

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Helping children to thrive, achieve
and fulfil their potential



-  **PURSUING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**
-  **WORKING TOGETHER**
-  **PRIORITISING AREAS OF NEED**
-  **GROWING SCHOOLS**

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Chair of Methodist Schools Committee

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Looking to the future
2023 Methodist Schools
International Conference



WELCOME FROM REVD DR ROGER WALTON

Methodism has been involved in establishing and running schools since the 1740s. Now as then, we seek to support schools in helping all children flourish and grow to their full potential. In Methodist schools, we aim to provide education that is high quality, rounded, and sensitive to individual need. Through our schools, we also endeavour to support and strengthen the communities they serve.

The education sector is, however, very dynamic and driven by continual evolutions of policy and practice. In each new landscape, the Methodist Church has sought to play its part in the changing scene and to help its schools to be the best they can be. The current government desires that all state schools become academies and all academies belong to a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). The Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) is supporting all its schools, Methodist and those jointly sponsored with other Churches, through this transition.

Methodist independent schools are also facing rapidly changing and challenging times, especially as we move forward from the pandemic. Methodist schools, whether state, academy or independent share the same ethos, built on the

belief that every human is made in the image of God, unique, loved by God and that each can be helped to reach their full potential. In *Transforming Lives*, the schools' strategy paper adopted by the Methodist Conference in 2019, we set the ways we seek to nurture, support and develop our schools and to encourage all schools with whom we have links. This newsletter outlines the key parts of that strategy.

There is already much to be proud of in our schools. I hope the pages in this newsletter will just give you a brief insight into some of our successes and achievements, as well as our vision for the future; look out for future issues as the work of the Schools and the Trusts further develops and seeks to implement to objectives of *Transforming Lives*.



Revd Dr Roger Walton
Chair of Methodist Schools Committee

“Every human is made in the image of God, unique, loved by God and that each can be helped to reach their full potential.”

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT

THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST)



There are currently **18** independent schools linked in some way to MIST: Trust Schools (10), Associated Schools (3), Affiliated Schools (5).



There are over **10,000** pupils on roll in Methodist Independent Schools, as boarders and day pupils.



Two of the schools are for children of nursery and primary age only, two have pupils from 11-18 only and the rest **offer continuity of education** from 3 to 18.



In academic year 2020/21, Trust and Acquired schools provided **£5,440,000** in means-tested bursaries.

Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST)



Has responsibility for **66** Methodist maintained schools, educating approximately **15,000 children**.



26 of our schools are solely Methodist and the rest held in ecumenical partnership trust, most commonly (though not exclusively) with the Church of England. All are in the Primary phase.



These schools are based in **40** different Local Authorities and **18 Dioceses**.



All schools are subject to a SIAMS inspection, and they are all judged Good or Better.

Epworth Education Trust (EET)



There are currently **6** schools in EET with approximately **1,500 pupils** on roll in the schools.



The Trust is a mixed MAT enabling both Methodist and non-Methodist schools to join and is **available for all Methodist schools** to join. The first hub is based in the North West.



EET has a growing reputation as a **strong Trust**. It is high performing in both SIAMS and Ofsted.



The Trust is on a **trajectory of growth** and is developing a **national** reach.



SIAMS

The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework guides state-funded Methodist schools to live out a Christian vision, enable robust religious literacy and deal with contradictory convictions. This has historically led Methodism to be involved in education, as a means of providing a practical social expression of our convictions about discipleship and the nature of the human society. A similar scheme of peer review is being developed for MIST schools.

“The way the school develops pupils’ characters is impressive. Pupils take on leadership roles with pride and enthusiasm. Christian values shine through their work. Their passion and commitment to the vision manifests itself in them ‘Doing all the good they can, in all the ways they can’.”

Radcliffe Hall Church of England Methodist Primary School, SIAMS 2021

OUR STRATEGY TRANSFORMING LIVES

Our Transforming Lives Strategy builds on the work of the Education Commission (Methodist Conference 2012) and will provide a focus for our priorities over the next 10 years, encouraging us to grow our presence and extend our influence in children's education and the communities they serve as an expression of the gospel.

Our strategy has two major parts:

PART 1



**Engaging with schools
in our locality**

PART 2

**A specific strategy for
Methodist schools:**



Growing schools



**Pursuing educational
excellence**



**Developing a confident
Methodist ethos**



Working together



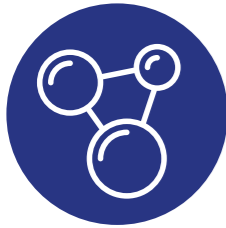
Prioritising areas of need

In the following pages you will see an overview of some of these key priority areas, as well as examples of the impact Methodist Schools are having in action.

“The demands we are facing as a school continue to shift and evolve. The days of being about the three “Rs” are long gone – and there is an ever-increasing focus on safeguarding and preventing radicalisation, as well as mental health and wellbeing. In addition, as has been brought out by the pandemic, there have been continuing rapid developments in technology, and now we deliver lessons in multiple ways. Expectations from parents are high, with what feels like a growing culture of complaint, grievance and the likelihood of challenging the authority that was once protected by expertise.”

Headteacher, Methodist School

ENGAGING WITH SCHOOLS IN OUR LOCALITY



It is impossible to set out all the work done by Methodist churches, ministers, youth and children's workers and volunteers in neighbourhood schools. There is a large number of Methodist people who engage tirelessly, with great creativity and selfless service in their local schools.

Many go into schools to lead or help with Collective Worship, and some churches provide chaplaincy teams for schools. Across the country, Methodists choose to be school governors, there are also many other ways that individuals share their expertise and interests for the benefit of local children. Churches act as hosts for a variety of school visitors and events, while a number of Methodist churches also host Early Years provision on their premises, offering real opportunities for synergy between church and school-based provision.

Following the Education Commission (2012), some districts have also successfully appointed District Education Officers or Committees to support those in education and to engage in issues facing schools and other educational establishments.

“Circuits and Methodist schools would mutually benefit from greater dialogue and engagement. Independently they have wisdom and lived experience that will enable each other to live out their calling and respond to some of the current needs of society... some of our schools are leading by example when it comes to good practice and pastoral care related issues such as human diversity, gender identity, wellbeing, and mental health awareness. Districts and circuits should be consulting with these schools and sharing in their expertise. Similarly, schools should be utilising the knowledge, skills and experiences of local congregations and developing mentoring schemes etc.”

Chaplain, Methodist school



CASE STUDY »

Some of the most creative work happens through partnerships between churches and schools. In one primary school, the local Methodists help facilitate a 'sleep out under the stars' night for Year 6 pupils. Another church works with a school to run a crib festival. Children receive worksheets to take home about the Nativity and they are asked to make cribs, which are displayed at the local church. During the pandemic, while traditional Christingle services were unable to take place, at **Gunnerside Methodist Primary School** in the Yorkshire Dales the local Reverend led a special classroom-based service for the children. The sessions explored both the Christmas story and the meaning of Christingle. Key Stage 1 pupils were also presented with a traditional candle to light at home, with many families lighting their candle together by their Christmas tree.

“Schools are now called upon to make an even greater contribution to the communities they are placed in. This will extend to caring for families as a whole rather than in a narrower experience of education. In particular mental health and wellbeing will extend to care for whole families – an area in which the church has a ministry.”

From a Superintendent Minister

GROWING SCHOOLS



Methodist schools have a small but significant place in the school system of England.

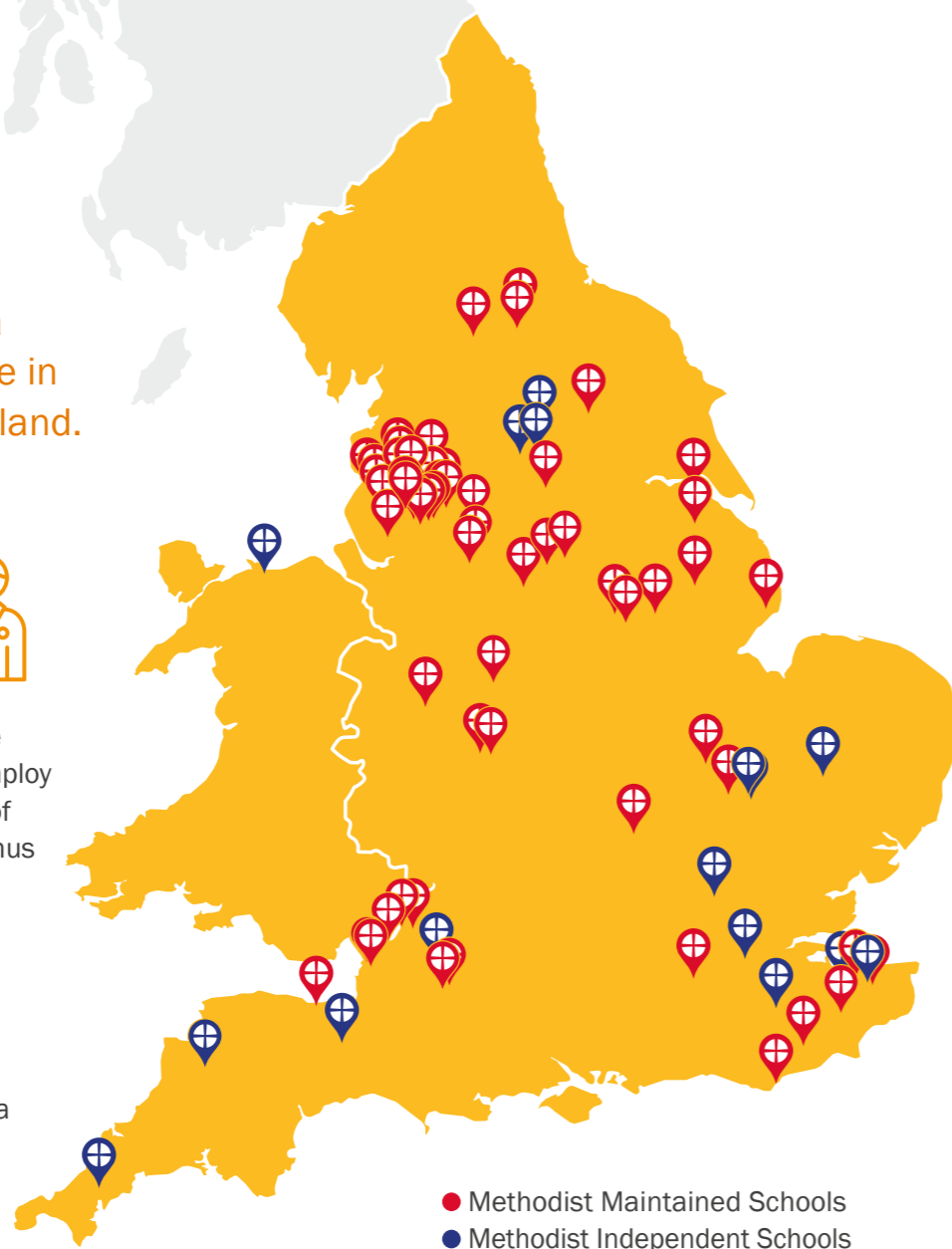


Through these schools we educate **25,000** children, employ thousands of staff (teaching and support) and thus reach a wider population (parents, grandparents etc) of well over

150,000.

The current changing landscape of schools' education, combined with a highly regarded reputation for the quality of education in Methodist schools, suggest that this is a good time to extend our presence in schools' education to reach more children and to benefit more lives through a distinctive Methodist educational provision. Of course, growth is not just the provision of more schools. It means sustaining, extending the size and influence of good schools and connecting schools for working together for school improvement, efficiency and effectiveness.

The proposal here is not to expand rapidly but at an appropriate pace, ensuring that the infrastructure is securely in place to support quality. Within five years we aim to extend our influence in strong strategic, responsible and sustainable ways.



● Methodist Maintained Schools
● Methodist Independent Schools

“Our school is the only connection most families have with the Christian way of life. We see our mission as being for the whole community, not just the children who come through our doors and we know that the Good News we tell reaches through the children to their families.”

Governor, Methodist school

ABOUT EPWORTH EDUCATION TRUST »

The Wesley Trust was established in 2017 as a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) to support any schools that wished to transfer to academy status. In 2020, it merged with Acorn Trust to establish the **Epworth Education Trust** (EET). There are now six schools within the Trust. The EET has been recognised by the Department for Education (DfE) as a place for vulnerable schools to be supported and has been granted sponsorship capacity for primary, secondary and special schools. It is anticipated that most growth through the addition of new schools will be through EET but there are also some limited opportunities for the group of independent schools to grow through selective mergers.

The Government have recently released the White Paper 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child'. A key aspect of this paper is the DfE decision to have all schools belong to a strong trust by 2030. The strength of EET is recognised by the DfE and they will play a key role in the realisation of this within Methodist Education.

“This moral imperative became the leading factor in the success of this merger, and the positive impact of the merger itself can be seen in the excellent work the trust is now undertaking with its academies and pupils.”

Regional Schools Commissioner



PURSuing EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE



Excellence in education is considerably more than high academic achievement. It means, firstly, an all-round education for all human flourishing.

In addition, excellence in education includes recognising and addressing the individual needs of all children, not only those who require specific education support but also those who are particularly gifted. It also entails enabling a growth in empathy, respect for diversity, ability to challenge injustice, the enjoyment of sport and outdoor education, creativity and the discovery and development of the spiritual dimension to human beings.

This also means that young people are equipped to tackle a changing world and to change the world. Change is always on the agenda and often in ways that we cannot predict or anticipate.

Technological advances, global pandemics and climate change require agility and adaptability in schools to respond to the ever-shifting world, this must be matched by an education that enables young people to navigate practical, ethical and moral dimensions of the emerging world. More than that, it must nurture in people the skills and confidence to play a part in the creation of a better, fairer, more just world.

“A strong commitment to Christian values, Methodist traditions and the development of the whole child underpins the work of the school. The school aspires to be ‘A Christian family where all can develop to their full potential’... The Christian ethos supports the children and their families so that barriers to learning are broken down and allows both pupils and their families to thrive.”

Westleigh Methodist Primary School
Leigh, SIAMS Inspection



CASE STUDY »

At **St Peter's Methodist Primary School**, Canterbury, children and staff held a 'Heroes for Homelessness' event in order to raise money for the homeless charity 'Porchlight'.

This was complemented by a Collective Worship session led by the local Reverend, which focussed on the topic of empathy, the importance of not judging people by their appearances and how to help others.

“The school's vision to ensure all children succeed is reflected in the inclusion policy. It welcomes children with a range of educational, emotional and behavioural needs. Leaders adapt the curriculum to motivate specific groups and progress is evident. Resources are allocated strategically, enabling vulnerable pupils to flourish.”

Hob Hill CE/Methodist Primary School
SIAMS 2019

DEVELOPING A CONFIDENT METHODIST ETHOS



Strategic support for developing a confident Methodist ethos is crucial in Methodist schools. Those involved in the life of a Methodist school need to understand the core Christian values and teaching as reflected in the Methodist ethos.

This enables schools to understand why social holiness and community engagement are vital: why, for example, Christian perfection encourages us all to be the best version of ourselves, and why prevenient grace teaches inclusion and the celebration of diversity.

If we are to be active in sponsoring schools, our schools must carry a distinctive Methodist ethos, regardless of their status as maintained, independent or academy. For this purpose, the Methodist Schools Committee works with all three Trusts to nourish and strengthen the schools' Methodist ethos.

Through its own voice, and working with other faith partners, Methodism (through its school officers) is also able to contribute to the national picture in religious education. This contributes to the wider experience of children in learning about religion, well beyond the schools themselves.

CONVERSATION WITH PUPILS AT METHODIST SCHOOLS »

What does it mean to be a Methodist school?

“God is always with us and he won't let us give up. Being in a Methodist school lets us know this.”

How would someone coming to your school know you are a Methodist school?

“We live out our vision in our school and we are a second family that really cares for each other.”

How can we use the John Wesley rule?

“By doing all the good we can to all the people we can as often as we can.”



WORKING TOGETHER



Working in partnership with local churches and circuits is an important priority for Methodist schools. This requires districts, circuits and churches to actively embrace the schools as part of their mission.

It also entails schools identifying what they can contribute to the Methodist community – this is not just a matter of mutual benefit but relates to the wider community that they serve.

Many of our schools are located in areas where people experience significant levels of social and economic vulnerability, and our schools often find opportunities to act as hubs for wellbeing and personal development for their wider community. From supporting food banks, to providing safe space for those suffering domestic violence and working with refugees and asylum seekers – this role is far reaching.

Following recommendations of the Education Commission (2012), close working and mutual support has developed between independent schools and those within the state system. This is an exciting model in our current landscape, which can enable the sharing of resources, staff development and innovation. Opportunities for working together with new partners on the international scene have also arisen.



CASE STUDIES »

At **Kent College**, Pembury, students and staff have a long-standing commitment to supporting their local hospice, Hospice in the Weald, in whatever way they can. Most recently, this included supporting a #heartsformyhospice campaign, raising funds for this vital local service.

At **Kingswood School**, Bath, a dedicated scholarships and bursaries programme offers financial assistance for families where it is felt that a particular child would benefit from the type of education Kingswood provides. This includes the John Wesley Boarding Awards, which may be granted for the potential all-round contribution that a child may bring to school life.

Since 2016 **Woodhouse Grove School**, in partnership with RNCSF, has provided numerous fully funded bursaries allowing children from low-income families to thrive and achieve their potential through education. These children would otherwise not have the opportunity to go on to go to university to study a range of subjects ranging from electronics to forensic psychology.

Nutgrove Methodist Primary, Merseyside, achieved the Inclusive School Award with Flagship status in 2019. Inclusivity forms a large part of the Methodist Church values. Although all our schools are church schools, Methodist schools do not have religion-based admissions criteria, they are welcoming to all. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and staff. One parent explained how the staff work together to: “Concentrate on everything for each individual child.”

In 2020 at the height of the Covid pandemic, **Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy**, in Ashton-under-Lyne, produced a YouTube video saying a ‘Big Great Thank You!’ to all Key Workers. Many of the children in the video thanked their own parents who were working within the local communities and NHS. All working together to keep everyone safe.

PRIORITISING AREAS OF NEED



Methodism cherishes its commitment to go to those ‘who need us most’.

Need takes many forms:

Special Educational Needs. All our schools, independent and state funded, have good track records in providing support to pupils with a range of learning needs/disabilities. Our schools enable and support every child and young person to thrive, achieve and fulfil their potential.

Emotional needs are equally important. All schools witness the impact of family breakdown, serious illness and bereavement. Methodist schools are primarily pastoral communities, committed to care and compassion.

Spiritual needs are a key concern of faith schools. Young people in Methodist schools are often awakened to a new perspective of the world and new possibilities of service.

Material and social challenges remain central to our broad understanding and all Methodist schools seek to address these needs in a variety of ways.

MIST schools are committed to extending their means tested bursary provision to 10% of income, so that someone without the means will be awarded part or full bursaries. MIST administers a small bursary fund to enable Methodist families to access their schools. It is hoped that, in due course, thought can be given to how this can be extended even further.

Many of our primary schools serve areas of social need and address these needs through the curriculum and the pastoral care they offer. Methodism is committed to bidding for opportunities to provide further schools in deprived areas, offering strong and committed support from the local church and circuit as well as other Methodist school networking. Where presented with a choice, we will choose to go to those who are in most need.

CASE STUDY »

Working alongside local Christian charity, CHARIS Refugees, **Queens College, Taunton**, were delighted to welcome five Syrian children since September 2017, Queens College's Headteacher said:

“When we were first approached by CHARIS in summer 2016 and asked if we might be able to support the education of the children from a Syrian refugee family who they were bringing into Taunton under the Government's Community Sponsorship Programme, we immediately knew this was something our community would wish to support. Supporting the displaced children from an area of conflict simply extended our educational mission into a more global context, one which was entirely fitting with the work of the Methodist Church.”

One of the children said of their experience:

“Joining a new school in a strange country was really hard for the first year ...I soon made friends...and they, and the staff helped me to settle in. Having joined in Year 9, I went on to take my GCSEs and the grades I achieved have meant I could study A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Food and Nutrition. I am hoping to go on to university to study Pharmacology. Coming to this school has changed my life.”

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As we look forward to the future, we have high ambitions for our communities.

We firmly believe that Methodist Schools have a vital role to play in education and, in turn, the futures of children, families and communities in this country, and across the world.

While our strategy outlines our key commitments to this cause, it is the Methodist values and beliefs of our community as well as the compassion, determination and talent of every individual that will contribute to this.

We firmly believe that Methodist Schools offer a unique and unifying mission within our communities. Our calling is to support every child and young person to *thrive, achieve* and *fulfil* their potential.

2023 Methodist Schools International Conference

27 – 30 April 2023, Bristol, UK

Methodist Schools will host the first Conference for the international family of Methodist schools in Bristol, United Kingdom in 2023.

The Conference coincides with the 275th anniversary of Kingswood School, the Methodist school established by John Wesley in 1748.

With the stated aim of bringing together Methodist educators from across the globe, this Conference will offer a unique opportunity to share, network, celebrate and enhance the educational opportunities for children and professionals within Methodist schools internationally.

Our goal is the improvement and widening of the educational offering within all our institutions. To support this, we will be providing workshops and seminars about our Methodist heritage, our work and yours – both here in the United Kingdom and abroad.

This is a unique Conference, seeking to connect Methodist schools across sectors (maintained, academy, independent) to enable ‘one voice’ messages to be developed and heard.





Methodist Schools

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