recognised candidates for Ordained ministry in the Church of England and other main-stream Christian churches. The Course also, where appropriate, prepares suitable candidates for Lay Ministry”
32. This vision is pursued through engagement with four central and interrelated vocational themes that are revisited throughout the course at ever deeper levels through a distinctive ‘spiral’ approach:
- Understanding and participating in mission;
 - Understanding and growing in faith;
 - Understanding and relating to self and others;
 - Understanding and preparing for ministry and leadership.
33. The YMC’s practice is closely informed by the 8 characteristics of formation and training within the YRTP set out in § 5 above. It places great emphasis on the importance of the formational community. It works in partnership with the College of Resurrection, with two universities, with two, soon to be three, Diocesan Schools of Ministry, and with five dioceses in the provision of an IME 4-7 course. Through the commitment to those relationships with dioceses it models a commitment to becoming a learning church. Most students will follow one of the two standard programmes. Pathway 1 with the University of Sheffield, is taught at

Mirfield or York; Pathway 2 at York St John University, is taught through the Schools of Ministry, spread over three or four years. But there is a number of other possible options offered in a flexible commitment to fitting the course to the needs of particular students, taking into account a huge variety of prior learning and experience. Training is delivered in a dispersed and accessible fashion within the constraints of maintaining quality. There is a commitment to handling diversity, in relation to traditions within the Church of England and those of other churches. Innovation has been demonstrated by building on the existing part-time pathway for Ordained Pioneer Ministry with the introduction of a full-time contextual pathway for OPM candidates and the appointment of a Director of Pioneering Ministries.

34. In its own assessment of weaknesses the Course identifies the fact that the complexity and diversity of pathways can affect the sense of cohesion and identity in the student body. We did have some evidence from meeting with personal tutors and incumbents that those on Pathway 2 can sometimes have a sense of separation from the main core. Some Pathway 2 students expressed a sense of loss at not being part of the weekly meetings of the Pathway 1 students, but most did not experience a significant sense of separation. All emphasised how crucial are the weekends for maintaining cohesiveness, and in particular they spoke very warmly of the important role played by the YMC groups. We also became aware that those two different contexts, of the Mirfield/York ordinand groups on the one hand, and the Schools of Ministry, training for a range of other lay ministries alongside ordinands, on the other, carried different implicit messages about models of ministry. To maximise flexibility and realise the potential for mutual learning between the different styles and experiences, requires focussed attention and constant assessment. We **encourage** the staff to consider how best that mutual learning between the two groups can be facilitated.
35. Students generally appreciated the commitment to a 'bespoke' approach and the variety of routes which were available to them seeing it as one of the strengths of the Course.
36. The dioceses adopt slightly different approaches to the role of Readers according to the ministry policy set by the diocese. However, the training, whether through Diocesan Schools of Ministry or otherwise, follows a common pattern. On the one hand that is maintained by the Foundation degree course provided by York St John University (§ 11), and on the other by reference to the broad parameters agreed by the YRTP set out in § 5 above. It is important to see the FDTM as being the direct result of the close relationship between the YSJU and the dioceses seeking to meet their training needs in respect of Reader, and other lay ministries. It is the YRTP's approved training route for Lay Ministries in the Church of

England and has been approved by the Ministry Division as a validated route for ordination training from 2008.

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

37. As already recorded, the YMC came into existence as a result of the implementation of the report 'Formation for Ministry in a Learning Church' (2003) in the creation of the YRTP. Its approach and principles are an integral part of that partnership. The YMC curriculum validation document demonstrates how its specific provision is mapped against the Outcome Statements in 'Shaping the Future' (2006).

A.iii There should be evidence of action taken in response to (a) the previous inspection and curriculum approval reports and any follow-up (b) the evaluation of other external bodies and (c) the institution's self-evaluation.

38. Since the last inspection which was of the Northern Ordination Course (NOC) in 2006 there has been considerable change. In 2007 NOC moved its administrative offices from Manchester to rented accommodation in the Mirfield Centre. The course then worked with others in the Yorkshire region to establish the YRTP. As a consequence, NOC began to work even more closely with the College of the Resurrection, eventually developing a joint teaching faculty and parallel degree programmes with the University of Leeds in 2008. In September 2008 the provision of part-time training for ordination, previously fulfilled by NOC, now in the context of the newly formed YRTP, was re-launched as the Yorkshire Ministry Course. Cooperation between COR and YMC has increased, with a joint appointment of Director of Studies. In 2010 a new collaborative agreement was forged between COR and YMC with the University of Sheffield Biblical Studies Department to replace the previous arrangement with the University of Leeds, which will finally come to an end in 2012. The Yorkshire Ministry Course is therefore in a very different place from that occupied by the NOC five years ago.
39. In that period there have been 3 UoL External Examiners Reports, and reports on the collaboration between COR/YMC and the UoL, and on a visit by a Panel from the University of Sheffield in relation to the new proposals. The External Examiner's reports have been consistently positive, the last one (2009) recording "that it has been richly rewarding to share in the process of their (the programmes) delivery and development over the past few years." "The teaching and assessment practices are of a consistently high standard and the programmes have coherent pedagogical principles that take into account current understandings of good practice in higher education."

40. The Collaborative Provision Review (2009) notes “confidence in the quality and standards of the taught provision delivered through the collaboration, and commends the considerable effort that has been expended in responding positively to the recommendations of the 2004 Collaborative Review.” It also refers to “the high regard of students for the educational experience provided by the tripartite collaboration, the laudable motivation to maintain diversity of opportunity through the YMC, and commended the high degree of support for students”.
41. The feedback from the visit of the Sheffield Panel noted that “all parties had worked together effectively on the design and introduction of the collaborative programmes and that the collaboration appeared to offer excellent opportunities for development”.
42. The YMC has a comprehensive process for evaluating its own performance. There are student evaluation forms for every residential event and study day as well as validated modules. The responses are collated and used in future planning. There is also a process for programme evaluation at the completion of the course. Regular staff/student consultations are held. The staff undertake an extended review of the year in July which informs planning for the following year. Annual staff appraisals offer another opportunity to reflect on performance, and every third year a 360 degree review will take place. Informal feedback from key personnel within the YRTP provides an external strand, together with the reports from the validating universities. The YMC Council’s Formation Committee plays an important role in overseeing the process.
43. The inspectors had evidence of these processes in two examples. First, feedback from students in the 2010 End of Course Evaluation identified a need for a higher profile to be given to Doctrine in the Course. This has been successfully met by less emphasis on an historical approach and an acknowledgement that the deeper doctrinal teaching occurs in the ethos, learning styles, relations and the chosen dynamic between faith and life. We observed a very good session in the Christology module where contemporary images, student’s life experience, and a close attention to the texts setting out Anselm’s understanding of atonement were skilfully interwoven. Second, the expression of concern by a group of students about workload had resulted in an assignment deadline being helpfully renegotiated with staff. (§ 132)

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion A, Aims, Objectives and Achievements of the Institution.</p>
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B Relationships with other institutions

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

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

44. YMC's academic partners are currently: The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at York St John University, the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds and the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield.
45. YMC's relationship with York St John University (YSJU) is through the Diocesan Schools of Ministry. YSJU have a six year rolling contractual arrangement with the Yorkshire dioceses to provide a Foundation Degree for a wide range of lay people pursuing training. Over the years it has been developed to fit the particular purposes of training for Readers, Evangelists, Pastoral Assistants and others growing their faith. Methodists and Roman Catholics also use the YSJU. YMC ordinands, currently 11, studying through the Schools of Ministry (§§9, 33) pursue the YSJU Foundation degree alongside others training for a variety of lay ministries, and some independent students. Some ordinands join the YMC with these degrees part completed and the YMC has the dedicated staff to be able to accommodate the academic transfer. This is hugely advantageous to the SoM as they can use the YSJU offer with complete confidence that wherever their candidates might end up none of their training would be wasted. Consequently most dioceses use the Foundation Degree modular approach as a part of the discernment process as individuals progress through the course.
46. In terms of the academic arrangements with YSJU the system that has grown over the years is well tried and tested and has continuous improvement built into it. In many respects the relationships with the five dioceses can be said to provide the infrastructure for a coordinated approach to the training of Readers throughout Yorkshire, (including some contribution also to IME 4-7) either through the Schools of Ministry in Bradford, Sheffield and Wakefield, or the different arrangements for Reader training in the dioceses of Ripon and Leeds and York. The relationships are strong, tutors are supported in pre-module delivery meetings. From our observations of teaching sessions and student interviews it is clear that the quality of teaching and learning is excellent

- and the student experience a good one. Comments from YSJU on their formal lesson observations and teaching quality confirm this view.
47. As set out earlier (§ 26) the exercise has been funded with money received by YSJU from HEFCE. This has been administered by YSJU with varying arrangements with the different dioceses concerning the financial and other support provided. Undoubtedly the churches in Yorkshire as a whole have benefited hugely from the relationship with YSJU. We were however aware that there had been discussions recently seeking greater clarity and transparency in the funding arrangements, especially in relation to where dioceses are providing teaching.
 48. The Inspectors were aware however of the planned withdrawal of HEFCE funding in relation to recent government proposals. They were assured that YSJU will do everything in its power to minimise the impact of this for the dioceses. As part of the mission of YSJU as an Anglican foundation they are resolved to do all they can to deliver the Foundation Degree at the best possible price. A recent meeting of representatives of the diocese and YSJU, attended by the YRTP Coordinator, considered a number of options. From what we heard from dioceses, it is likely that there will be some who will not be able to afford to continue offering the Foundation degree as part of their Reader and lay training provision, whilst others are thinking positively about budgeting to ensure its continuance (§ 26).
 49. Whatever the result there will be an impact on the YRTP for whom this coordinated approach to Reader and lay training has been one of its hallmarks. It has also sparked discussion there about the role of accreditation for ministerial training.
 50. The relationship with the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds (UoL) continues for the Year 2 and 3 students but will come to an end in 2012. This decision was made on strategic grounds by UoL. Although some students have transferred to Sheffield others are continuing with UoL. They confirmed to us that the quality of teaching and learning, access to resources and marking has not been diminished. In his conversations with UoL, the Director of Studies was assured that the Department were confident in the academic quality and assurance process being resilient to the end, no one we spoke to and nothing we saw suggested otherwise.
 51. The relationship with the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield (UoS) is very new. As such it was too new to test out with any degree of confidence on its longer term suitability for formation and training. We did see evidence of a remarkable amount of energy and effort on the side of UoS on the one hand, and a strong coordinated effort

with YMC and COR on the other to establish the management, teaching and administration, the curriculum and timetable, marking, and module design all in a very short period of time, for which all parties are to be commended. We did hear from students of some of the stresses of transition and the first term's 'undoable' deadlines. We did hear from the UoS that the high level of set up meeting time required could not be sustainable into the future. We did see that the huge amount of effort required by one member of COR/YMC staff in managing the transition had meant that some of his duties had to be taken up by another member of staff. However we also heard of the positive reaction of the staff and students. We have noted that the 2000 word per module less for UoS than UoL will have a positive effect on the student's workload in the future. We recognise that fewer meetings should be required to manage the process now under way, but it will be necessary to continue to monitor carefully how the relationship develops. We also recognise that the UoS themselves have an acting head of department who is very positive about the present and future arrangements, but when a full time head of department is appointed there will be new relationships to establish.

52. Like YMC, and indeed COR, we are content with the evidence that the future with UoS looks very positive. Certainly the UoS MA offer through YMC is proving to be very attractive from a marketing point of view and having a Russell Group University as a partner validating and providing some teaching for YMC students' degrees can only be positive. The future HEFCE funding issues will also impact directly on UoS and YMC but with much of the teaching for UoS being delivered by YMC and COR staff the negotiating position is reasonably strong. YMC has a very attractive relationship with UoS in the making which should be an asset to the training of ordinands for the Church of England into the future.

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

53. The relationship with Sheffield University provides all the benefits for the staff to continue their professional development *vis a vis* quality assessment, (§§ 166-8) marking and teaching. The relationship is still new but the YMC have already had one development day on 'My Online Learning Environment' (MOLE), and the offer is there for staff to take up other opportunities offered by UoS. The reality is that the whole of the transition (and preparation for the Inspection) of the last two terms has meant that there has been limited take up so far. The YMC staff do have UoS staff cards and full UoS entitlements and there is a desire for the staff in the future to avail themselves of further opportunities.

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

54. The relationships with other institutions are well covered within the RTP overview at the beginning of the report. Their engagement with other faiths is well provided for in various respects and on one Easter School, but this was not one we observed (§ 157).
55. However it is worth saying a little more about the specific relationships that YMC has because of its physical location. The Community of the Resurrection (CR) owns the remarkable site which contains their own monastery, the College of the Resurrection (COR), and the Mirfield Centre for lay training.
56. The CR as owners and landlords have a phased ambitious programme to redevelop the site and the first phase is to completely renovate their large church. This is fully funded and the work has begun. The next phase will be to renew the monastery and their conference/retreat facilities. This phase has the needs of YMC and COR accommodated within its projected business plan. But there is no contractual commitment that binds YMC to a future on this site. Both organisations recognise that their futures could continue to converge, or they may not, but the way is open whatever seems to be right.

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

57. Like all incomers into an established family, the relationship between COR and YMC is viewed differently from different sides. YMC feels sometimes, as one member of the Council put it to us, that we are lodgers living in someone else's house when relationships aren't quite equal. From our conversations with members of CR and the COR on the other hand, they feel as if things have moved on and are better than they were when NOC first moved in. They see it in terms of a journey. Both parties agree they have now a 'common teaching faculty' but they are a long way from having a common 'common room'. The Inspectors recognise that this is a sensitive and complex issue which is not wholly solved by the two groups eating, worshipping or studying together. For instance, it might seem sensible for the YMC and COR students to share a common meal on the evenings when the former are present in Mirfield. But we also understand that when the YMC students spend such little time together, the opportunities they have to socialise over a meal together is to be cherished. The more underlying point is one of what strategies might be employed to try to make the most of the two different groups inhabiting the

- same building, so that the distinctiveness is preserved but there is mutual learning and growing together in other ways. The Inspectors understood that since the recent departure of the Principal of the COR, the regular joint staff meeting has fallen by the wayside, and relationships have felt more at arms length than they used to be. Once the new Principal of COR is appointed we **encourage** YMC and COR to reinstate those joint meetings at an early date.
58. The Inspectors observed that a key part of the relationship between COR and YMC was held in the person of the joint appointment of Director of Studies. His personal grasp of the complexities of the various pathways open to students in YMC and COR and indeed in the IME 4-7 programme under the aegis of the YRTP, is very impressive. That the negotiations with the University of Sheffield, with all the necessary design of modules, marking arrangements etc. were so speedily and successfully concluded owed a great deal to his entrepreneurial skill. However the Inspectors had serious misgivings that, as a consequence, too much of the substance of the relationship between COR and YMC resided in him as an individual. Whilst the reinstatement of the joint staff meeting will help, we believe that YMC and COR might consider whether some other joint group at Council level might be asked to take some responsibility for developing the relationship between the two institutions in a way which honours their different characters and traditions, yet takes the process of mutual learning and collaboration on to the next stage.
59. The YMC relates to the dioceses through the YRTP and the Schools of Ministry, but also separately. We received strong affirmation of the way in which YMC is developing from those we consulted. They are very happy with the training. Communication with the Course is seen as being quick and helpful in relation to individual candidates. One Director of Ordinands spoke of how YMC had not only encouraged one student to grow and develop on the course, but was able to discern that his calling had developed to such an extent that it had actually altered in direction. Another referred to YMC's supportive care of a person who left the course.
60. The Inspectors were also made aware of the efforts made by the Principal and other members of staff in visiting, and building good relationships with, the dioceses. In particular the new Director Pioneering Ministries has spent a great deal of time talking with people in the dioceses and particularly with the leaders of the larger churches, to listen to their needs and to share understandings. This should build firm foundations for not only developing the part-time, but the new full-time contextual OPM Course.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion B, Relationships with other institutions.</p>

SECTION TWO: CURRICULUM FOR FORMATION AND EDUCATION

C Curriculum for formation and education

Curriculum advisors will consider the proposals for the curriculum to be offered by the training institution in the coming years against the policy statements of the relevant sponsoring churches. They will evaluate the formational and educational principles and design of the proposed programmes including their assessment proposals.

C.i The institution should offer a theological rationale for its approach to mission and ministry consistent with the principles of the churches for which it trains ministers and for the education it offers other groups of learners.

61. The YMC shares the same theological rationale as the YRTP (§ 4, 31):

“The people of God are called to celebrate and participate in the *missio Dei*. To this end, churches must treasure the Holy Spirit’s gift of listening and responding faithfully to God, to one another and to the world around them.

In participating in the life of God who is Trinity, we are committed to community and mission. At the heart of our work, therefore, is a passion to support and develop local church congregations and their formation in discipleship, wisdom, holiness, prayer and response to the needs of all people.

Ministers, lay and ordained, have a crucial role in this building up of the life of the Church. Such ministers need to grow in and reflect the creative, nurturing and redeeming nature of God. They need to be reflective practitioners who are well resourced and formed in the disciplines of biblical, historical, theological and pastoral study, of liturgy, spirituality, and evangelism.”

62. The Inspectors appreciated that this concise statement for the overall vision of the YRTP, was a good starting point for the Course as it began, and for expressing its integral relationship with the YRTP. But as they looked in detail at how the three paragraphs were elaborated in the recently updated validation document, and reflected on their observations on the direction and practice of the Course, they began to see the considerable development the Course has made in its thinking; those opening paragraphs no longer conveying adequately the direction, energy and imagination of YMC.

63. The Inspectors wish to make three comments. First, whilst they endorse the starting point in the theological rationale of the call to participation in the *missio Dei*, they are concerned that the emphases in the later paragraphs lose some of that breadth of vision as the content narrows too swiftly into developing the life of congregations and the crucial role of ministers in building up that life. Excellent quotations from various sources in section (i) a of the Validation Document amplify that wide vision, but the final paragraph, relating how YMC gives expression to the vision, locates it only in relation to those men and women who come to the Course for training and how they have responded to God's initiative. This is of course true but it would have been helpful here to have also had a reference to how YMC seeks to encourage the whole church and society generally to engage with 'God's purposeful activity in the world'. This whole approach then needs to be evident in YMC's curriculum, worship and preoccupations.
64. Second, the Inspectors wish to endorse the statement about "participating in the life of God who is Trinity" in section (i) c. Again the quotation, this time from Bosch, paints an excellently broad canvas, "the *missio Dei* is God's activity, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church may be privileged to participate". But the paragraph which follows interprets this broad vision only in terms of the church seeking out and identifying especially with those who suffer, which is illustrated in the quotation from *Gaudium et Spes*, (Preface, in Vatican Council II). This essentially pastoral approach is absolutely right, but limited. Taking the broader vision of sharing God's work in the world also raises questions about how people find themselves in positions of poverty, and about those unjust structures which cause it alongside other denials of human flourishing.
65. The final paragraph of that section notes that "for YMC this commitment is reflected in the emphasis upon placement learning within the curriculum". We shall be making further comments on how this emphasis might find fuller expression later in the report (§ 149-154).
66. The third point is the need for a fuller expression of the Trinitarian commitment within a *missio Dei* ecclesiology, reflecting that the Gospel is inherently relational and ministry exists only as mutual animation. We have observed these features within the life of YMC. We were aware from discussion with students and from the 2010 End of Course Evaluation how much they valued the mutual learning which results from the breadth of spiritual diversity and traditions. The draft ministerial formation policy refers to the importance of working with difference and not avoiding the challenge it presents. "YMC is clear that it is important to allow significant differences to emerge appropriately and be worked with rather than seeking to preserve a bland and unrealistic uniformity". The integrated

nature of YMC within the YRTP, the relationships with the Schools of Ministry, the College of the Resurrection, and its commitment to serving the ministerial training needs of the five dioceses in Yorkshire expresses in another way the YMC's essentially relational character.

67. The Inspectors believe that three years into the existence of the YMC, it might be useful to reflect on how the developments in both thinking and practice over that period might be articulated within the theological rationale.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that YMC review the theological rationale to reflect the changes in its self-understanding since its inception and to ensure a greater consistency throughout with the theology and ecclesiology of missio Dei.

C.ii The institution should offer a formational and educational rationale for its approach to ministerial training and for the education it intends to offer to other groups of learners.

68. The YMC's formational and educational rationale is set out in section (i) b of the curriculum validation document. It is closely related to theology of missio Dei and thus of the need to enable students to "treasure the Holy Spirit's gift of listening and responding faithfully to God, to one another and to the world around them." In YMC this leads to a commitment to an approach to education based on the 'learning cycle'. "Learning begins with experience", including students' "prior experiences of ministry in the church and community". "YMC then provides fresh perspectives and knowledge from the learning and teaching, and this provides the opportunity to explore and critically reflect upon that experience". A diagram sets out clearly how each stage of the learning cycle finds expression within the Course: Experience (home church, placements, work) => Exploration (modules, residentials, placements, home church, work) => Reflection (groups, assignments, tutorials) => Action (placements, home church, curacy) => Experience. As indicated in § 32 these principles are underpinned by a spiral approach to the whole curriculum where certain themes are revisited each time at a greater depth.
69. The Inspectors were also pleased to see the recognition in the rationale that people have different learning aptitudes. Any programme of learning needs to take this into account and to provide a range of approaches which tap into these different learning styles.

70. No educational approach is value free. The inspectors therefore welcomed the exposition of this experiential and contextual stance taken by the YMC, which they believe has many resonances with elements of the theological rationale set out in previous paragraphs (§§ 64-6). The inspectors were interested to note, however, that in the explication of the 'learning cycle' approach the reference to Paulo Freire is not followed through. The remainder of the paragraph is devoted in more detail to Kolb and Rogers. The inspectors believe that it would be useful to spell out the contribution Freire's distinctive insights might make to the overall approach. Whereas the 'learning cycle' can be simply about helping people to reflect on experience and grow in awareness and knowledge, Freire brought an extra dimension. For him no educational act was neutral. It always led to the transformation of the individual and the community. He was concerned to try to help people to stand in a new place, to see things with new eyes, to step outside the ways of perceiving which have been defined by others or by history. For him the 'oppressed' in the title of his book had their perception of reality defined for them by the powerful elite of the society. What he aimed to do was to help them to lose their blindness to the structures which created their blindness and thus their acquiescence to oppression, and thus be able to take action. "The dependent society" he said, "is by definition a silent society. Its voice is not an authentic voice but merely an echo of the voice of the metropolis." He was also clear that all are teachers and all learners in the process of education.
71. There are resonances in all this in responding to the *missio Dei*, in ways that are not bound by the past. There are implications for how we value the diversity of the spiritual experience of lay people, really hearing those who are so often part of the 'silent' society. There are implications not just for how students on the Course learn, but for how they are being helped to be themselves stimulators of that transformative learning and evokers of the response of the whole church.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that YMC consider how:

- (i) the educational rationale could be helpfully developed and articulated more fully, adding to the underpinning of the practice in relation to contextual learning and pioneer ministry.**
- (ii) within the curriculum the skills of stimulating and evoking learning in others can be modelled.**

C.iii The institution should offer a set of programmes which will enable candidates to be prepared for their envisaged ministries, in line with

the developing policies of the sponsoring churches, and appropriate programmes to educate other groups of learners.

72. The YMC has in place a pattern of programmes, validated by the Universities of Sheffield and York St John, supported by a range of formational arrangements, YMC groups, Personal Tutors etc. that prepare students for their envisaged ministries.
73. We wish to commend the proposed new full-time Ordained Pioneer Ministry contextual route. It will be important to develop structures and approaches which ensure that the full potential is realised, particularly from its contextual elements. As an innovative scheme there will need to be continuous reflection on how it is working out, what is to be learned from the experience and how it might develop. The induction of students into the process and debriefing them on a regular basis together with theological reflection should be built in to the process of the new pathway. Supervisors will clearly play an important role and there will be need to ensure good communication and training so that they feel fully part of this new exercise. A similar approach of monitoring and testing out will need to be adopted in the area of selection. We wish to commend the developing links with the Church Army for OPM training in general but especially drawing on their experience for the development of this pathway.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that YMC consider how best to develop the particular opportunities of the full-time contextual pathway, with particular attention to:

- (i) the use of the contextual elements;**
 - (ii) the communication with and training of the supervisors;**
 - (iii) theological reflection within the pathway and on its wider process.**
74. The Diocesan Schools of Ministry in Bradford, Sheffield and Wakefield offer programmes for a variety of lay ministries, (as indicated in § 11) some of them validated by York St John University. Readers training through the Schools of Ministry have additional support in formation for their particular role, in some cases through separate tutorial groups. In the dioceses of York and Ripon/Leeds, programmes are offered for Reader training, again validated by York St John University.
75. The YSJU courses were developed in close consultation with dioceses to meet their needs for the training for a variety of lay ministries, and to

enable lay people to do theology for the first time as part of Education for Discipleship (EFD). The Inspectors were very satisfied about the appropriateness of these programmes, and witnessed the enthusiasm of many lay people in the various teaching centres. We were aware, however, of differences of delivery and timetable between diocesan centres, for instance, Ripon and Leeds license Readers after Year 2 rather than Year 3. We **encourage** the YRTP to find ways in which the best practice in terms of course delivery, formation, and assessment for Reader Ministry can be effectively shared across the dioceses, and different approaches and understandings learned from (§ 77-89).

C.iv The proposals concerning assessment should enable the institution to advise church leaders on the suitability of candidates for the envisaged ministry, in line with the guidelines of the sponsoring churches. Assessment proposals for other groups of learners should be consistent with the aims and objectives of the programmes being offered.

76. YMC supports a developmental rather than rigid model of formational assessment. The progress of the ordinand towards achieving the learning outcomes from 'Shaping the Future' is assessed in a variety of ways which include staff assessment, peer assessment and self assessment. The personal tutor plays a major role in the process. The elements of the system are:
- Formal assignments – criteria are set in conjunction with the validating institutions, whether the University of Sheffield or York St John;
 - The personal tutor system;
 - The self-managed and facilitated reflection groups;
 - Self-assessment;
 - External assessment;
 - Reports to sponsoring bishops;
77. Assessment proposals for those in the Schools of Ministry and Reader training, are partly unified through the York St John University Programme Committee, and partly the responsibility of the various dioceses. Assessment, other than academic, follows this variation between dioceses concerning the role (§36). In some cases it is more comprehensive with regard to formation than in others, but normally includes a major consultation at the end of Years 1 and 3, and an interim one in the intervening year.

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

78. The YMC is made up of a number of overlapping communities or groupings. As set out in §33 those pursuing Pathway 1 with the University of Sheffield degree meet one evening a week at either Mirfield or in rooms rented from York St John University, whilst those on Pathway 2 meet in the context of the Wakefield (or possibly also eventually Sheffield School of Ministry) or (a day per month) or Bradford School of Ministry (one evening a week during term time). This pattern provides two different primary communities for students.
79. These two 'core' groupings overlap when they come together for residential weekends, study days and Easter School. Both sets of students share in the same study sessions on these occasions. The small formational YMC Groups constitute an important mechanism for bringing the two core groups together. These are self-managed groups with two clear purposes. The first is to provide a forum which fosters the development of individual Course members through discussion and prayer. The Student Handbook makes it clear that this is "not just an extra group for fellowship . . . but an important focus for learning and practising collaborative and mutually supportive ministry". Second, the YMC Groups take responsibility for planning and leading worship at weekends.
80. These two 'core' groupings of the corporate life of YMC also have some overlap with three wider groups. First, evening sessions at Mirfield within the COR setting involve a meal taken in the refectory alongside the COR students, and a number of shared teaching sessions. In addition, YMC students are welcome to take meals in the college during term time if, for instance, they have been working in the library. Occasionally a COR student will come to some Saturday teaching either at COR or Wakefield Police College for any appropriate sessions for their course. Second, COR and YMC equally have their base on the site of the Community of the Resurrection. This has a direct influence physically through the engagement with members of the Community by students of both college

and Course, the Community providing a chaplain to the YMC residential weekends, and by the occasional sharing in worship. The inspectors observed the Wakefield School of Ministry on such an occasion.

81. Whilst the staff of COR and YMC have a focus within either College or Course they will from time to time be part of both major student groupings.

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

82. The Inspectors did not find a single clear statement of how YMC understands its corporate life but we did find a number of relevant elements present in different parts of the documentation, and that the practice demonstrates a well thought through if not explicitly articulated approach.

83. The YMC sees the underlying principle of the 'learning cycle' as providing a key mechanism for building community. The validation document states that "the learning cycle clearly depends on paying attention to 'the other', whether the neighbour or the world of the Holy Spirit, and on giving 'the other' time and the space to make their presence felt and known.... Formation takes place, when the ordinand is placed within a supportive yet stretching community which places a premium on listening, communication and a-hard-to-quantify communion."

84. The draft ministerial formation policy also includes some important relevant statements, especially where it recognises the growing diversity of students on YMC and of the ministries that they will be taking up. It goes on to speak of the commonality of ordained ministry and the need to work together as a single community of faith, respecting difference and not avoiding the challenge it presents either to one's own view or to the cohesion of the community.

85. We also observed the good practice of the staff/student consultation. In relation to issues of gender, ethnic grouping and disability there is an Equal Opportunities Policy set out in the Student Handbook. It contains a commitment to regular review of its implementation. Special needs are acknowledged and partially addressed in the Student Handbook. YSJU, UoL and UoS all have appropriate dyslexia policies.

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

86. The inspectors saw evidence of the various elements referred to above within both YMC pathways, in the learning, where the particular experience of individuals was drawn upon, and in the teaching styles of many of the sessions, including the deliberate attention to the variety of learning styles and the good flow of participation between members and leader. Here was both encouragement to listen to one another and to value the different contributions, and good modelling. We heard from some students that one of the most valuable aspects of the Course for them had been what they had learned from one another.
87. We observed the attention given to a student possessing special needs. We saw evidence of appropriate rooms being available for disabled members at residential weekends, full disabled access at off site teaching venues and dietary needs being fully considered.
88. 'Working together as a single community of faith' must presuppose worshipping together. The Inspectors noted that in the response to the questionnaire "worship holds and carries the weekend, giving it depth and perspective". Whilst very much agreeing with that principle, observation caused the inspectors to question how far this was working out in practice. Specific comments on this issue are offered in the following section, but worship does also need to take its place within a statement of how YMC understands its community and corporate life.
89. The inspectors see certain parallels here with the comments, in the previous section (C), on the adequacy of the theological and educational rationales. Whilst YMC draws on decades of experience from its predecessor the NOC, in its new existence YMC is still a very young and developing organisation. Nevertheless models of good practice are emerging which should encourage the Course to have confidence in charting its own distinctive way forward. It may be beneficial at this stage for it to reflect on whether the approaches being taken in different aspects of its life are properly articulated in its more formal statements. Such a statement will need to address how the corporate life of the two main groupings sits within the wider context referred to above.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the staff and students work together to articulate a more comprehensive statement on community and corporate life.

90. The inspectors observed, at the Schools of Ministry we attended, a strong sense of the existence of a learning community. It was very encouraging to see 50-60 people giving up a whole day a month, in the case of Sheffield and Wakefield, or an evening a week in Bradford, to learn and

worship together and to grow in their faith and their calling. Alongside the teaching sessions there was time for worship, for eating and talking together. The evening Reader training sessions we observed in York and Ripon and Leeds dioceses bore witness likewise to the dedication of a group of lay people, but without the wider context of a range of people at different stages on a journey. We **encourage** the YRTP through its involvement in the Reader Programme Committee to explore ways in which mutual learning can take place between the different approaches to training across the dioceses, including ecumenical involvement.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion D, Community and Corporate Life</p>

E Worship and training in public worship

Inspectors will consider the arrangements for common worship and the policy underlying them, noting the use of the authorized and other forms of worship, and how worship is conducted. Inspectors will note the ways in which ministerial candidates are trained to plan, prepare and conduct public worship.

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

91. YMC is very positive about being enriched through the hospitality of the praying community of the Community of the Resurrection – offering a unique context for ministerial training. The Lower Church where we attended worship on our second weekend visit understandably works well. We heard testimony of the creative spaces at the Hayes Centre.
92. The Inspectors note that neither the Wakefield Police College nor the adjacent St John's Parish Church used for Sunday worship on the residential weekend offer ideal liturgical spaces for large groups. The raked seating and stage area at the Police College all too easily draws worship back to assumptions of performance, distance and observation rather than participation and mutuality. Likewise, the size and inflexibility of the seating at St John's Church makes for similar difficulties. Prayer during the week-night sessions takes place in one of the teaching rooms.
93. Clearly YMC, meeting in various configurations of staff and students, has to make pragmatic choices about the overall viability of the sites where it convenes – the Community and College of the Resurrection, Wakefield Police College, Sneaton Castle and the Hayes Centre, Swanwick. The balance between space for learning, eating, sleeping, meeting and worshipping is never going to be ideal. As a learning community,

however, there are advantages in this situation because rarely do public ministers find ideal conditions in every respect. Supporting students in learning to use their imagination and the confidence to work in any given space is an important dimension of YMC's task.

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

94. The Student Handbook contains a section on the 'Introduction to YMC Worship'. It sets out how in such a 'provisional' community worship can play an important stabilising role. It stresses the diversity of the community and the opportunity to learn from traditions other than one's own. The pattern of weekend worship is explained, and of the short period of prayer at the beginning of week-night teaching sessions. An expectation of attendance at the main offices and especially at the Sunday Eucharist is clearly stated. The section concludes with guidelines for those planning worship.
95. Each day on a residential weekend begins and ends with an act of worship; also at the end of Saturday teaching and through Sunday morning worship and reflection are central. The structure at weekends provides for a breadth of experience, daily offices, sacramental liturgy, and innovative forms of worship. At our first residential weekend the Book of Common Prayer was used throughout apart from an 'Alternative Worship' session. The second weekend we observed Common Worship as the main anchor for offices and Sunday Eucharist, whilst we experienced an imaginative alternative worship on the Saturday evening. It was Catholic in character and its effectiveness was enhanced through the personal experience of one of the YMC Group members from that tradition.
96. The YMC staff confidently model varying styles of presiding at public worship, so enabling students to reflect on their own future pathways. In the end of year evaluation for 2010, students wrote that they had gained confidence partly through the gentle self-effacing leadership of the staff.
97. The Inspectors had sight of the 2010 Easter School programme on Relationships – pastoral, political and theological dimensions – and were impressed by the range of input, teaching media and opportunities for worship, study and interaction. Students reported that the Easter School experience continues to improve.

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

98. YMC admits to a shortage of time allowing only “a certain amount of time for experiment and change”. However, as described in §§ 94-5, a clear policy about the balance is set out in the Student Handbook, and it has been reflected in what we have observed.

E.iv There should be a policy about expected attendance at public worship and evidence of its outworking.

99. As stated above in §94 the Student Handbook sets out clearly expected attendance at worship at the residential weekends indicating those that are optional (Late evening Night Prayer, Silent Prayer prior to Morning Prayer). Whilst attendance is required at the Sunday Eucharist, regardless of who is presiding, it is made clear in the policy that there is no obligation to receive the sacrament. That is a matter for the individual conscience.

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

100. YMC seeks to centre its worship in the context of learning and training for public ministry. Students are encouraged to think and reflect beyond their present horizons, engaging with the whole Christian tradition. The transformational value of being taken to unfamiliar territory in worship is underlined in the response to the Inspection Questionnaire. However the Inspectors were not convinced that this integration of worship into the whole training experience is yet achieved (§§ 103-6).

E.vi The institution should have a policy, available to candidates, on training in public worship. It should ensure that candidates plan, prepare and effectively conduct public worship, including preaching.

101. Policies are in place. Weekend worship is prepared and led by students, who then receive feedback, written and oral, including advice on how their skills may be developed for the parochial context. Prayer at the week-night sessions is led by a student.

102. However the Inspectors noted that an area of weakness stated in the response to the Inspection Questionnaire was: “Training in liturgical practice and leading worship needs further development”. We concur with this assessment. There are two aspects to it, one more theoretical and underlying, the other more practical.

103. The first relates to the comments made in §88 above concerning the reality of the aspiration for “worship to be seen as an essential part of

learning and training for public ministry” as expressed in the response to the Inspection Questionnaire. At the weekends worship and spirituality are prominent in the programme; sessions exploring spiritualities on the Friday evening (§ 113); the Saturday teaching day beginning and ending with worship and student prayer groups; and most of the Sunday morning given over to worship and reflection. The inspectors were concerned however about how the different aspects of the weekend interacted with one another. We did not experience the kind of integration we observed in teaching sessions (§ 133) between context, experience and Christian tradition, being present between the various elements in the weekend. In particular we wondered how some of the themes present in the teaching sessions, and the rich reflection in the YMC Groups could find fuller, more direct expression in the worship. We recognise that this may require doing some work at the planning stage with those responsible for worship at the weekend, and some rescheduling of the YMC Groups, to enable their insights to feed into the final worship of the community. There are links here with the comments made earlier (§ 88) about how worship takes its place within YMC’s understanding of its community and corporate life, and the “need for a fuller expression of the Trinitarian commitment within a mission Dei ecclesiology, and how “the importance of handling difference” (§§ 66 and 117) are expressed in the community’s worship..

104. The inspectors observed that the disconnection between worship and study was particularly marked at the week-night sessions. After socialising and eating, students meet together in one of the teaching rooms for preliminary prayer. Whilst we understand that the direction given to students is that prayers should occupy around five minutes, we felt that the time spent in gathering, sharing food and mutual support, absolutely essential in a part-time course, was nevertheless considerably out of proportion to the time spent in prayer. Further, whilst the short prayer/meditation given by one of the students was very satisfactory, no attention was given to the seating arrangements, or any kind of focus for the brief period of worship. This did not assist the message to be conveyed that worship is an essential part of the whole process. We encourage staff to explore these issues further to enable worship to become more fully part of the whole learning experience. These matters are important not only for life on the Course, but for the future where in parish life it is often too easy for there to be a disconnection between life in the week, in work, family and community, and the Sunday worship.
105. The second aspect is at the more practical level. We fully endorse the principle of responsibility for organising worship at the weekends being with the YMC Groups, and on the week-night sessions with individuals. Students value this and record their growth in confidence as a result. We understand there is a member of staff at each weekend with a responsibility for oversight, and that the YMC Group responsible for

worship confer with that person as they prepare. There is much excellent advice in the 'Issues to consider in planning worship' in the Worship Guidelines in the Student Handbook. The inspectors feel however that this would benefit from being supplemented by a more hands-on approach by the member of staff responsible for the weekend, looking at such things as the imaginative design of worship for difficult spaces, questions about ambience, lighting, provision of a visual focus, arrangement of seating with especial reference to the week-night sessions, music, balance of seeing and listening, as well as help in the balance of choices, length of hymns, consistency in the conduct of the daily office.

106. These two aspects are clearly closely linked. The inspectors believe that worship needs to be seen more clearly as a vital and integrated part of all that YMC stands for, and that staff giving more attention to supporting students in some of the delivery both at weekends and in week-night sessions will serve to move its importance higher up the overall agenda.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that:

- (i) the staff consider how the aspiration for 'worship to be seen as an essential part of learning and training for public ministry' can be more strongly expressed and communicated;**
- (ii) the member of staff with responsibility for the oversight of the residential weekends actively supports the YMC Group in the pre-planning stage for the weekend's worship.**

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

107. The policy is adhered to, but we hope our proposals above will enable it to be more effectively delivered. Our proposals seek to build on and revisit in practical situations, the liturgical principles which the staff deliver at the start of each year. They should also serve to counter the comments of three students in the end of course evaluation concerning what they felt to an absence of practical liturgical learning.

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

108. There is both a policy and practice in place and the critique and appraisal works well. The inspectors saw evidence of oral feedback to groups charged with arranging and leading weekend worship, covering the range

of daily office, alternative worship and Sunday Eucharist, Prayer and Praise and Doxology. The Inspectors were satisfied that written feedback sheets were given to the worship teams with both encouragement and detailed critique.

E.ix The student should receive critical and constructive comment, attending to performance, content and process from staff and peers.

109. The inspectors noted that both oral and written evaluation was given to the worship teams to stimulate their own reflection. The comments were supportive, practical, detailed, and gently pointing to omissions and ways of developing future practice, e.g. adding biddings to BCP liturgy, finding ways to integrate more of the weekend's learning themes or including a hymn to bring worship to a clearer ending.

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

F Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation

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

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

110. The policy is clearly documented in the Prospectus and in the Student Handbook. Four vocational themes in ministerial formation are listed as; Understanding and Participating in Mission; Understanding and Growing in Faith; Understanding and relating to Self and Others; Understanding and Preparing for Ministry and Leadership. Each of these is set out in more detail in the Validation Document. In conversation and through the delivery of the curriculum, students are clearly aware of this approach.
111. We had sight of a draft of a fuller Ministerial Formation Policy which we understand was to go to the YMC Council in March. We commend its contents and have referred earlier to the need to bring some of the theological assumptions which it contains into a revised theological rationale (see §§ 67-9).

F.ii The institution through its common life and through the way it guides and supervises candidates should enable them to grow in

Christian discipleship with a view to exercising a public role in ordained ministry.

112. The ethos of YMC is described in the Inspection Questionnaire as rooted in the mutuality, inclusion of difference and love of the Trinity. Personal growth occurs through the integration of the academic, pastoral and formational aspects of YMC's character and work, together with student assessment processes. The staff encourage by example growth in depth and intensity in the lives of the students. Spiritual direction is regarded as a norm for students and tutors regularly enquire if this is happening.
113. The End of Course Assessment 2010 referred to the sacrifices made by students and families. In conversation some students admitted to anxiety and guilt that their development is often at the expense of those close to them. The inspectors noted a tension between the overall formation of students for public ministry in terms of spirituality, ministerial formation and relationships on the one hand and academic work on the other. If students choose to limit their academic work to the minimum required to 'pass' in order to have time for family, prayer and work and life in general how would YMC respond? Where would it be addressed? Yet this is an issue which is a crucial part of the formation of public ministers especially those who will not be full-time paid by the church – what is endemic in training will be carried through into public ministry unless it is reflected upon and addressed. Although the opportunities for answering those questions are provided within the Course structure, YMC Groups, the Personal Tutor network, individual spiritual direction, and conversations with YMC staff members, we **urge** the staff and students to consider how these areas of tension in the preparation for public ministry might best be more consciously and explicitly handled through these various mechanisms.

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

114. The YMC community already comprehends a wide range of different traditions, backgrounds and experiences. Staff and students are aware that this gives a potential for great richness but that it can also be negative. Handling that issue creatively is seen as a crucial part of the course. Students expressed appreciation of the mix and the interactions. A variety of opportunities provide material for reflection. For many, regular contact with members of the Community of the Resurrection and the opportunity to share in the worship of the Community is a great privilege. Through the alternative worship at residential weekends and during the first year placement students often experience being taken into unfamiliar

territory. The spirituality programme on the first evening of each of the residential weekends introduces students to a wide range of traditions. The inspectors observed this at the January weekend when a representative of the Pentecostal Movement made a presentation, whilst there were parallel sessions on German pietism and on Benedictine and Franciscan spiritualities. Each of the sessions helped people to enter into something of the experience of the particular tradition. The Pentecostalist Pastor's address could have been given to some of his own pastors in training, the session on German pietism concluded with the singing of hymns followed by reflection, while in the third session, two students who had experience of those two traditions taught with passion and skill using a variety of good handouts. Altogether these sessions reflected the variety of approach, sensitivity to different learning styles and drawing on student experience which we observed elsewhere (§ 134).

115. The Ministry in the Church module provides another opportunity for reflection on the contrast between the spirituality of the student's own church with that of their first year placement church. Church visit days and visits during Communicating the Gospel Easter School provide further opportunities to encounter and reflect on worship in unfamiliar contexts.
116. We have noted elsewhere the commitment of YMC to embrace as wide a range of church traditions as possible (§33). The provision of part-time training for those to be ordained as Ordained Pioneer Ministers, and the introduction of a full-time contextual course for OPMs, bears witness to that commitment. It carries with it the expectation that all students on the Course will be exposed to patterns of ministry outside the ordinary range of parish traditions as well as being encouraged to ask how they too can become pioneers in their own settings. A wider challenge to YMC is for it to be robust in its inclusiveness of, as well as in critiquing, new insights for mission and evangelism. As part of this YMC has the difficult task of balancing the needs of confident larger churches in Sheffield, Leeds and York, from which many potential pioneer ministers will come, with the range of churches that mainly constitute the Church of England. The Course is committed to being responsive to the needs of all these churches through enabling students to be confident in affirming their own espoused theology, spirituality and identity within the wider variety of traditions.
117. An interactive trinitarian ecclesiology, sustained beyond an opening paragraph in the validation document, that understands difference as inherently constitutive of, rather than inimical towards communion, would provide an integrated theoretical framework for YMC's practice. Further it would serve to challenge dioceses and sponsoring bishops to model and affirm it (see §66).

118. It is regrettable that the hopes for greater ecumenical involvement enshrined in the setting up of the Regional Training Partnership have not come to be more evident in YMC. There are formational and institutional reasons why so few non-Anglicans are represented, largely through denominations making their own provision outside the area. As we have indicated above (§ 94-5), the Course takes a number of steps to expose students to the traditions of other churches. But the encouragement to work ecumenically once ordained which would come more powerfully from training alongside those from other denominations is unfortunately absent.

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

119. The Community of the Resurrection makes available its members as chaplains to weekends and as spiritual directors. Students are assigned a Personal tutor for their whole period on YMC. They may seek counsel also in regular conversations with members of the staff team, module tutors and other clergy, including of course their incumbents. A Pastoral Care Adviser is also appointed by YMC. This person is independent of the Course. The YMC Groups provide another important point of mutual support. The inspectors noted the enthusiasm of the students for these groups, especially as they have recently also taken over the role of the previously separate prayer groups. Strong encouragement is given to working with a Spiritual Director and help is offered in finding one.

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

120. We have already referred to the first part of this criterion in §114.

121. Personal tutors play a key role in helping the students to work with personal issues arising out of the whole process of training. The Student Handbook sets out their role very clearly. They meet with their student throughout the Course. They are the first line of support for tutees on their path through training; acting as a mentor and guide in personal, practical, educational and formational issues. They play a central role in the assessment process, gathering together evaluations of the student's progress, and after discussion drafting reports to the dioceses.

122. Observing the regular meeting the Course arranges for Personal Tutors as a group, and in separate meetings with other Personal Tutors either in a group or individually, we were impressed by their commitment to the task. They were very knowledgeable about the Course, said that they were kept

very well in touch through the circulation of emails and papers, and felt very much part of the whole enterprise.

123. Other aspects of the Course provision which assist in this area, in addition to the Course staff, are the YMC Groups, where, from our observation, this personal support of one another is very evident, the Pastoral Care Adviser, the student's home incumbent and spiritual director, and the Local Support Network.

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

124. Students have an opportunity to take part in Myers Briggs and Enneagram events. They work on their personal character in the Ministry in the Church, and Preparing for Ordination modules. The 2010 End of Course Evaluation includes several references from students concerning their sense of personal transformation.

125. Students are encouraged in life-long learning by the example of staff in fostering habits of theological reflection. This also happens through the application of feedback sheets and the encouragement to recognise in the learning cycle ways of living and ministering which continue, always moving from action to reflection to action and onwards.

126. The YRTP provision of a common element in IME 4-7 across all the five dioceses, largely perceived to be provided by YMC, enables learning to be seen as a continuous process, not one which stops after the completion of the three year course.

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

127. As noted above in §112 and §119, YMC recommends and supports students in working with a spiritual director, and encourages an annual retreat or quiet day, (one YMC weekend a year being a timetabled retreat for each year group), and models this in the curriculum. Students explore the Ordinal's expectations in the Ministry in the Church module; discussion with the recently ordained in the Preparation for Ordination module also serves this agenda. The inspectors noted that the personal aspect of this works extremely well and perhaps needs to be matched with an equivalent energy given to formation through corporate spirituality (§§ 99ff). The draft new Ministerial Formation Policy will serve to further support students

in having the 'primary responsibility for their formation and growth in Christian maturity'.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion F, Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation.

SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION AND TRAINING

G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources

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

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

128. The Student Handbook contains the Church of England Learning Outcomes for Ordained Ministry. Students and staff refer to these as part of the learning process. These published Learning Outcomes make clear what is included in pre-ordination training and what is left to the IME4-7 period. The curriculum validation document includes a chart mapping the YMC provision with Learning Outcomes.

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

129. The Inspectors were satisfied that the teaching and learning programmes serve the aims and objectives of the institution in both content and process. As indicated above (§32), the programme is shaped around four vocational themes; Understanding and Participating in Mission; Understanding and Growing in Faith; Understanding and Relating to Self and Others; and Understanding and Preparing for Ministry and Leadership. These are handled within a learning spiral, revisiting each theme at different depths. It is made clear in the prospectus that this spiral is to be understood over the whole of IME 4-7, inculcating a habit of life-long learning.

130. The presence of the 'learning cycle' §68, which is central to YMC's educational approach was evident to the Inspectors in many of the teaching sessions we attended at the residential weekends and week-night sessions. Reflection on the placements upon which the Course places an emphasis, and the process of assessment where students are helped to bring together and reflect on the various aspects of their experience and work on the Course, provide further examples of the 'learning cycle' in action.

131. The different pathways open to students are described in §33. The Validation Document sets out clearly how, in relation to both main pathways, the validated modules of both the Sheffield and York St John Course fit into the framework of the four vocational themes. The same charts demonstrate how the formational and practical aspects of training fit within the whole pattern, through further week-night modules, study days, placements, weekends and Easter School. The Inspectors are satisfied that there is a proper balance between the academic, formational and practical aspects of training.

G.iii Units of teaching and learning should have clear and appropriate aims, be well structured and enable students to achieve appropriate learning goals.

132. We examined the module outlines and found them to be clearly presented. The aims and the planned learning outcomes, expected number of study hours and the means of assessment are clear. There is a timetable and a bibliography. The Inspectors noted how tutors spelled out the expected learning outcomes at the beginning of their session. There is a commitment to being responsive to feedback. Students feel that their suggestions for improvement are heard and appropriate action taken (See § 43).

G.iv Teaching programmes should introduce students to the appropriate knowledge and learning processes, while drawing on student experience.

133. The variety and level of academic pathways offered by YMC, Foundation degree, BA and MA, seeks to accommodate varying student educational experiences, abilities and personal situations. We observed this working in practice in teaching sessions

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

134. The vast majority of teaching sessions we observed at both the week-night meetings and the residential weekends ranged between good and outstanding. Sessions were skilfully and sensitively structured. A variety of approaches was deployed, individual and group work, use of PowerPoint and video clips and music. The creative flow of engagement between the person leading the session and the members resulted in a high level of engagement. The thematic design of some of the sessions enabled a constant interaction between context, experience, and the

Christian tradition. We were aware in one or two cases of a need for a growth in confidence in the use of adult educational skills and **encourage** the core staff, in following up their annual appraisals, to make use of the opportunities offered by both UoS and YSJU for further professional development (§§ 166, 67 and Recommendation 10). We make a similar comment in relation to Reader training in § 136 below). Handouts were always present and helpful in the sessions we observed.

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

135. The YMC Groups play an important role here. The Inspectors were left in no doubt about the value that students place upon them; 'brilliant', 'outstanding', 'couldn't survive without them', were some of the comments. But the time for their meeting at weekends was very restricted whilst their remit is potentially quite large. Their purpose is expressed as providing a base, and they are an essential means of bringing the Sheffield and York St John students together as YMC students. But they are also tasked with being the main focus for integrative development, addressing issues of growth and change, facing the difficulties of development honestly by being a place of openness and support. In sitting in on the groups, whilst staff had provided some questions for reflection in the light of the theme of the weekend, the inspectors noted the understandable tendency for the group to move into mutual support, or use precious time together to plan liturgical responsibilities.
136. The inspectors also observed that the residential weekends' schedules were intensely packed. Particularly this was the case, when at our first visit, in addition to the main programme, the YMC Annual Lecture took place with Frank Field MP talking about his recent work on child poverty. We make two points from that experience. The first is about the balance between the formal sessions and time for digestion and reflection. We recognise that, certainly in the sessions we observed, time for reflection was to some extent built in, but we are thinking more about the whole experience of the weekend. Accordingly we questioned whether the hour or so on Sunday morning in the YMC Groups is sufficient, and whether the Groups' task, with its separate aspects, needs to be clarified. The second point was to affirm the public lecture, but to raise the issue of whether there might be ways of using the event more fully as part of the educational and worship programme for the weekend.

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the staff review the YMC Groups to clarify the various roles they are expected to play, and ensure that adequate time is available to fulfil them.

137. The comments in §134 concerning YMC teaching sessions also broadly apply to our observations at the Schools of Ministry and Reader training. Again expected outcomes were clearly spelled out. There was good use made of various media, good levels of involvement and participation. Some sessions again were outstanding. Some tutors might benefit from extra help in making more effective use of the adult education methods they were applying. YSJU offer very considerable support to their module tutors and we **encourage** YRTP through the Reader Programme Committee to explore how more help with adult education methods might be made available.

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

138. The response to the Inspection Questionnaire identified the length of time taken to mark work and give feedback as one of YMC's weaknesses. We heard from students of some confusion and delay happening in the transition from the University of Leeds to the University of Sheffield. These specific issues have been resolved and students generally felt that the situation was improving. The coming of the new Academic Registrar was felt to have made a positive impact on the marking situation.

139. The examples of students' work which we examined all contained helpful feedback from the marker. There was both affirmation and constructive criticism.

140. The overall assessment processes in which the Personal Tutor plays a major role work well and are referred to elsewhere (§121). Other feedback to students is provided in relation to specific activities, for instance, worship, from placement supervisors and the follow up to placement reports, and through peer support in the various groups.

141. We observed one example of the latter where students in small groups of three or four presented one another with their work to date on their portfolio presentations, seeking feedback and suggestions for taking the work forward. We **urge** the staff to explore the potential for an extension of peer assessment of this kind.

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

142. Assessment criteria are published in the University of Sheffield Handbook, and in the York St John Programme Handbook, available to students. We **encourage** staff, in both YMC and Reader training, to make this information available within the Student Handbook at the conclusion of the academic information section, and the appropriate equivalent Reader documentation.

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

143. YMC students on Pathway 1 meet on week-night evenings either at the College of Resurrection (COR) or rooms rented from York St John University. Both places have good well equipped facilities. YMC students on Pathway 2 take part in the Schools of Ministry in Wakefield, meeting one day a month in the COR, and Bradford, meeting on one evening a week during term time. The Bradford School of Ministry meets at the Bradford Diocesan Resources Centre, Kadugli House. It provides excellent accessible facilities, well equipped with communications technology.

144. Readers and others training for lay ministry in Wakefield and Leeds share the provision referred to above. When we attended the Sheffield School of Ministry for one of its monthly day sessions, it was being held temporarily in the Cathedral, where the facilities are good. We understand however that they will shortly moving back to the Wilson Carlile Church Army training premises once the redevelopment has taken place there. Readers in Ripon and Leeds Diocese meet in either Ripon in the Cathedral Hall which has good facilities and reasonable parking, or in Leeds Parish Church where the same comments can be made. York Diocesan Reader training takes place at three centres, at York St John University, in the Church of the Ascension, Middlesbrough, a modern church building with ample accommodation in hall and separate rooms, and at Beverley Minister in a newly refurbished hall well equipped with technology.

145. Library facilities are available at the College of Resurrection and the Community of the Resurrection. All YMC students registered for a Sheffield degree have full borrowing rights at the University Library in Sheffield. Also in Sheffield, YMC students have full borrowing rights at Wilson Carlile College of Evangelism Library, a nominal fee being paid by the Course. YMC students in the York area can have borrowing rights at the York St John University Library. Kadugli House, York Minister, and Wakefield Diocesan Resource Centre all have resources. There is a good

small library within the Church of Ascension, Middlesbrough making available recommended texts for the specific modules.

146. A range of settings for placements is available for YMC students. We comment more on this below. Most of those on Reader training also have a parish placement as an essential part of their training programme.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion G, Teaching and Learning: content, method and resources.</p>
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H Practical and pastoral theology

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

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

147. The integration of theory and practice is at the heart of the 'learning cycle' which underpins the educational approach of the YMC. The validation document spells this out clearly as well as speaking of an emphasis upon placement learning within the curriculum. The response to the Inspection Questionnaire sets out in detail the range of ways in which YMC seeks to achieve integration. From our observations we endorse the effectiveness of these various elements in practice. However the inspectors felt that this approach could be set out more explicitly in the Prospectus and the Student Handbook.
148. The Placement Handbooks set out clearly how the placements form an integral part of the Ministry in the Church Module in the case of the first year Placement, and the Church in Contemporary Society module in the second year Placement. The first is also linked into the home Church-Community Audit developed in Term 1, which sets the tone for the reflection on experience and the interaction with the Christian tradition which is evident throughout the Course. There is a further link with the two Preaching Days and the Mission module in Term 3. But the Placement Handbooks are not included in the Student Handbook, and there are only cursory references to placements within the academic information section, nor are students pointed to where further information is available.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that:

- (i) **a clear statement about how the Course seeks to integrate theory and practice is included in the Student Handbook;**
- (ii) **the two placement handbooks are included in the Student Handbook.**

149. The inspectors found that the directions for the first year Placement were clear and widely understood by students. As indicated above the first year Placement, described as the 'Parish Placement', is part of the Ministry in the Church module and well linked in with other parts of the programme. It requires students to spend time in a parish/church context that differs from their own. Expected areas of activity are careful observation of the life and ministry of the local church in its context, active participation in ministry, and critical reflection on the participation with the placement supervisor. The handbook sets out helpfully aids to reflection, verbatim and critical incident reporting, bibliography etc.
150. Both placements are said in the validation document to be designed for "observation and for practice in practical and pastoral skills (and the first in ministerial skills also), but equally for theological and missiological reflection". In the placement handbooks, the emphasis falls more directly on theological reflection.
151. Whereas the inspectors are confident that the Parish Placement works well, we feel that there is need for greater clarity about the second year Placement which is described as the "Non-Church Placement". The documentation states that this "placement gives you an opportunity to experience the work of a non-church institution in its context and to reflect on it theologically", "it is specifically aimed at helping you to grow in your experience and understanding of the church's mission in the world". We found that in the majority of cases students' placements were alongside chaplains in caring institutions or in one case rural ministry. In a discussion with a group of students, their own lack of clarity became clear. One OPM student sparked off a sharp debate when he challenged someone who said that their placement would be in a hospice chaplaincy as to whether this could really be described as a non-church placement.
152. The inspectors believe that there is a link back here to the references to Paulo Freire and the primacy of the missio Dei. How might a non-church placement "help people to stand in a new place, to see things with new eyes, to step outside the ways of perceiving which have been defined by others or by history" (§70); and to first ask not, what is the church's

mission here, but what is God saying to us in what is going on? We have in mind a comment in the minutes of the Staffing Committee when identifying the weaknesses of YMC – “Need to open people up to a sense of something more than ‘me and my vocation’”.

153. A further possibility which might be considered would be to include at some point in the Course a reflection on the student’s work context, either alongside or instead of the home Church-Community Audit.
154. The Inspectors were aware that the Director of Pioneer Ministry is devising a policy for pioneer placements on the current part-time OPM pathway. We **urge** him to explore new approaches to the use of placements in the new full-time contextual OPM pathway.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the Director of Pastoral Studies ensures greater clarity about the purpose of the second year placement expectations and the nature of the non-church setting.

155. All the Reader training, as it participates in the YSJU programme, includes a parish or chaplaincy placement as part of the Ministry and Praxis module. Some dioceses provide extra sessions in such areas as leading worship and preaching.

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

156. The response to the Inspection Questionnaire spells out a variety of ways in which the Course facilitates integration:
 - The alignment of module design, learning outcomes, teaching methods and feedback;
 - The sequencing of modules to facilitate integrated learning;
 - The use of varied approaches to learning, through small group work and student presentation to peers;
 - The involvement of ministerial practitioners in teaching;
 - Theological reflection in the placement context;
 - Group discussion of placement experiences;
 - By tutor reference to the increasing intertextuality of the course modules;

- By reference to and integration of students prior learning and experience.

We saw evidence of all those elements in our various visits.

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

157. Students are enabled to develop an appreciation of a multifaith and multicultural society in the following ways:

- At themed Easter Schools;
- In the Church and World, Ministry in the Church and Ethics modules via teaching on ministry in multifaith and multicultural contexts;
- Current staff members have experience of ministry in a wide range of contexts in Britain and other parts of the world on which to draw in their teaching.

Written assignments and external examiners' comments provide evidence of the students' growing abilities in these areas.

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

SECTION FIVE: STAFF AND STUDENTS

I Teaching staff

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

- I.i Appointments should involve appropriate consultation with the relevant sponsoring churches and partner institutions, and the method for making appointments should be clear and fair to all concerned.*
158. The core staff consists of the Principal who is full-time, and four colleagues, all of whom are to a greater or lesser degree part-time, the Director of Pastoral Studies, the tutor in Anglican Studies in a parish, the Director of Pioneering Ministries pursuing a higher degree, and one who is a shared appointment as Director of Studies with the College of the Resurrection. There are three ancillary staff, one of whom is a joint member of staff with the College (the Academic Registrar), and another who, as well as being ordained and part of the administrative team, is also an honorary tutor and responsible for coordinating spirituality and worship on the Course.
159. As with most part-time courses YMC depends upon a range of people who act as Personal Tutors or who teach modules. We have already referred to the regular meetings and communication with Personal Tutors to enable them to feel part of the enterprise. A similar point should be made about module tutors, and particularly about the regular meetings between the YMC core staff and the Directors of the two Schools of Ministry which currently include YMC students.
160. In relation to the core staff, the Staff Handbook sets out clearly the process for the making of appointments. The Council delegates responsibility for this to the Staffing Committee which consists of a Chair appointed by the Council together with two other Council members and one non-Council member, and the Principal. An agreed staff member acts as secretary. We were able to check that this process had indeed been followed in the case of the most recent appointment.
- I.ii Recruitment and selection should be in line with current good practice. Job descriptions and conditions of service should be clear at the time of appointment and should be revised at regular intervals.*

161. The Staff Handbook sets out a comprehensive Code of Practice for the recruitment and selection of staff, including the honorary personal tutors. The code includes the requirement for job descriptions and terms and conditions of service to be drawn up for the beginning of the process of recruitment. The finance committee must give its approval and it should be indicated as to whether the successful candidate will be required to undertake a CRB check.
- I.iii The number, field of expertise, scholarly and teaching competence of the staff should enable the educational programmes of the institution to be offered at the appropriate levels, both in terms of academic achievement and of preparation for public ministry.*
162. The YMC core staff offer a rich range of expertise, including: the experience of working with the church in Africa, South Asia and South America, sector and student ministry in the UK, parochial ministry and experience as a clergy spouse, alongside previous involvement in theological and ministerial education in this country. The association with the University of Sheffield provides access to a world class Biblical Studies Department, whilst on the Mirfield site they are able to draw on expertise in the liturgical and doctrinal fields.
163. The Schools of Ministry and other Reader training arrangements come under the responsibility of the Directors of Ministry and Training, or equivalents, in the dioceses. In most cases they themselves will do some of the teaching, whilst drawing in suitably qualified teachers from elsewhere. YSJU offer considerable support. There is an annual new tutors' day, and day events for specific modules. An annual review of each teaching centre is undertaken by YSJU. The review of the Sheffield SoM 2009/10 speaks of a "continued high quality of learning and teaching" and "creative and engaging teaching and learning strategies". These comments are echoed elsewhere and accord with our observations.
- I.iv The gender, lay/ordained and denominational balance among staff members should enable the institution to offer appropriate models of learning and of ministry, and should comply with denominational guidelines.*
164. The YMC core teaching staff should not really be seen as totally separate from the ancillary staff for what we observe is a consciousness of all being members of "YMC staff." Together they contain an interesting balance of gender, lay and ordained, different church traditions, those whose focus is wholly on the Course and those who have other part-time commitments. The Principal is a lay woman, the Directors of Studies and Pioneering Ministries are lay men, the tutor for Anglican Studies and Director of Pastoral Studies are ordained. The person responsible for the

administration in relation to students and teaching is an ordained woman, whilst the Principal's PA is a clergy spouse and the Academic Registrar a lay woman.

165. Further the YMC core teaching and ancillary staff are themselves set within the wider network of COR staff members, personal and module tutors, schools of ministry leaders and tutors, which offer an even broader mix of experience.

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

166. The Staff Handbook contains a section of staff development which sets out encouragement to staff in respect of sabbaticals, retreats, professional development. It also states that all members of staff are to have a staff development programme which will be part of their job description. The inspectors did not see this being made explicit in the job description relating to the most recent appointment.

167. The Staff Handbook sets out the process for an annual appraisal, with the provision that every three years there should be a '360 degree review'. No one has yet been in post long enough with YMC for that to have taken place, but we did have sight of some annual appraisals. These were very satisfactory, but the inspectors believe in order that these should be followed through as effectively as possible that the Staffing Committee should review the provision for staff development. The inspectors appreciate the pressure under which the staff operate especially since, very commendably, much energy is necessarily being put into the development of the Course, not least into the new contextual OPM pathway. But unless steps are taken now within the constraints of time, to make space for the staff's own development, it could be detrimental to the future of the Course.

168. The Inspectors were aware that staff members have access to a range of learning opportunities provided by the University of Sheffield.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Council put in place a formal policy setting out and detailing adequate provision for Continuing Professional Development.

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

169. The YMC core staff meets fortnightly. The Chair's role rotates. The meeting takes place in the morning, followed by a Eucharist and a pooled lunch. At the meeting we observed there was a clearly set out and timed agenda. There was good sense of collaborative working. A draft Ministerial Formation policy, a paper on Pioneer placements and some new proposals for the induction process to YMC formed some of the content of the business. There was also discussion about a change in the sequencing of some of the modules to effect greater coherence and integration. The administrative secretary took the minutes and the academic registrar joined for the worship and lunch. The whole event was a good model of collaborative working, demonstrating reflection on experience in order to improve various elements of the Course.
170. On the first residential weekend we attended, all staff were present and were responsible for different teaching sessions. We did not see any evidence of joint teaching, we encourage staff to explore this possibility as a further means of modelling the collaborative working. We heard several comments to the effect that the way YMC students and tutors relate to one another as adults makes it feel like everyone is learning.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion I, Teaching staff.</p>
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J Ancillary staff

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

- J.i There should be an adequate number of ancillary staff for the type of institution and its way of working.*
171. YMC has three part-time staff to run the administration of the Course, two who share the main organisational tasks and an academic registrar. Whilst it is clear that being a small team there is very little slack in the organisation to cope with any additional matters which arise, they are comfortable with the amount of work they have to undertake in the normal course of events.
- J.ii The institution should establish and make known clear lines of responsibility and accountability for its administrative staff.*
172. The administrative staff have clear lines of accountability and responsibility with a clear job description and person specification. There is an annual appraisal with a member of the core staff.

173. The academic registrar is a joint appointment with the College of the Resurrection whose primary responsibility is relating to the University of Sheffield. She is accountable to the Director of Studies.

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

174. The administrative staff team has been stable for some time. They are fully aware of their roles. Recruitment and selection were in accordance with the code of practice set out in the Staff Handbook. The job descriptions and the employment contracts are clear and sufficiently detailed. Any needs for training and development are highlighted during the appraisal process and staff are satisfied with this.

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

175. As set out above (§158) YMC core staff and ancillary staff are small in number. Proximity to the Principal and other members of the staff team is very straightforward. The administrative staff believe that the staff team as a whole is excellent with a good mix of skills and abilities, clergy and lay. The staff team feels very egalitarian. The staff collectively model an excellent leadership style of team ministry.

176. All the administrative staff serve on the committee structure at YMC and as a result feel valued members of the staff team. They feel this tone of inclusion and value is set by the Principal.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion J, Ancillary staff.</p>

K Students

Inspectors will examine procedures for admission and suspension or dismissal, for assessing progress during training, and, for ministerial candidates, for reporting to the sponsoring church and for supporting candidates in finding first appointments.

K.i Written information for students about admission, welfare, complaints, discipline, assessment, reporting to sponsoring

churches and arrangements for first appointments should be publicly available.

177. The Prospectus sets out in a clear and attractive fashion, with illustrations and quotes from current students, what the Course is for, how and where it happens, entrance requirements and what the possible pathways through it are. It also includes the Church of England Learning outcomes, and information about what is offered for IME 4-7.
178. The Student Handbook provides comprehensive information about the conduct of the Course, including the procedures for assessment and reporting, and first appointments.

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

179. In both individual conversations and more formal meetings students expressed great appreciation of the Course. There was recognition of some of the pressures studying alongside work and family. Some smaller issues came up, uncertainty about the diocesan book grant provision which varies from dioceses to diocese, the timing of deadlines for assignments, some teething problems with the move to Sheffield etc. But students felt that the variety of pathways and the flexibility was a real strength, as was the breadth and styles of tutors. There was a feeling that the broad tradition of the Church of England was reflected in YMC, and it was said 'we learn as much from each another as we do from anything else'.

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

180. We observed one of the regular meetings of the staff/student consultative group. Issues are raised from both staff and students. This allows both detailed issues to be dealt with, e.g. the shortage of chairs in the College library, and more substantial reflection on issues such as the Annual Lecture.
181. Students are represented on the YMC Council (two places), the Formation Committee and the Joint Board of Studies. Students are also members of interviewing panels and at other informal stages in the interview process. They are encouraged to give feedback to the appointment panel.

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

L Governance, management, constitution and organisation

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

182. The YMC Council consists of 24 members. The Chairmanship has just passed from one Yorkshire diocesan bishop to another, which helps to ensure local ownership. There are representatives from the five Yorkshire Dioceses, the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership, The College of the Resurrection, the Methodist Church (2), the Wakefield Ministry Scheme, Women in Ministry, and General Synod. There are two student representatives and one staff member in addition to the Principal and three members co-opted for their particular expertise.
183. Between members of the inspection team we were able to meet with 9 members of the Council, including the Chairs of Finance, Staffing and Formation Committees and the representative of the Methodist Church. There is a clear sense of active involvement in the Course by the Chairs of the Committees. The Formation Committee scrutinises every evaluation sheet and reviews the content of all the courses and the ordinands experience in general, whilst the engagement of the Finance Committee is attested to below. There is a general sense that the Course is in good heart, whilst being aware of some of the issues that are on the horizon, the impact of the withdrawal of HEFCE funding, and the challenge of ensuring that YMC can become flexible and inclusive enough to serve the needs of all the churches in Yorkshire. There is regret that ecumenical involvement in YMC is less than it was in previous years in NOC, although it is understood that this is to some extent outside YMC's control. The ecumenical commitment however remains strong at YRTP level, and the Methodist representative recounted a range of training initiatives in the Methodist Church, especially for lay people where greater cooperation would be welcome.
184. With a new Chair of the Council, and the Chair of the YRTP retiring shortly, the inspectors felt that this an important moment to build on the progress that has been made in the last three years. It was stressed to us that maintaining good relationships with the dioceses is crucial. Or to put it the other way round, the opportunity exists for the dioceses to build on the covenant by taking forward a comprehensive vision for theological education for lay and ordained, through the vehicles of the YRTP and YMC (Recommendation 1). If that is to be realised it will be important that

those nominated by the dioceses to the Council in the future will bring that commitment with them. In the light of the possible changes flowing from the work of the Dioceses Review, YRTP and YMC could be a point of stability through any transition.

L.i There should be evidence of effective financial, administrative and management structures that facilitate the stated aims and objectives of the institution.

185. The Finance Committee is appropriately staffed and is an effective body for facilitating the aims and objectives of the YMC. The Committee is made up of knowledgeable individuals with a variety of backgrounds, complementing each other and providing sufficient financial expertise to report effectively to the Council. We observed during the meeting we attended that the Principal, who does not have a finance or business background herself, readily asked for advice where she felt she was lacking in experience and was open and not defensive with other members.

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

186. We have already referred in §§ 180-181 to the student participation in decision-making.

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

187. We have already referred to this in § 166-7 and made a recommendation in relation to the policy for staff development

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

188. The Staff Handbook contains details of the appraisal process together with an Appraisal Form including directions for its use. We saw examples of its recent use (§167).

L.v The training institution should meet the current legal requirements, including fire prevention, health and safety, safeguarding, charity registration, immigration and any other current legislation.

189. One of the inspectors scrutinised all the relevant policies and found them to be in order. The Health and Safety Policy for YMC is a little

complicated by being in office space rented from CoR. A member of the inspection team checked the policy with the Principal against a check list and found it to be in order. There is now in post a General Manager of the site. He was appointed a year ago since when great improvements have been seen in the area of health and safety.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion L, Governance, management, constitution and organisation.

M Business planning and risk management

M.i The inspectors should be satisfied that the governing body has clearly identified its role in policy formation and delegation of authority in the areas of business planning, risk management and financial policies.

190. Delegation of authority by the Council to the Finance Committee is seen to be effectively operating in terms of business planning, risk management and financial policies. All members of the finance committee are clear about the responsibilities that they have and also are fully aware where their responsibility ends and those things which Council are required to ratify. At the meeting we attended the Chair regularly identified items that were required to be passed to Council.

M. ii The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the trustees/directors have carried out a proper risk assessment process to ensure that the institution is not at risk from loss, or claims that have not been identified or for which provision has not been made in the accounts.

191. There is a Risk Assessment and Management Strategy document that has been prepared for the YMC for the period 2010-2011. This is prepared annually and the format used is a standard one that identifies risk and assigns a gross risk to each risk that is identified. The management of risk is then stated for each of the risks identified.

192. We noted that the key risks identified are consistent with the current uncertain climate within the higher education sector. We observed however that in a number of cases the detail contained within the management of risk column was aspirational in nature rather than a record of action actually taken. It is clear that had the management measures been carried out effectively risk would have been significantly reduced within the institution. As it stands however, the information generated within the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy could be much more effectively used by the Council, and make a significant impact on the risk to the institution. Active engagement with the risk management

process needs to be a key element of business planning within the institution.

193. We commend the steps taken to date in the risk management process. We **urge** that the Council amend the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy document to include only those steps that have been taken so far and the impact of the steps taken should be assessed and a numerical figure assigned to residual or net risk to indicate the extent to which the measures are able to reduce risk. Consideration should be given to unacceptable residual risk to determine if there are additional management measures that could be taken in future. All steps taken by management to reduce risk should be evidenced formally.
194. The Risk Assessment and Management Strategy should be a dynamic document that is subject to critical review at least quarterly, and amended as necessary, by both the Finance Committee and the Council, and any changes made clearly documented. It is particularly important in this uncertain climate that risk management is taken seriously and embedded within the institution as far as is practicable.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the Council develop the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy as a dynamic document subject to quarterly critical review.

M.iii The inspectors should be satisfied that the institution has in place a business plan which identifies the aims and objectives of the institution over the short and medium term and identifies how the organisation intends to meet the opportunities and needs identified therein.

195. There is no formal business plan in place within the institution at present. Discussions with key members of the Finance Committee indicated that they were well aware of what they considered to be the key objectives of the institution, namely the provision of attractive and flexible courses to serve the needs of the churches in the region. The uncertain current economic climate and recent considerable staffing changes have made it difficult to prepare a meaningful business plan. We understand that this has been recognised by the Council who have agreed that the reserves should be used as a buffer in the short term until there is greater stability and clarity. The inspectors also recognise however that the current uncertain economic climate may also be a period when entrepreneurial opportunities and innovation, such as those already being realised in the developments in IME 4 – 7, the new full-time contextual course, will present themselves (§33).

196. The Business Plan should identify the aims and objectives of the institution over the short and medium term and identify how it is able to meet both the needs and opportunities identified. The Business Plan should include the necessary financials and tie clearly in to the budget. We recognise that the resource for preparing this may not be available in house and suggest that the Council consider bringing in suitable skills to complete this task, always remembering that the response to this recommendation should be proportional to the size of the institution.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the Council begin the process of preparing a formal business plan, identifying the aims and objectives of the institution over the short and medium term, taking close account of the amended Risk Assessment and Management Strategy (§193).

<p>The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to Criterion M, Business planning and risk management.</p>

N Financial policies and cost-effectiveness

- N.i The inspectors should satisfy themselves that proper books of account are kept enabling the trustees/directors to determine on a day-to-day basis the assets and liabilities of the institution.*
197. The Treasurer is fully involved in the preparation of accounts on a regular basis and has first hand experience of the books of account and is able to answer queries readily.
- N.ii The inspectors should be satisfied that the annual budget planning process correlates to the business plan and is reviewed regularly by the governing body that the financial position of the institution is reported on a regular basis to the governing body and that appropriate and timely action in respect of such reports is taken.*
198. The annual budget planning process is in place. The financial position against the budget is reviewed in a timely manner with the accounts for the period to 31/12/10 presented to the Finance Committee and discussed on 18/1/11. The Council will be updated as an agenda item on items that have been addressed within the Finance Committee.
- N.iii The inspectors should satisfy themselves that proper budgets are prepared and that expenditure against these budgets is regularly monitored and reported to the trustees. Authority for virement between budget heads should be properly authorised within set limits and recorded.*

199. Proper budgets are prepared as evidenced by the budget tabled at the Finance Committee we attended. The budget is basic and considered to be appropriate to the size of the institution. The management accounts prepared for each of the finance Committee meetings clearly indicate spend per category against the budget.
- N.iv The inspectors should ensure that the trustees/directors have properly delegated power to operate the bank accounts and to enter into binding contracts to staff members. There should be evidence that these arrangements are regularly reviewed and that the governing body regularly reviews all covenants in respect of any bank or other loan covenants or agreements have been observed.*
200. The bank mandate was last changed on 1/7/09. This has been approved by the Council.
- N.v The inspectors should examine the cost-effectiveness of the institution. The inspectors should be satisfied that the institution has in place procedures to ensure that due economy is exercised in respect of the purchase of goods and services. There should be defined limits for authority to purchase without quotations being obtained and the terms and levels of authority for officers and trustees should be clear*
201. The value of expenditure outside of salary cost is very low within the institution. The approval of the actual costs against budget by the Finance Committee is evidence that due economy is exercised in the limited purchase of goods and services within the institution. The small tight-knit staff team are fully aware of their responsibilities in this area and regularly check expenditure with the Treasurer as required.
- N.vi The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the institution provides cost effective education and training when compared to the costs of similar institutions.*
202. The inspectors did not have available comparable figures from other similar institutions. We could not therefore comment directly on this criterion other than to refer to the remarks on cost-effectiveness in §200 above.
- N.vii The inspectors in making their recommendations should evaluate the expected cost to the institution. The inspectors should state whether in their opinion the institution has the necessary resources to achieve a satisfactory response to the recommendations*

203. The Inspectors do not envisage any of our recommendations requiring extra expenditure. This assessment is based on the view that the skills referred to in §196 should be able to be found from within the existing resources of the governing body or churches.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion N, Financial policies and cost effectiveness.

O Reserves policy and statutory liabilities

O.i The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the trustees/directors can be satisfied that the institution is solvent and the institution has sufficient reserves to ensure that it is able to meet at least 3 months expenditure or such other amount as the trustees/directors have deemed appropriate.

204. The reserves policy is shown within the accounts and the reserves in 2009 were £281,183 (2010: £334,255). The trustees/directors are fully informed by the Finance Committee using the statutory accounts that the institution is solvent and has sufficient reserves to meet three months expenditure. The reserves policy quantified by the directors is a sum of the equivalent to three months or 25% of budgeted expenditure plus the estimated minimum requirement. For 2009 this was £150,000, for 2010 £144,000. Actual reserves are in excess of this.

O.ii The inspectors should satisfy themselves that appropriate advice has been taken on VAT and PAYE liabilities and that appropriate controls exist to ensure that any payments made correctly identify potential liabilities.

205. The institution is not VAT registered. The payroll is outsourced and the PAYE/NI liability is prepared by a third party.

O.iii If the accounts are kept on a computerised system there should be adequate provision to ensure that all data is properly backed up on a regular basis and that adequate backup data is kept offsite.

206. TAS Books are used to compile the accounts and are maintained by the Administrator who copies changes made and transfers a copy to the diocesan offices where the Treasurer is located. The back-up copy is maintained off-site. This is satisfactory.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to Criterion O, Reserves policy and statutory liabilities.

P Accommodation

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

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

207. Reference has already been made to the good facilities at the various centres used by YMC, the Schools of Ministry and others delivering training for Readers (§§143-4).
208. YMC uses several residential centres for weekends and Easter Schools, including The Hayes Conference Centre at Swanwick, Sneaton Castle, Whitby, The Wakefield Police College and the Retreat House, Community of the Resurrection. We were only able to observe the last two. The Police College provides good basic accommodation, meals etc. The disadvantage in terms of providing a suitable space for worship to which we have referred (§92) is outweighed by its convenience in other respects. The Retreat House provides good accommodation, students share meals with the COR, have the advantages which flow from being on the Mirfield site, library facilities, chapel, attractive grounds.
209. YMC has office accommodation within the COR premises, administrative office together with separate rooms for the Principal and two staff. The space available has been considerably increased since the early days of the relationship between NOC and COR. We understand that steps have been taken to provide better signage in the entrance hall so that the growing relationship between COR and YMC as members of the YRTP can be reinforced.
- P.ii There should be an awareness of perceived inadequacies, and a policy and programme for addressing them.*
210. On the Mirfield site, the appointment of a Site Manager a year ago, and the existence of a management committee is seen as the means whereby any issues can be addressed.

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

Overall outcome: The inspection team has confidence in the Yorkshire Ministry Course and the Reader training provision within the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership.

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend that the Annual Meeting of the YRTP consider how to give leadership in conceptualising and articulating the further development of its vision for the future mission and ministry of the churches in Yorkshire.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that YMC review the theological rationale to reflect the changes in its self-understanding since its inception and to ensure a greater consistency throughout with the theology and ecclesiology of missio Dei.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that YMC consider how:

- (i) the educational rationale could be helpfully developed and articulated more fully, adding to the underpinning of the practice in relation to contextual learning and pioneer ministry.**
- (ii) Within the curriculum, the skills of stimulating and evoking learning in others can be modelled.**

Recommendation 4

We recommend that YMC consider how best to develop the particular opportunities of the full-time contextual pathway, with particular attention to:

- (i) the use of the contextual elements;**
- (ii) the communication with and training of the supervisors;**
- (iii) theological reflection within the pathway and on its wider process.**

Recommendation 5

We recommend that the staff and students work together to articulate a more comprehensive statement on community and corporate life.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that:

- (i) the staff consider how the aspiration for ‘worship to be seen as an essential part of learning and training for public ministry’ can be more strongly expressed and communicated;**
- (ii) the member of staff with responsibility for the oversight of the residential weekends actively supports the YMC Group in the pre-planning stage for the weekend’s worship.**

Recommendation 7

We recommend that the staff review the YMC Groups to clarify the various roles they are expected to play, and ensure that adequate time is available to fulfil them.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that:

- (i) a clear statement about how the Course seeks to integrate theory and practice is included in the Student Handbook;**
- (ii) the two placement handbooks are included in the Student Handbook.**

Recommendation 9

We recommend that the Director of Pastoral Studies ensures greater clarity about the purpose of the second year placement expectations and the nature of the non-church setting.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the Council put in place a formal policy setting out and detailing adequate provision for Continuing Professional Development.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the Council develop the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy as a dynamic document subject to quarterly critical review.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the Council begin the process of preparing a formal business plan, identifying the aims and objectives of the institution over the short and medium term, taking close account of the amended Risk Assessment and Management Strategy.