



24 November 2006

Mrs Gaynor Goodman  
Churchmead Church of England (VA) School  
Priory Way  
Datchet  
Slough  
SL3 9JQ

Dear Mrs Goodman

## MONITORING INSPECTION OF CHURCHMEAD CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) SCHOOL'S INADEQUATE SIXTH FORM

### Introduction

Following our visit to your school on 14 and 15 November 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the sixth form was judged to be inadequate in February 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

### Evidence

We met with the headteacher and senior staff, a school governor, and the headteacher of Slough Grammar School. In addition, meetings were held with representatives from the local authority (LA), the Learning and Skills Council and the Oxford Diocese. We also met with a group of Year 12 students and observed lessons at Churchmead and at Slough Grammar School. We also examined a range of documents relating to the sixth form.

### Context

Churchmead School secured voluntary aided status in September 2002, and at the same time launched its sixth form provision with the opening of purpose-built accommodation. There were 23 students in September 2002; in 2003 there were 46, and in 2004 the cohort was 40. The February 2005 inspection judged the school to be providing a satisfactory standard of

education overall, 'though it provides unsatisfactory value for money due to an inadequate sixth form that fails to attract sufficient students'. The school did not recruit to the sixth form in September 2005, and focused on ensuring that the five students in Year 13 could complete their courses satisfactorily. In this academic year there are just 9 students in the sixth form, all of them in Year 12.

### Achievement and standards

Comparisons with national data are not meaningful for such a small number of students. Four students entered for two or more GCE A level examinations in June 2006. Their results were good especially when compared with their prior attainment.

### Personal development and well-being

Students work hard in lessons and show strong commitment to their studies. They complete a good deal of work at home in their own time. They have very good attitudes to learning. There is no provision of physical education (PE) and this, coupled with the fact that the opportunities for sport within school are very limited, means that they are not supported well enough in leading healthy and active lifestyles. There are also few opportunities for sixth formers to be involved in projects with the local community or with pupils lower down the school. Sixth formers have little involvement with the school council and they do not have access to the sporting, cultural and personal development opportunities that are provided in most good sixth forms.

Attendance is monitored effectively and to date this year is good.

Progress on the area for improvement identified at the inspection in February 2005

- Attendance is too low - good progress

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers follow students' progress carefully and make sure they understand what they need to do in order to improve. Students appreciate the individual attention that being in small groups provides but they and their teachers are aware of the limitations that this also brings to stimulating experiences in the classroom. Teachers

know in detail the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Assessment and marking are accurate, regular and supportive.

The sixth form curriculum based at Churchmead is extremely limited. It neither provides the range of subjects nor the level of courses needed to be fully inclusive. There are no specific level 1 or 2 courses available and there are no vocational courses available at Churchmead. The sixth form fails to attract sufficient students even with the very recent collaboration with Slough Grammar School. The curriculum based at Churchmead is less varied than it was at the time of the inspection in February 2005. The curriculum does not satisfactorily provide for key skills and physical education. Students study personal, social and health education (PSHE) within their tutorial programme but there is no provision of formal information and communication technology (ICT). The wider curriculum enrichment available in larger sixth forms is not provided and its development has been hampered by the very small size of the sixth form. Only nine students have chosen advanced level courses and are registered at Churchmead. Of these, only four are involved in the collaboration with Slough Grammar School.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- The curriculum is poor; it neither attracts sufficient students nor provides an adequate range of enrichment activities to promote improved key skills, including academic skills and social skills – inadequate progress.

### Care guidance and support

Procedures for ensuring students' safety and welfare, including child protection, are good. Students feel supported well and this high standard of care helps students to concentrate upon their work and achieve well. Effective performance monitoring helps tutors to identify students who are underachieving quickly and address their various needs. Parents are involved at certain points in the year when students' progress is reviewed formally.

### Leadership and management

During 2005/06 the school did not enrol new students to the sixth form, pending a decision on its future. After initial interest by some 25 pupils in Year 11, the sixth form was re-opened for Year 12 students in September 2006, in collaboration with Slough Grammar School. The detailed planning for this arrangement took place too late for effective marketing and promotion to

be carried out. There was a large over-estimation of the potential number of students enrolling. The first term started with just two students. There are now nine students, three having arrived at half term. Two students from Slough Grammar attend AS level media studies at Churchmead School. There have been a series of meetings and a draft plan for a formal compact in 2007 has been produced and there will also be a joint prospectus enabling students to apply to this joint provision. There is a high degree of commitment from both schools' senior managers to make the collaboration work effectively.

There were lengthy delays in deciding on the future of the sixth form. Since the previous inspection there has been no improvement to the sixth form curriculum. Development of, for example, vocational courses and level 2 courses below AS and GCE A level in the sixth form has been too slow. Although the new arrangements have provided a wider subject offer to local students, Churchmead School has been able to attract too few of its pupils into Year 12 and a significant number enrolled full time at Slough Grammar School and with other post 16 providers.

A new Head of Sixth Form was appointed from September 2006 on a temporary basis. The school provides effective support for the very small number of students in the sixth form, most of whom make very good progress.

Because of the low number of students, the expenditure exceeds income for the sixth form by a very significant amount. The very serious question of the sustainability of the financial investment in such a small sixth form is recognised. However the governing body has agreed to support the deficit pending another year's enrolments. The sixth form provides inadequate value for money. The school has received some additional financial support from the LA which has been spent largely on new equipment for ICT and art related subjects.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in February 2005:

- Leadership and management in the sixth form are unsatisfactory – inadequate progress

#### External support

The agreed plan of action between Churchmead and Slough Grammar School is supported by both governing bodies. All parties are aware of the importance of monitoring how many students enrol for the sixth form. The LA has provided some initial support for the school in improving its provision in

the sixth form but this specific support has tailed off over the last two terms. However the School Improvement Partner (SIP) has had a number of focused meetings with the school in which the sixth form was discussed.

### Main Judgements

Progress since the sixth form was identified as inadequate – inadequate

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – inadequate

### Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to develop the compact arrangements with Slough Grammar School to ensure the provision at Churchmead School attracts sufficient students.
- Ensure that the leadership team, governing body and local authority focus immediate attention on detailed planning for September 2007.
- Provide a range of curriculum enrichment activities to meet the personal and development needs of sixth formers
- Ensure the necessary development of new courses takes place, especially with regard to vocational and level 2 provision.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Learning and Skills Council, the Head of Learning & Achievement for Windsor and Maidenhead and the Oxford Diocesan Board.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Rhowbotham  
H M Inspector