



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Ministry Council

Inspection Report

Spurgeon's College

March 2011

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CONTENTS

LIST OF INSPECTORS	iv
GLOSSARY	v
THE INSPECTIONS FRAMEWORK.....	vi
SUMMARY.....	1
FULL REPORT	4
INTRODUCTION.....	4
SECTION ONE: AIMS AND KEY RELATIONS	6
A Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution	6
B Relationships with other institutions.....	7
SECTION TWO: CURRICULUM FOR FORMATION AND EDUCATION	9
C Curriculum for Formation and Education	9
SECTION THREE: MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT.....	12
D Community and Corporate Life.....	12
E Worship and training in public worship	13
F Ministerial, Personal and Spiritual Formation	15
SECTION FOUR: EDUCATION AND TRAINING.....	19
G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources	19
H Practical and Pastoral Theology	22
SECTION FIVE: STAFF AND STUDENTS	25
I Teaching Staff	25
J Ancillary staff	27
K Students	28
SECTION SIX: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE	30
L Governance, management, constitution and organisation.....	30
M Business Planning and risk management.....	31
N Financial policies and cost-effectiveness	32
O Reserves policy and statutory liabilities	35
P Accommodation.....	35
Appendices	38
List of Recommendations	40

LIST OF INSPECTORS

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GLOSSARY

BAC:	British Accreditation Council
BMS:	Baptist Missionary Society
BU/BUGB:	Baptist Union/Baptist Union of Great Britain
ICT:	Information and Computing Technology
IT:	Information Technology
MIT:	Minister in Training
NAM:	Newly Accredited Minister
PMP:	Professional Ministry and Practice

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 SPURGEON'S COLLEGE

March 2011

SUMMARY

1. Spurgeon's College which is just over 150 years old, was founded by London's great preacher as an early exercise in widening participation in higher education, for he deliberately targeted as potential students young men who would not have been admitted by the other Baptist colleges because of the low level of their prior education, and trained them for a ministry which was both evangelical and evangelistic. As secondary education has improved so the Spurgeon's student entry is perhaps less distinctive than it once was in educational terms, but is today interestingly diverse in that it is ethnically more mixed than it used to be, and serves those training for ministry in independent and black-led churches, as well as those seeking accreditation from the Baptist Union.

2, The College is a very lively institution in which some 15 members of academic and training staff serve a wide diversity of students, including both College-based and Church-based ministerial students, around 70 of whom are preparing for the Baptist ministry, and about 20 for the ministry of Independent and Black-led churches, newly accredited ministers completing their probationary studies, more established ministers pursuing Master's degrees and Doctoral studies including the College's specially tailored D.Min. Another important constituency is that of ordinary church members seeking to equip themselves for leadership by undertaking a variety of part-time courses, as different as the *Equipped to Minister* course taught on selected Saturdays over a three-year period, to the many options possible through *Spurgeon's Online* www.spurgeononline.org.uk/

3. In common with other Baptist Colleges : all ministerial students train on a programme in which studies in college are complemented by a placement within a pastoral situation, which necessarily leads to an emphasis on Applied Theology rather than just an academic discipline, with much more emphasis on preparation for the pastoral ministry than was traditionally the case. Finding sufficient locations in which students can serve as a minister in training is a difficult task especially when a successful training experience leads to the student minister being called to permanent service. This partly explains why the church placements are so widely scattered. There must be an element of risk in such a programme but the evidence is that the College is alert to this and has available necessary remedial strategies.

4. The quality of the work was generally very good with tutors successfully engaging students, illustrating their presentations with up-to-date examples, good use of power-point, charts and film clips. All of the teaching staff now

possess doctorates and are engaged in publishing quality work for a wider audience.

5. The remedy for some difficulties with access to the premises by those with limited mobility has been frustrated by the failure of the 'Atrium Scheme', occasioned by the late decision that parts of the scheme would have to pay VAT, which took it well beyond budget. The College is having therefore to renew its thinking about both how to overcome access issues, as well as the provision of more student accommodation.

Summary of outcomes

The inspection team judges Spurgeon's College fit for the purpose in preparing candidates both for the ordained and for lay ministry within the churches of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. They were also pleased to note that alongside such students others were preparing for similar service in Independent and Black-led churches in the South East.

The recommendations made below are designed to encourage a very good College to become even better

Criteria

Spurgeon's College was inspected on all 16 Quality in Formation criteria.

CRITERIA	OUTCOME
A. Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution	Confidence
B Relationships with other institutions	Confidence
C Curriculum for formation and education	Confidence
D Community and corporate life	Confidence with qualifications
E Worship and training in public worship	Confidence
F Ministerial, personal and spiritual formation	Confidence
G Teaching and learning: content, method and resources	Confidence
H Practical and pastoral theology	Confidence with qualifications
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
N Financial policies and cost-	Confidence

effectiveness	
O Reserves policy and statutory liabilities	Confidence
P Accommodation	Confidence
Overall Outcome	Confidence

FULL REPORT

INTRODUCTION

1. Spurgeon's College, originally the Pastor's or Metropolitan College before adopting the name of its founder, had its origins in Walworth in 1856, being run for many years from the premises of the Metropolitan Tabernacle. In founding the College, Spurgeon was concerned not to produce great biblical or theological scholars: rather the founder confessed: 'to get to the hearts of the masses, to evangelize the poor – this is the College ambition, this and nothing else.' Spurgeon's great concern, therefore, was to equip working-class men who heard the call to an evangelical ministry of Christian outreach. This proved a recipe for growth and by the outbreak of the First World War the College was training about a quarter of all Baptist ministers in the UK, whilst about a quarter of its students emigrated to serve churches in North America and in the dominions. This international service is continued in the range of students to be found in the College today, albeit a number now represent ethnic communities resident in the UK.

2. The College removed to a house and estate provided by the Falkland Park Trustees on South Norwood Hill in 1923. Over the years the training provided by the College developed along similar lines to that offered by other Baptist Colleges, with many students preparing for London University External Degrees and awards. When that option closed down, the College's academic work was accredited by the Council for National Academic Awards, and when that body ceased to exist, its students were prepared for degrees, certificates and awards of the University of Wales.

3. The College's objectives are clearly set out in the Student Handbook in its Mission Statement and in the Statement of Intent adopted by all Baptist Colleges in 1990 see p7-8 of the Student Handbook .

4. The inspection of the ministerial training programmes at Spurgeon's College, London, took place from 7 – 11 March 2011. Outside these dates, inspectors also visited two day conferences and a student in a church placement. The inspectors, who shared a very helpful training day at Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church on 27th January, received every co-operation from the staff and students, and the preparatory paperwork was full and carefully presented. All requests for assistance were met immediately. The team of four were accommodated in a hotel some 5 miles from the College.

5. Spurgeon's College prepares candidates for ministry in Baptist churches and is a recognized College of the Baptist Union of Great Britain. At the time of the inspection in the Lent Term of 2011 there were 68 Baptist Union ordinands and 19 students preparing for ministry in other churches. The total number of students registered for courses is 1180 though this figure includes

540 students who have signed up for a single module in the On Line Learning Programme, some of whom may have become inactive.

6. Ministerial students at Spurgeon's College train on one of two different patterns. Church-based students normally undertake the vocational BTh (Ordinary) degree whilst those in College normally work for the BD (Honours), the modules for which have all been written to be appropriate to those seeking accreditation by the Baptist Union and therefore encompass those essential elements that it requires. Those who enter the College as theology graduates will normally take a two-year MA in Mission and Ministry, created for this purpose, though this degree is being phased out in favour of a more varied programme of taught Master's degrees, allowing students a greater degree of focus in their studies. Most of the non-Baptist Union students enrolled in the College take a College-based course following the BD programme.

7. This Report is presented in a sequence of paragraphs which follow the order of enquiry suggested in the Inspections Quality Assurance and Enhancement Handbook as revised in 2010.

SECTION ONE: AIMS AND KEY RELATIONS

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) for public ministry within the breadth of traditions of the sponsoring church

8. The aims and objectives of the College are clearly set out in a mission statement (revised 2010) and a statement of intent, with special reference to ministerial formation, in the General Student Handbook. More detailed application of these principles is to be found in the Development Plan 2010-2011 and the Strategic Plan 2010-2013, approved by the Governors of the College. The College has a clear commitment to the study of theology, ministerial formation, and the fostering of personal spiritual development, whether this is in preparation for ordained or lay ministry.

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.

9. In fulfilment of these aims it has adopted the Core Competencies model developed by the BU Department of Ministry and the Ministry Executive of the BUGB, adapted to fit with the established ethos of the College. The College has also embedded the Five Core Values of the Baptist Union throughout its training and this was clearly seen in both the documentation supplied and in conversation with students and staff throughout the visitation.

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

10. This is the first Quality in Formation inspection of the College, and so there are no previous inspection recommendations. However the College has experienced a range of inspection visits by the University of Wales, including a Quinquennial Review (2006) and that undertaken by a Review Group for Undergraduate Courses in 2010 (set up by the college's own Quality Assurance Committee and including two external and one internal assessor), as well as inspections undertaken by the British Accreditation Council. Following the Quality in Formation Inspection, there will be a Review of Postgraduate courses [April 2011] and another Quinquennial Review from the University of Wales [June 2011]. Responses made by the College and reports from External Examiners demonstrate that the College is maintaining

high academic standards and still evolving and adapting as an institution to the complex and shifting contexts found in church, community and higher education. In the words of the Principal, 'We welcome inspection because what we have is good and we are always willing to learn'. The inspection team found a very high degree of openness and responsiveness by the staff as they engaged with this process. The College's procedures for Quality Assurance are governed by the demands of the University of Wales and take place under a Quality Assurance Committee chaired by a retired senior academic from another university

The inspection team has confidence with regard to A, Aims, objectives and evaluation of the institution.

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.

11 Most of the degrees of the College are accredited by the University of Wales, but its D.Min programme is accredited by the University of Chester. 'with some residual students remaining with the former accrediting body Lampeter/Trinity St David's The various reviews of the College's work undertaken by the University of Wales are generally very applaudatory and testify to the high quality of the academic work undertaken.

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.

12. Relationships with other institutions happen mostly at staff level where the staff of the College meet regularly with colleagues in other Baptist Colleges, as also within their own several disciplines. The distance of the College from other theological institutions combined with the Church-based pattern of education for most undergraduates make meaningful relations with other institutions almost impossible at a student level. The overall contribution of the present staff to scholarship is impressive and this feeds back into their teaching. Research at Spurgeon's is regularly reviewed by the University of Wales with an inspection, for which the documentation was available to the inspection team,, due in April

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.

13. 'Locality' here is difficult to define since church placements stretch from Huddersfield to Weston super Mare and south and east of this to the North Sea and the English Channel. Some students are in sole pastorates and others in team ministries which vary from a Cambridgeshire village to densely populated areas in the East End of London. Although some of the students will have placements in contexts where there are no other faith communities present, those who serve, for example, in inner London, show evidence of engagement with such communities. All students seeking accreditation are required to complete the module on Encountering Other Faiths, which is well-taught within the College curricula. Evidence was seen both in the directions given to students and in the written assignments of ecumenical engagement within the context of their local placements. However the inspectors became aware that not all students are exposed to a breadth of experience of ministry in secular situations: this is discussed later in section H.ii.

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

14. Given the absence of any neighbouring institution the most viable partnership is that with a group of other theological colleges and schools which network provides opportunities for officers holding similar offices, e.g. principals, librarians, business managers/bursars etc, to meet. The College is in membership with the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Evangelical Alliance and the Micah Network. The College has longstanding links with All Nations College, London School of Theology and Oak Hill Theological College in an affiliation entitled ALSO'

The inspection team has confidence with regard to B, Relationships with other institutions.

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

15. The theological rationale for the College stance in relationship to mission and ministry was clearly evidenced in the documentation, including reports, handbooks and other promotional and supporting literature. This was carried through into the lecture context that included a diverse range of College-based, Church-based, ministerial and non-ministerial students. Lectures included a focus on missional church, evangelism and the local church, worship and preaching skills, Christian doctrine, communication and hermeneutics, as well as continuing professional development and counselling - skills and theory. It is the very clarity of its theological rationale that appears to be attractive both to Baptist students and to students engaged in leadership in black-led and other independent churches throughout south London and the southeast.

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.

16. The formative and educational rationales for the training of ministerial and non-ministerial students were included in the documentation, including reports, handbooks and other promotional and supporting literature. The application of such formative and educational approaches to training was seen in the use of small group discussion, providing reflective space and the opportunity to reflect. Tutors modelled the use of the Bible and prayer in the majority of lecture contexts.

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.

17. The College offers a wide range of programmes to fulfil its theological aims and objectives and specifically through such units as the professional ministry and practice modules (which include a wide variety of topics), exploring Christian spirituality, preaching and worship, and modules which link to wider contexts including other faith traditions and pastoral theory and practice. The wide range of modules observed by the inspection team demonstrated a high level of engagement between tutor and students. The inspectors experienced a greater level of engagement amongst the ministerial students, the majority of whom are church-based. As a cohort, they have a greater homogeneity than those studying for other reasons, most of whom are college-based, some full and some part. The role played by *Spurgeon's Online*, is impressive and is the subject of a separate paragraph at the end of the report.

18. Ministerial training at Spurgeon's exists within a complex structure aimed at meeting a range of diverse needs. Historically the College ran church planting and evangelism tracks; however due to the desire to embed mission in all training, given the denomination's commitment to the vision of a missional church, the College has incorporated these modes of training within the wider curriculum. However, some church planting and evangelism students expressed concern that their particular speciality had insufficient focus in these generic modules and we would agree with their concerns.

Recommendation 1

We recommend that

(a) the College develop specific essay titles or training portfolios that focus specifically on the areas of church planting and evangelism; and

(b) that students applying primarily because of their interest in evangelism and church planting should receive a clear outline of how these subjects are addressed within the generic modules and modes of training.

19. *Equipped to Minister* is an impressive three-year course of monthly Saturday teaching covering an introduction to the disciplines of theological study for lay leaders. The course has recruited very well, and is clearly meeting a demand within the churches served by the College. The tutors make a very good job of meeting the needs of a wide range of enthusiastic students who come from a very broad range of backgrounds and abilities who are motivated by different reasons for doing the course. The rapid growth of the course seems to have meant, however, that the resources needed to support it administratively and pastorally have not kept up with the numbers involved. The course is currently run by a volunteer, with some administrative support from the College.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the College consider improving the administrative resourcing of this course.

20. In addition the College runs occasional open day conferences on topical issues; for example, one recently on 'Evangelicals and Universalism', and one on 'Preaching: Past, Present and Future', which serve a wider constituency in matters of theological interest and orientation, have created great interest.

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.

21. There are clear assessment processes in place which assess both academic and ministerial formation and these are incorporated under the core competencies developed in conjunction with the BUGB. Assessments of other groups of learners are consistent with aims and objectives of the programmes offered.

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to C,
Curriculum for Education and Formation.**

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.

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.

22. The inspectors saw the documents that express the College's understanding of its corporate life, covering the appropriate categories of gender, ethnicity and disability access. This material is presented appropriately, and is available to the whole range of people who need access to it. The statements on intention and practice in the various categories appear to us to be in line with the stated aims and objectives of the College.

23. The inspectors were glad to see that issues of gender, ethnicity and other questions of natural justice are well addressed, both in language and in practice within the College.

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

24. Evidence was seen, both in paperwork, and in the practices of the College, that the relationships between the members of the College are well managed. The inspectors were particularly impressed to see the ways in which ethnic diversity was negotiated, and is clearly understood as offering learning possibilities, both in formal teaching contexts, and in the encouragement of informal contacts. They also noted with approval the deliberate gender inclusion that is practiced both in assigning roles and in presumed behaviour.

25. However, it was noted that the building is not easily accessible. The inspectors recognise the efforts being made by the College to address this, and affirm the adjustments which are being made – the movement of classes to rooms that are accessible, for example – but the current situation is less than ideal. They, particularly note that the library is not presently accessible to wheelchair users, or those with limited mobility.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that access to the library be made available to people with impaired mobility.

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to D, Community and Corporate Life.

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.

26. Worship on Mondays to Thursdays is in the chapel, which is just large enough for those who attend and has flexible space which can be extended by means of a sliding door. This, however, diminishes the participation of those sitting in that recess. Attention needs to be paid to the way in which the space is used to enable all to participate. There is a ramp up to the door so that access is possible for wheelchair users and for those with limited mobility wheelchair access, and access by those of limited mobility, is possible.

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

27. The inspectors were able both to see the documentation detailing the policy for communal worship, and to take part in the corporate worship of the College on four mornings. The worship in which they shared took a variety of forms, reflecting the variety of worship found in Baptist churches.

28. The inspectors recognise that there is a range of worship style and practice within the chapel over the week. However, they also became aware that there is, what one of the chaplains referred to as “a default position”, especially on a Monday, the day on which most students are in College. The inspectors would encourage the chaplain to explore ways in which the breadth of practice during the week might be more reflected on a Monday when the majority are present, believing this to be important in helping students explore the range of worship styles and practices among Baptists, and also in being more inclusive of the whole of the large and diverse community on a Monday.

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

29. While it is hard to talk about “authorized” forms of worship among Baptists, the inspectors read material, and observed classes in which the spirituality, theology and the practice of leading worship in Baptist churches was under consideration. There was careful attention to the theology of the sacraments and occasional services, and students were encouraged to reflect on the extempore forms of worship that is part of Baptist practice.

30. In student portfolios there was evidence of students’ involvement in ecumenical worship within their placements. In class discussion the differences between Baptist patterns and assumptions, and those of some of the charismatic and Black-led churches were raised, leading to consideration of differential practices and attitudes reaching well beyond the normal scope of ecumenical contacts. This level of engagement, and the way in which it is handled, is particularly impressive. Over the year there is a programme of worship which intends to introduce the students to a range of resources in worship.

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

31. The expectation that students will participate in these ‘core times in the spiritual life of the community’ is stated in the General Student Handbook as critical to the sustaining of the College’s existence as a worshipping community. During the period of the inspection, the majority of students did attend worship in the chapel. The reflection group tutors would note students who habitually miss worship, and would take action if necessary. Those students, particularly those on the counselling course, who belong to other living faiths or of no faith commitment however, are invited to attend worship, but are not required to attend.

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.

32. In the pastoral material given to the students there is encouragement to students to think about the tensions between leading and worshipping. The inspectors also heard in conversation with students, who are on placement as pastors of churches, the recognition that part of the importance of attending College was the opportunity to be led in worship. The inspectors would encourage the College to help students to explore this further, and to bear it in mind as part of the mutual commitment inherent in leading worship in chapel.

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.

33. There is a clear policy on training in leading worship. Students are asked to lead services and to make music on a rota basis, although feedback on such participation is not a part of formal assessment. The College relies on supervising ministers to train the students to lead worship within their placements.

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.

34. This is mainly carried out in the student's placement churches where the responsibility for oversight rests with the appointed supervisor many of whom also serve as Baptist Union mentors. An additional check on this is exercised by the Field Placement Tutors each of whom is responsible for placements in a defined area. In addition the Placement Co-ordinator arranges Supervisor Training Days

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

35. There was evidence, especially in the student portfolios of careful reflection on the leading of worship, and of tutors' feedback to students on their written submissions, as well as after observation of their practice in the local church. Students also reported to the inspectors their appreciation of the feedback offered both by tutors and supervisors and field tutors in visiting their placements.

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

36. Written comments on student sermons were found in the student portfolios which the students found helpful, and the inspectors also heard of the importance of the verbal feedback, offered by staff on performance, content and process, which were again considered constructive even when critical. The fact that the majority of those who are in formation for ministry are in Church-based placements severely restricts the possibility of peer review, though peers do share experiences within the reflection groups

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to 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.

37. Whilst there is no single 'Baptist' theology of ministry, the denomination looks for the training of candidates for Baptist ministry to be based on the 'Core competencies' recognized as those skills which are expected of all ministers. All students are aware of these 'core competencies', which are to be found in the General Student Handbook.

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.

38. The fundamental ethos of the College puts great value on the necessity of integrating ministerial, personal and spiritual formation within the context of education and appropriate life-long learning. The common life and the practice of the institution encourages students in Christian discipleship. The inspectors were impressed by the way that the staff nurtured each student's growth in discipleship and self-awareness as well as in academic study. The modelling by staff of these qualities in their own lives is a significant part of this, and the inspectors want to commend and encourage this.

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.

39. The College is clearly and self-consciously Baptist, and in both practice and teaching, the nature of being Baptist, and the development of this tradition, are carefully reflected. The breadth of Baptist life is also echoed, though it is recognised that, while this is a never-ending search, more might be done. The breadth of the experiential context of the students, the inclusion of students from others traditions and the conversations that emerge as a result, is an important and well-recognised asset in understanding other ways of being church. The inclusion of ministers from other traditions on the staff in a variety of ways also deepens this connection with other branches of the church. The fact that in the week following the inspection, there was to be a Reflection Week, which would include a Quiet Day, led by an Anglican Diocesan Bishop, was very welcome.

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

40. In the handbook there are to be found details of the processes that are available for students to be given appropriate guidance and supervision. Two inspectors met with the chaplains and heard about their commitment to and

practice of pastoral care for individuals, which was warmly reciprocated by students by their comments in the group meetings and individually underlining both their availability and their modelling of pastoral care

41. Whilst the nature of spiritual direction is explained at various points in the course, this is not well known, nor well-used, within the Baptist tradition. It is nevertheless important for those going into pastoral ministry that they are made aware of and encouraged to access resources and disciplines that will help to sustain their ministry. Since what is known in other denominations as 'spiritual direction' is not a common practice among Baptists (although the practice of having a spiritual director is growing) it is important that students understand the importance of an appropriate discipline and are encouraged to use this within the normal contours of Baptist practice and identity. It should, however be noted that the Revd Roy Searle, leader of the Northumbria community, serves the College as an associate tutor (spiritual companionship). He leads regular College retreats and makes himself available for spiritual direction.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the College is more intentional in alerting and enabling students to seek spiritual direction within an appropriate Baptist framework.

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.

42. The policies of the College give evidence of the intention to enable students to engage with wider traditions and the teaching in spirituality that inspectors observed supported these intentions. The chaplains offer students the possibility to work with them on any personal issues that emerge. This support is also available from other tutors, and from supervisors and mentors in placement situations. Reflection groups, which include all students, facilitate fellowship as well as providing opportunity for prayer, discussion and support. These groups also offer space to consider directly the integration between pastoral experience and College work. However both observation, and conversations with students and staff indicated that some reflection groups work better than others. Those that work most effectively are those in which there is a structured agenda, at least in the first year of training when students are unfamiliar with each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that those reflection groups that consist of part-time students should have a more structured agenda, to enable more fruitful interaction and that those who have not previously led a reflection group be given training in the various ways in which this may be undertaken.

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.

43. The College has a clear policy, in line with that of the Baptist Union, in supporting life-long learning, and this was evidenced by the way the College worked out its relationships with, and sustained its former students in pastoral correspondence which was evidenced in the way such students were remembered in the College's cycle of prayer. A good number of former students return to do postgraduate work at a variety of levels.

44. The Centre for Continuing Development in Ministry, which is a collaborative venture between the College and the Claybury Trust, an ecumenical organisation, is one example of ways in which the College also provides resources for continuing development. Since many of the former students of the College have no library facilities readily accessible to them the inspectors would encourage the College to publicise more explicitly the availability of the library facilities to former students, especially on days when the College is not busy with undergraduate presence'.

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.

45. The expectation of the cultivation of personal spirituality is present in the declared policies, and worked out both in the modelling of the staff and in the shape of the college week and year – regular corporate prayer, and times during the year for reflection and retreats. The students are introduced, and encouraged to reflect on the Baptist Union guidelines for appropriate ethical living.

The inspection team has confidence with regard to 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, especially libraries, and will look at samples of students' written work. They should report on the full range of educational activities of the inspected institution including provision for other types of ministries and for independent students and auditors.

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

46. In the past decade all Baptist Colleges have adopted congregation-based training alongside College-based training, and this forms the context for the majority of ministerial students. Many ministerial students are already serving as ministers in churches while studying at the College, so that for them the change from College to the post-College period is less marked than in the 'pre-ordination' and 'post-ordination' categories which apply in other denominational contexts. In keeping with the BUGB processes for accreditation, the College is responsible for supervising programmes of study for newly accredited ministers (NAMs) who settle in the region; not all of whom have necessarily been trained through the College. The programme of study or directed reading is appropriately designed to meet the particular need of the NAM concerned, and linked to their experience of ministry, focusing on ongoing formation. The BUGB core competencies document remains foundational in this process.

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.

47. Due to the pattern of study and practice intrinsic to Church-based training, there is always the need to establish a balance between academic, practical and formational training, evidence for which was found from documentation and visits. The documentation outlined forms of teaching and learning relevant to differing student cohorts. The inspectors witnessed good evidence of applying the subject matter of the course to student needs, modelling good practice of teaching and learning together.

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

48. The inspectors were impressed by the course content. The aims of each module, the outline, forms of assessment and bibliographies and other resources, were well set out. Classes and lectures were clearly delivered with tutors often using illustrations or making applications that were contextually situated in ministry and mission. In one module in pastoral theory and practice, the literature paid insufficient attention to recent developments and contributions from feminist, liberation and ethnic contexts.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that all modules, but especially those in pastoral theory and practice, review their bibliographies to represent the most up to date developments in the field.

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

49. The inspectors were able to examine the documentation of many of the courses taught on the various programmes. They also attended a wide range of lectures and related training events. They were impressed by both the content of the courses and the quality of teaching. The presentation of material was matched with the expectation of student engagement to explore the subject more. Of particular note was the high quality of the counselling course, available to students and partners at an introductory level, though not a formal part of the ministerial formation process.

50. It is noted, however, that if the counselling profession, within the context of enhanced self-regulation, adopts foundation degree status as the entry standard for accredited counselling, this will require significant changes and staff/time input to upgrade existing courses. The College is advised of the prudence of investing some paid staff time and expertise in the coming two years to explore this possibility.

51. A very high standard was also demonstrated by an associate tutor delivering the world faiths module.

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

52. The educational methods employed were a combination of the didactic and the reflective. The style or form varied from seminar to seminar often reflecting the nature and content of that seminar. There was a sufficiently good balance of methods used.

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

53. The inspectors saw demonstrated a frequent use of small groups, pairs, skills practice with observation (peer and tutor).

- 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.*

54. Detailed samples of student work were available to all inspectors and they can attest to the breadth and depth of training that encompasses academic, spiritual and formational areas.

Recommendation 7

We recommend (a) that the impact of their feedback on modules be reflected back to students, and the changes in teaching and in structures that take place be communicated to them, and (b) that where appropriate, students are informed of feedback given by other students.

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

55. Student work also revealed clear, detailed and informative feedback through published assessment criteria from tutors to aid the student in further development. These are to be found in the student handbook.

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

56. The new library resources available to staff and students are very good, offering a healthy learning environment. The librarian was singled out by many students as unfailingly informative and helpful. The librarian is in touch with other theological College librarians, keeping abreast of developments elsewhere and managing the budget well within the wider financial constraints. *Spurgeon's Online*, the College's programme dealing with computer-based learning, is dealt with in a separate section. IT is, however, a problem in some areas of the College, with little Wifi access due to the nature of the location and building, as well as budget constraints. This could become a problem as more students use laptops in a lecture context.[Subsequent to the inspection Wifi availability has been extended to most areas of the college] However, access is available and lecture notes, PowerPoint's etc. are made available to students after the lecture.

57. The Church-based and College-based students are all involved in placements ranging from 2-3 years. These provide many opportunities for practical learning and reflection in terms of ministerial formation and development. This learning is supported by a structure of supervisors, mentors and field tutors. The mentors, supervisors and field tutors with whom the inspectors met, were thoughtful and aware of the tensions in some contexts of a senior minister who was the student's supervisor also being their

line-manager. They believed this dual relationship was an opportunity to learn about the complexity of ministry. In cases where there had been a breakdown of relationship, a mentor had been appointed, or in more critical cases, the student moved to a better learning context.

58. The inspectors recognize the very heavy work loads all members of staff, for congregation-based training is known to be labour intensive, a matter treated in detail later in the report

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

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 in place on how the curriculum integrates theory and practice and should communicate it to students.*

59. There is a clear policy on the integration of theory and practice which is communicated through the variety of modules offered, and in the way in which the modules are constructed. This is particularly true of the module 'Professional Ministry and Practice (PMP)'.

60. Spurgeon's College sees ministry as a process of discovering gifts and abilities and integrating academic theories into the practice and delivery of ministry. All students, it is hoped, should become competent practical theologians able to sustain their ministry and mission in the contemporary context of a multicultural society. Much of the teaching observed was 'academic' in the sense that the students were engaging with biblical texts, points of doctrine, the place of the sacraments within the Baptist ethos, to name just a few. In every case though there was a sub-text of practicality in the sense that explicit and implicit connections were made between theology, biblical study and practice. During the inspection the BD Level 6 students who were taking the course 'Transforming Ministry and Mission' visited the detention centre at Gatwick Airport and were able to discuss issues of immigration and asylum-seeking – a clear connection between theory and practice. The relationship of theory to practice was most apparent in the PMP module where a three-year cycle takes the student through practical issues of ministry such as chaplaincy, managing stress in themselves and others, ministry at the occasional offices, and lessons in leadership, to name just some of the topics. The inspectors were impressed as they perused (inspected) some of the files which contained reflection on the practice of ministry, and the collection of resources which would help the student when

he/she embarks on full-time ministry and their growth into the core competencies and found the grades given realistic.

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

61 Placements are of paramount importance in facilitating the integration between theory and practice. The Church-based students spend two/three days per week in College but then have a three day per week pastorate in a church which might be a considerable distance away. For students working within a team, the practice of reflection on their ministry and its marriage with their academic work seemed to integrate reasonably well. For those students who are in a sole pastorate, the integration was harder and one or two with whom the inspectors spoke, seemed isolated and without sufficient support, although a local minister is appointed as a supervisor. The College-based students were in a somewhat different position, in that they were expected to be in their placement church every other Sunday and to have involvement in a mid-week activity. For them the block placement of four weeks in the summer was especially valuable and during this time they had the help and support of the minister of the placement church in their reflection and integration of theory and practice.

62 Both the College-based and the Church-based students remain in the given placement for three years. While a College-based placement gives the student a three-year experience in one particular church situation, he/she is also invited to preach in a number of other churches. This was reflected in the sermon outlines and comments given in the PMP files. The Church-based students have a somewhat different experience in that they are the pastor during the three year period, and since they spend more time in their pastorate, inevitably gain a wider experience of ministry, including some knowledge and reflection on occasional offices. However, unless he/she chooses the chaplaincy module, the student will have little experience of other forms of ministry. By contrast those who choose to take the Chaplaincy module in their final year will have a placement in a hospital, hospice, prison or town centre. The mission placement in Brazil, organised through BMS World Mission, proved highly informative, formative and life-changing for some students

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the College considers the possibility of both the College-based and the Church-based students being exposed to a greater range of placement experience.

63. There are a number of Field Placement Tutors who oversee the placements, but where the student's placement is as part of a team ministry the student is generally supervised by the Senior Minister of the church, who is therefore both their line manager and regarded by College as the placement supervisor. This does sometimes lead to problems of supervision and on

those occasions an independent mentor is appointed. Where the student is the sole pastor of the placement church then a senior minister in a neighbouring church is appointed as supervisor. Students and tutors both commented on the complexity of the Church-based supervisory context, noting some lack of clarity as to the respective roles to be undertaken by supervisors, mentors and field placement tutors.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that greater clarity in role and responsibility be established for those with whom students are placed.

H.iii *The institution should demonstrate how it is enabling 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.*

64. The College population contains not only candidates training for Baptist ministry but also some from independent, charismatic and Black-led church communities who also represent the cultural outlook and linguistic practices of the communities from which they come. This is of great benefit to all the students, helping them to interpret the world to the church as well as the church to the world. This was evident through observation in listening to student discussions in class, and in the written work inspectors read.

The inspection team has confidence with qualifications with regard to 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.

65. Each Baptist College has a large degree of autonomy in its staff appointments. There is much less consultation therefore with sponsoring churches and partner institutions than might be found in other denominations. However the method of making appointments is clear where personal contacts and appropriate advertising are used to encourage applications, leading to a process of short-listing and interview, involving staff, students, external experts and governors.

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.

66. Each member of staff has an appropriate job description, with clear conditions of service and these are revised annually through a structured review process.

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.

67. The allocation of staff posts is such as to facilitate the delivery of the full range of modules taught by the College, as also to model a wide range of pastoral experiences.

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. (For Church of England Guidelines see Appendix E.)

68. The College attempts the complex balance of gender, ethnic, lay and ordained staff. Women and members of ethnic groups are underrepresented in the full-time positions, although this has been addressed to some extent by the forthcoming appointment of a lecturer in Practical Theology who is both female and Jamaican. This area requires ongoing review.

69. The role of associate tutors is more difficult to discern as some associate tutors, such as those involved in counselling are teaching at the College two days a week, but others visit the College much less frequently (giving an occasional lecture, conducting a retreat etc.) Given that the inclusion of associate tutors offers the potential to balance gender, ethnic and lay representation, a means of including them within the wider College and staff life could be valuable.

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the role of associate tutor be reviewed, and where there is a substantial contribution to the College, associate tutors become part of the review/appraisal process.

70. All teaching staff at the College carry a heavy work load. The committed engagement with students is clear, fitting with a model patterned by the principal. Field placement officers and supervisors are not formally part of the staff, but they do form an essential part of the formative training undertaken by both College and Church-based ministerial students. Supervisors and students spoke very highly of the support given through the Placement Co-ordinator. While there are handbooks available for supervisors, some students reported that when working with a senior minister in a Church-based context, their meetings were task-orientated rather than formative. In some cases mentors had been appointed to overcome any such difficulties. While there are inherent difficulties of being both a line manager and also being a supervisor, staff, students and supervisors appeared to be managing this well, noting that such dual relationships are commonplace in ministry and offer a learning opportunity.

1.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.

71. The College is concerned for the continuing professional development of its staff, making financial provision for them to attend at least one conference a year. (Full funding for a conference in the UK and a contribution to one overseas). Staff are also encouraged to write for publication and are not generally expected to be in attendance in College on a Friday. The College does not run events in July or August, allowing appropriate time for rest, recreation and research. Teaching staff are reviewed annually by the Principal. However the Principal's review is currently only conducted every two years and should be brought into line with other staff as an example of best practice.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the review/appraisal of the Principal be brought into line with the annual review of staff and continue as an example of best practice.

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

72. Staff are also encouraged to lead reflection groups, modelling a reflective spirituality, and to attend to their own spiritual development.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to 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.

73. The College is well served by a small band of dedicated ancillary staff whose strength is at the minimum viable for the efficient running of the College. Some tasks could be more speedily effected were the staffing more generous, but staff seem to be coping well given that, in any academic institution, there will be periods of greater and lesser demand. The increasing number of reviews in recent months has certainly increased the burden placed upon all the secretarial and administrative staff but they seemed to be managing this remarkably well – something made possible by the good community spirit that the Principal engenders in the College

J.ii The institution should establish and make known clear lines of responsibility and accountability for its administrative staff.

74. Lines of accountability and responsibility are clearly laid out and understood. The Business and Finance Manager is the line manager for all the ancillary staff save two, the Registrar and Assistant Registrar, who are line-managed by the Academic Dean. The newly appointed Business and Finance Manager is approachable and has created a good spirit amongst his team who are very devoted to the purposes of the College

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.

75. Recruitment is in line with good practice but the specialised nature of many of the appointments does not make for a large field of suitable applicants. Some of those in higher grade posts have been grown into a position where they can undertake greater responsibilities. Sample contracts were scrutinised. Regular appraisals are undertaken identifying what is needed for staff development, the cost of which is met by the College.

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

76. Those in secretarial/ administrative grades are involved in the way that the College's future is being shaped through regular meetings convened by the Business and Finance Manager. The small technical staff, in so far as they live (or will soon live) on site, with accommodation as part of their remuneration package, serve the College well and contribute to the decision-making about the College's future especially as far as the physical plant is concerned. Concern for ancillary staff can be seen in the way in which the retiring Finance Officer was farewell-ed, and the new one called into the governors' meeting for greeting and prayer. The number of cleaners has been reduced following a recent retirement and this behoves those who plan conferences and similar events etc to be sure that the housekeeper is properly advised of incoming groups or individuals well in advance to ensure that, with limited resources, she is not put under last minute pressure in preparing rooms.

77. The College should consider establishing some more formal calendar on which room requirements are registered. Its existence needs to be well-publicised with a requirement that academic colleagues use this for booking accommodation, and appropriate equipment/catering in advance, both for forthcoming events and incoming groups.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the College establishes a formal room booking system and ensures that all staff use this.

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

K Students

Inspectors will examine procedures for admission and suspension or dismissal, for assessing progress during training, for reporting to the sponsoring church, and for arranging first appointments.

- K.i *Written information for students about admission, welfare, complaints, disciplines, assessment, reporting to sponsoring churches and arrangements for first appointments should be publicly available.*

78. The written information for the students is available in the handbook. However, the inspectors were disturbed by the wordiness and impenetrability of the handbook which they believe to be important, in part because of the number of students for whom English is not their first language.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the handbook be rewritten and the material within it re-presented so that it is more accessible. It should also include a sample of the student contract.

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

79. The inspectors have seen evidence, in the handbook, and in the structure of the orientation week that the College works at compliance with its own policies, and those of the denomination.

- 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.*

80. The structures of the institution enable students to take an appropriate part in the life of the College, and evidence heard in conversation indicated that students take this seriously

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to 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.

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

81. The College is well-served by its effective financial, administrative and management structures which are well suited to the carrying out of the stated aims of the institution. It has recently changed its auditors and already has evidence that the new firm is engaging urgently with monitoring its financial planning and controls. The governing body embraces a good range of academic, pastoral and business experience, the latter reflecting leadership and practice in the secular world of finance, human resource administration, educational senior management, business promotion and the law. The governors are intent on ensuring that they embrace within their number not only such a range of appropriate skills but the right gender and ethnic representation.

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

82. Present and former students are represented on the Academic Board, the Quality Assurance Committee, the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Committee and the Health and Safety Committee (which is in process of formation) and the Council (appointed by 'Conference' of which they automatically become members when they graduate). For reasons of charity law it is not appropriate that present students be members of the Governing Body.

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.

83. There is evidence that both tutorial and ancillary staff are well able to fulfil their job descriptions and are properly resourced to fulfil the tasks with which they are charged, by the provision of the appropriate equipment, facilities and such training as is identified through regular appraisals. More provision could always be made but in a time of deficit budgeting the provision is as good as can be expected or afforded.

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

84. Appraisal systems for all the staff are properly in place.

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.

85. The College is well aware of its legal responsibilities with regard to fire prevention (and fire escapes, a new one having just been installed), health and safety, charity registration and immigration law. A new document, which in part reflects a policy statement available from the Baptist Union, dealing with safeguarding (although responsibilities for children are indirect rather than direct) was adopted by the Governors at its meeting during the inspection.

<p>The inspection team has confidence with regard to L, Governance, management, constitution and organisation.</p>

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.

86. The governing body has clearly identified its role in policy formation with clear lines of delegation in the areas of business planning, risk management, and financial policy. In all these areas the Principal and the Business and Finance Manager work closely with the College Treasurer and the Chairman of the Board of Governors, with sub committees of the Board to oversee such areas as Finance (including Investments), Building Developments, Income Generation (- an Income Generation Officer has been recently appointed), and Governance, with ad hoc groups to deal with such projects as from time to time need detailed scrutiny and investigation prior to decision-making by the governing body, or to oversee the implementation of a particular agreed undertaking once budgets have been set by the governing body.

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.

87. The governing body keeps a careful watch on risk management and carries out appropriate analyses. In particular there has been very careful analysis of income and expenditure. In the past deficits have been liquidated out of legacy income, but more recently this has been insufficient for this purpose, leading the governors to change to deficit budgeting rather than relying on legacies. Were there to be an end of year deficiency of the order of £100,000 the College could deal with this for at least five years. Last year's deficit was c £70,000, the previous year £103,000 but the year before that saw a surplus of £530,000 because of a property sale. The current year's deficit is predicted to be £100,000 which it is hoped may be reduced to about £70,000, Further time could be bought by the sale of off-site property, At the same time tight controls are exercised on all areas of expenditure including freezing a number of posts. The other major risk factor would be if a decision were taken at some future date by the University of Wales to cease to validate courses at Collaborative Centres. Even though there is no current indication that this might happen, by placing the D.Min programme with the University of Chester the College has already begun to develop relationships with another accrediting institution. At the same time student recruitment is carefully monitored. On a separate matter, the College has been informed by the Valuation Office that it will no longer be exempt from Business Rates. Following discussions with the Valuation Office, the College's liability has been established as around £2,200 per year following mandatory relief backdated to September 2009. The College has applied to Croydon Council for discretionary relief. Since the college does not receive any government funding for the teaching it offers, the raising of student fees is unlikely to affect the college adversely – rather university fees which have been lower will significantly overtake the charges the college makes.

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.

88, The College's Strategic Plan (2010-13) and Development Plan (2010-11) are sane and sensible and have had recently to be reshaped owing to an adverse decision on the application of VAT to its major building plans for the construction of an atrium linking the house, the library and the chapel together with new student accommodation. This has led to the need to rethink the building of on-site 'hall of residence' accommodation which unlike the purchase of off-site accommodation would not, the college has been advised by its professional advisers, significantly increase the value of the College site. Moreover money invested on site would be hard to realise whereas off-site property could be realised at a future date were the college to have the need to increase its liquid capital.

N

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

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.

89. Proper books of account are kept enabling day to day assessment to be made of the institution's assets and liabilities. A more determined attempt is now being made to secure the timely payment of student fees, with a pleasing reduction of the amount to be written off as bad debts.

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.

90. Budget planning and the checking of expenditure within the various budget heads for the current year is carried out with care and firmness with the quarterly preparation of management accounts and the regular reporting to the governing body which meets six times a year.

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.

91. Expenditure under specific budget headings is regularly checked. The need to cancel the Atrium Building has suggested the need for a major virement on the expending of funds, which has much engaged the governors who have given careful thought to the ways in which they might re-allocate funds which, it had been anticipated, would be used for a particular purpose, though there was no apparent mandate requiring these funds to be deployed in such a way. At the moment those funds are in a suspense account awaiting further decision by the governors who have demonstrated appropriate care and sensitivity with regard to those who have over the years generously supported the work of the College and who had recently in part provided the funds which it had hoped would have funded the Atrium project.

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.

92. With the appointment of a new Finance Officer the Governors authorised new bank mandates with various signatory responsibilities within appropriate limits, the principal signatories being the Finance Officer, the Business and

Finance Manager, the Principal and the Librarian. Payments of up to £1000 can be paid on a single signature, but payments over £1000 require two signatures. The only loan that the College has is an interest-free sum of £18,108 provided by the Carbon Trust, which the College budgets to repay over the next three years. Inspectors were not aware of any other loans or mortgages needing to be serviced.

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.

93. The governors are very conscious of the need to secure cost effectiveness. Staff remuneration is modest. The maintenance of the buildings is carried out by in-house staff wherever possible but for larger tasks the college goes out to external tender. When there has been opportunity to test internal staff costs for a project against external tenders it has always been very much to the advantage of the former. Such matters as catering and audit are frequently put out to re-tendering.

N.vi The inspectors should satisfy themselves that the institution provides cost effective education and training when compared to the costs of similar institutions.

94. The institution provides cost-effective education. The cost of the teaching is carefully monitored and a fee for each course established. Overall, as in most theological Colleges, this does not cover the cost of running the College, and has to be supplemented by the allocation of donor income. Some introductory courses especially in the Spurgeon's *Online* programme are deliberately subsidised as part of the College's recruitment policy. Efforts have, however, been made to keep on-line courses in step with the costs of on site learning.

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.

95. In so far as the institution is already deficit budgeting any costly recommendation would clearly add to the annual deficit or reduce the reserves available to cover such losses. However, the inspectors judge that the recommendations made can be carried out within the College's means.

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to 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.

96. The institution is solvent and is well able to cover three-months' expenditure from reserves.

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.

97. The inspectors have satisfied themselves that appropriate advice has been taken on VAT and PAYE liabilities.

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.

98. The accounts are held on the computer using an accounting package which is constantly backed up with the back-ups taken away for off site storage once a week by the College's IT Consultant, meaning that the maximum period of risk for the loss of accounting information is five days.

**The inspection team has confidence with regard to 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.

99. Spurgeon's College is set in South London, about eight miles from Central London and a mile from Croydon. There is plenty of car parking available and easy access, by public transport, to most areas of the country.

100. There are six lecture rooms, all attractive and well-equipped with ICT provision. The students reported that Wifi is not available in all lecture rooms. However, the decision not to make Wifi available in all lecture theatres is a

policy matter because the tutors very deliberately do not want students to be accessing material during a lecture. By contrast all illustrations, lecture outlines etc are made available after a lecture by putting them on the web. One of the lecture rooms has recently been enlarged and refurbished which was essential given the large number of students attending the College on a Monday. The library is spacious and well-equipped and has recently been refurbished, such that the librarian has sufficient room to add to the collection for a period of around ten years.

101. The dining room, staff room and office accommodation are small but adequate but the student common room was described to us by one student as being 'like a waiting room.' The room has been freshly decorated and plans are in place to replace chairs and carpets to make the room more comfortable.

102. The residential accommodation was described as 'basic but cheap'. There is a programme of refurbishment in place and the most urgent work will be completed during this academic year. There is a mixture of single rooms, shared rooms and flats: bathrooms and kitchens are shared and there is a small sitting room for the use of the resident student. Very few students are resident for the whole of their time at Spurgeon's but many spend one or two nights a week in College to reduce the stress of travelling.

103. The kitchens are adequate and the catering is franchised out and provides a basic breakfast and hot and cold meals in the middle of the day. The students much appreciate the standard of the food with which they are presented.

104. The institution faces significant challenges for students with disabilities. There was the hope and expectation that there could be within the atrium project such enhancements as the installation of a lift that would take students to the first floor. The College had been advised that much of this project would be VAT-free but this turned out not to be the case and so the project became too expensive to undertake. The inability to proceed with this scheme has only recently occurred and so replacement strategies are still in an early stage of development. However, the governors have agreed to create a covered walkway which will link all the buildings at ground level and thereby the lift at the front of the college would also provide access to the library with a new disabled entrance created at one side accessed from the new covered walkway. In addition a toilet for disabled people will be installed on the ground floor during this academic year and other problems of disabled students such as access to first-floor lecture rooms will be managed by altering the locations of lectures etc as the need arises. For auditory-impaired students the chapel has a loop system and the College provides a digital listener for lectures

105. There are currently two maintenance staff and a groundsman employed by the College. The latter is to retire in May and the other maintenance staff will take over the care of the grounds. The two maintenance staff are well able to do minor building work – decorating, plumbing, electrical work but major work is put out to tender.

P.ii There should be an awareness of perceived inadequacies, and a policy and programme for addressing them.

106. 'The College possesses distinctive, interesting and valuable buildings. It is fully aware of their inadequacies and limitations and the building work needing to be done. The governors have drawn up a realistic schedule of alterations and refurbishment which is planned for the next five years. The inspectors are strongly of the opinion that this schedule of alterations and refurbishment needs to be followed through with some urgency.

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

Appendices

I. SPURGEON'S *ONLINE*

107. This has been a major innovation in the College's programme over the last three years. The College now has an introductory module available, followed by Certificate, Diploma and a number of modules for the BTh/BD degrees and some Master's degrees. The quality of the module production is good and the system robust. There are good systems in place to secure quality tuition and to ensure that *Online* tutors keep to their contracts, e.g attending training sessions, turning round marking in timely fashion, standardising levels of marking, etc. The system has built in checks to ensure that the study is properly accomplished for example, students have to complete learning journals/portfolios as well as the normal assignments. These develop more sophistication according to level, for instance at higher levels they include such items as reviews of reading'. These together with written assignments are regularly checked for quality. Those concerned with administering this course are well aware of the potential difficulties of this kind of activity and have built in appropriate checks on for example such things as plagiarism. Whilst there is a separate cohort of on-line students probably numbering some 400 students the material is also available to full-time students, for whom tutors also post the equivalent of hand-outs and bibliographies on-line. Accordingly students can test their skills before entering College and complete some modules before full registration and indeed complete modules that they have missed. The need to relate charges for *Online* modules to that for in-house teaching may need revisiting as some of the charges, e.g. that for a dissertation which is priced at c£900 seems excessive. The programme is proving particularly helpful in training lay leadership, and is providing a challenging programme of work for some newly accredited ministers.

Breakdown of Open Learning Student Numbers:

Undergraduate: BD	14
Diploma	27
Certificate	75
Certificate (Preaching)	12
Single Module Only	540
Via Nazareth Centre for Christian Studies	<u>14</u>
	682
MTh Applied Theology	53
MTh Applied Theology (Ghana)	5
MTh Preaching	33
MTh Radical Free Church Movements	<u>10</u>
	101

Additionally, the Director reports over 6,000 site visits from 88 countries during the last month. (February 5th to March 7th)

2. OVERSEAS STUDENTS AND THEIR VISA STATUS

108. The College has been proactive in its concern to relate visa legislation both to the time a student is studying, and also to any desire they may have to seek settlement in a Baptist Church in this country. This is of critical importance as a prior requirement for those seeking registration as ministerial students, that is to say the College has been active to take the process back one stage before an application is made to College. In this they have worked closely both with the Baptist Union and the London Baptist Association. At first sight the College appears to have a large number of overseas students – some 43 in fact but when you take out those who already have British Citizenship (14) or residence permits (5), those from other EEA countries and their spouses (5), overseas part-time students, studying either individually or in cohorts (the Nazareth Centre for Christian Studies students) and those undertaking other distance learning programmes (7), those who need special consideration reduce to three undergraduates and seven postgraduates whom the College sponsors and concerning whom it has been in regular contact with the Borders Agency seeking advice on proper procedures. The work of the College has been scrutinised by the British Accreditation Council for a number of years without identification of weakness: ‘A College well-managed with attention to detail’, ‘an excellent institution which provides top-rate academic and professional theological education.’ The Inspectors inspected the appropriate student files and registers and found them well-kept, and had confidence that this area of work was firmly under control.

List of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

We recommend that

(a) the College develop specific essay titles or training portfolios that focus specifically on the areas of church planting and evangelism; and

(b) that students applying primarily because of their interest in evangelism and church planting should receive a clear outline of how these subjects are addressed within the generic modules and modes of training.

Recommendation 2

We recommend that the College consider improving the administrative resourcing of the *Equipped to Minister* course.

Recommendation 3

We recommend that access to the library be made available to people with impaired mobility.

Recommendation 4

We recommend that the College is more intentional in alerting and enabling students to seek spiritual direction within an appropriate Baptist framework.

Recommendation 5

We recommend that those reflection groups that consist of part-time students should have a more structured agenda, to enable more fruitful interaction and that those who have not previously led a reflection group be given training in the various ways in which this may be undertaken.

Recommendation 6

We recommend that all modules, but especially those in pastoral theory and practice, review their bibliographies to represent the most up to date developments in the field.

Recommendation 7

We recommend (a) that the impact of their feedback on modules be reflected back to students, and the changes in teaching and in

structures that take place be communicated to them, and (b) that where appropriate, students are informed of feedback given by other students.

Recommendation 8

We recommend that the College considers the possibility of both the College-based and the Church-based students being exposed to a greater range of placement experience.

Recommendation 9

We recommend that greater clarity in role and responsibility be established for those with whom students are placed

Recommendation 10

We recommend that the role of associate tutor be reviewed, and where there is a substantial contribution to the College, associate tutors become part of the review/appraisal process.

Recommendation 11

We recommend that the review/appraisal of the Principal be brought into line with the annual review of staff and continue as an example of best practice.

Recommendation 12

We recommend that the College establishes a formal room booking system and ensures that all staff use this.

Recommendation 13

We recommend that the handbook be rewritten and the material within it re-presented so that it is more accessible. It should also include a sample of the student contract.