



13 July 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 my visit to your school on 10 July 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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**

I met with the headteacher and senior staff, the chair and vice-chair of governors, and the headteacher of Slough Grammar School. In addition, meetings were held with representatives from the local authority, the Learning and Skills Council, and with the Oxford Diocese.

### **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 Ofsted inspection of the school in February 2005 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 decided wisely to put on hold any curriculum offer for Year 12 for September 2005, and to ensure that Year 13 students could complete their courses satisfactorily. Thus, this academic year just five students in Year 13 have been on roll.

### **Achievement and standards**

Given the low numbers of students in the sixth form, comparisons with national data are not meaningful. The February 2005 inspection judged that there were too many unclassified results at AS level in 2004, and it remained the case in 2005 that at both AS and A level there were too many students not achieving pass grades. However, a number of students achieved A – E grades which indicated sound progress when measured against their attainment at GCSE.

As a result of good teaching, clear target setting and effective tracking of students' progress, together with the students' own diligent application to study, the school is rightly confident that target grades this summer at A level will be achieved. Such results, predominantly in the A – C range of grades, will mean that good progress has been made by most of the students. Their end-of-year reports highlight that this small group have applied themselves well to their courses, and have been prepared appropriately for entry into higher education and employment.

### **Personal development and well-being**

The Year 13 students have continued to show positive attitudes to their studies and the sixth form, and have made worthwhile contributions to the whole school. Their attendance has been good, and they have proved themselves well equipped for future study and the workplace. The school reports that they have been involved in making recommendations about the future direction of the sixth form.

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

- Attendance is too low – good progress.

### **Quality of provision**

While this small group of Year 13 students, ably supported by staff, have made good progress within significant constraints, it remains the case that the curriculum is poor; it neither attracts sufficient students nor provides an adequate range of enrichment activities to promote key academic and social skills. There is a common understanding that the sixth form provides

unsatisfactory value for money and that the current financial investment in post-16 provision is not sustainable.

## **Leadership and management**

During the autumn term 2005 and the spring term 2006, the headteacher, staff and governors undertook a serious review of post-16 provision at the school. A number of alternative ways forward was examined. The decision was made to relaunch the sixth form in partnership with a neighbouring school, under the name of the Churchmead Slough Grammar Compact. This enables Churchmead students in Year 11 to access a very wide range of courses based at Slough Grammar, while at the same time taking advantage of a number of level 3 courses based at Churchmead. Students from Slough Grammar will also be able to access Churchmead's courses in English Literature, Business Studies, Art & Design and Media Studies.

The school is clearly building on its proven strengths to present to students a modest curriculum offer, in the hope that this will begin to build community confidence in Churchmead's sixth-form. To date, about 25 applications for Year 12 have been received. There is evidently a strong willingness from both schools to expand gradually the range of courses on offer at Churchmead. Appropriate detailed planning in relation to timetables, transport and day-to-day operational matters has taken place. However, there is not yet a coherent protocol to support operational detail; equally vital, robust systems for monitoring and evaluation have yet to be agreed and written down in the interests of mutual accountability between the two schools.

The headteachers of both schools identified enthusiastically that the proposed partnership over post-16 provision could well lead to benefits for students and staff in other aspects of the schools' future planning of the curriculum for the 14 – 19 age range.

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

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

## **External support**

The agreed plan of action between Churchmead and Slough Grammar commands the support of both governing bodies, Windsor and Maidenhead Local Authority, the Learning and Skills Council and the Oxford Diocese. All parties are aware of the importance of monitoring how many students enrol

for the sixth form in September and keeping under close review the financial viability of the provision.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since the sixth form was identified as inadequate – satisfactory.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- agree well defined systems for governors and staff to monitor and evaluate the new provision.
- ensure clear lines of accountability for the management of students across the two schools, from September 2006.

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

Roy Blatchford  
**H M Inspector**