



Our Future

One thing that unites nearly all of us is that we all went to school. Did you know, however, that over the last 15 years there has been a significant change in how schools are run? Even for educationalists these changes are confusing - so we wanted to share with you what these changes mean for Methodist schools across the country.

Methodist schools in England

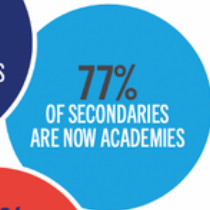
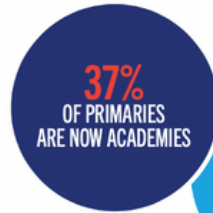
Currently there are nearly 25,000 schools in England. Of those, 66 are Methodist, or joint Methodist and Anglican, schools. Many of these schools are smaller schools.

Traditionally these schools were run through the local authority, which is a local or regional council, but over recent years lots of schools have become academies.

What is an academy?

An academy is a non-fee paying state-school which is funded by, and accountable to, the Government rather than an local authority (LA). To help the running of that school, there is a board of independent trustees or governors, and the money for the running of that school is paid directly to the school.

An academy has to be part of a group of academies, known as a multi-academy trust.



What are the benefits of becoming an academy?

There are lots of views and opinions about academies. Supporters say that academies allow schools some additional freedoms, give leaders greater control of finances and help smaller and stronger collaborations to form between groups of like-minded schools.

The view of the Methodist Church is that we should do all we can to enhance the education that children receive in Methodist schools across the country. This is not only about educational standards, but also about instilling values that are so important to our Church.

Given that there are some fantastic Methodist schools, but there are also some that are struggling educationally and financially, academisation offers an opportunity to help bring Methodist schools together so that they can work collectively and collaboratively.

This family approach helps each school to get stronger.



What are we doing to support Methodist Schools?

The Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) has established a multi-academy trust called the **Epworth Education Trust**. This is an organisation that has grown from a group of fantastic Methodist schools in the North-West of England.

Our hope is that, over time, all Methodist schools will become part of the Epworth Education Trust. This would allow those who share the same Methodist family ethos to support and strengthen each other.

Furthermore, the Government has recently evolved how a school can join a trust. They can either formally join, or spend a period of time as an associate member to gain a greater understanding of what it would mean to join that trust.





EPWORTH EDUCATION TRUST

About the Epworth Education Trust

The Epworth Education Trust was created in November 2020 when two smaller academy trusts - Wesley Trust, consisting of three schools, and Acorn Trust, consisting of two schools, merged to create the foundations for a Multi-Academy Trust where schools work collaboratively to be the very best that they can be.

We passionately believe, however, that does not mean every school needs to be the same. Our schools are reflections of their communities, and that is an important connection that should not be challenged or lost. We share, however, a belief that as a group of schools we can, and will, achieve more by working collaboratively. United by a shared ethos and common purpose, together we maximise our resources, echo best practice and reduce workload.

By being part of a family of schools, it will enable us to “do all we can”.

What does the Epworth Education Trust stand for?

The Epworth Education Trust is rooted in our communities, our profession and our faith. We work together to ensure that every child and young person can achieve excellence.

The Trust's approach is anchored to six core principles. These are:

- We will build a family of schools with shared Methodist values, but who can support their individual communities in their own unique way
- Best practice will be delivered through school-based models of excellence
- Each school will deliver a dynamic and creative curriculum that holds no limits on the achievements and learning of all pupils
- A commitment to the highest standard of pastoral care and support
- Our education and ethos will be used to support and develop our local communities
- Our high-quality continuous professional development will enable staff to shine and advance in their career

What will the Epworth Education Trust look like in the future?

The Epworth Education Trust is an inclusive trust that will welcome a wide range of schools including Methodist and community schools, primary, secondary and special schools.

Given our belief that we should support all children in all schools, we will also be working with schools that are seen to be strong in the eyes of Ofsted, but also those facing challenges.

Our hope is that, over time, all Methodist schools across the country will join us. Schools will be allocated into "hubs" so that really close-knit families of Methodist schools can work together in each region.

Who monitors a Multi-Academy Trust?

All schools in a trust will still be visited by Ofsted, and they will also be inspected by the Church.

In addition, there is a Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), who monitors a trust's effectiveness and considers if it is right for a school to join a trust.

Is there a governance structure that the community can still be part of?

We believe passionately in the importance of local governance. In a Trust, however, governance is different – and has three layers:

Members

These they take a very strategic overview. They approve the Trust accounts, appoint the auditors and trustees and are "eyes on, hands off".

Trustees

The Trustees have a range of responsibilities and working in close partnership with the Chief Executive Office. The Trust Board considers the vision and aims of Epworth and its schools, as well as strategy and policy to deliver its key objectives..

Local Governance

Each school has Local Governance, known as a local advisory board, which enables it to focus on the performance and scrutiny of teaching and learning; student behaviour, attendance, safety and wellbeing; and community relations.

Good governance is about creating a true partnership between all three layers to champion, support and challenge each school.