

# 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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## Our Strategy

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.

# WELCOME FROM REVD DR ROGER WALTON

As Chair of the Methodist Schools Committee I welcome you to the second edition of *Transforming Lives*. Much has happened in the last year. From an International Conference to working together lifting up the schools entrusted to us, and much more!

In this edition, we highlight issues that connect with the Transforming Lives Methodist Education International Conference (25 April–1 May 2023) and are relevant to the UK, but also have international dimensions. I hope it will be an inspiration and a challenge to you and bolster your delight in being part of the extraordinary worldwide Methodist family.

First the Conference, and what a remarkable event it was! As far as I know, the first International Methodist Schools Conference ever. And it lived up to our hopes and expectations, bringing together over 260 people, representing every continent (except Antarctica) and thousands of Methodist schools across the globe.

Like all Conferences, the outcome is not simply the inspiration and encouragement that we received, but what grows out of this positive experience. We are hopeful for international links and partnerships, a strengthening of work between different types of Methodist schools and shared training and development. The Methodist network across the world is both extensive and hugely creative in radically different contexts and can be a source of energy for every Methodist school.

It was an absolute honour and privilege to share the same platform as a Methodist from Fiji described, poignantly, what climate change is doing to his homeland, and also to learn from a Methodist from Oklahoma, a state built on the wealth and the power of oil. Both spoke of ways to resist, prevent and renew, for the sake of the planet. I am sure I speak for everyone present when I say that it made us realise more than ever that we are all connected and together we can make a difference.

The Conference also keyed into our Wesleyan roots. It coincided with the 275th anniversary of John Wesley’s model school, Kingswood School – a link to the past while looking to the future. We worshipped in John Wesley’s New Room, the first preaching house built by Wesley. It set the tone as we acknowledged our shared heritage. We delved respectfully and constructively into the hard issues of discrimination, poverty and climate change, heard first-hand experiences and considered how our schools can play their part in transforming lives and transforming our world for good.

Methodist schools are of very different types. Some are fee paying independent schools, some are located in areas of desperate poverty with very

limited resources, some are state funded, in one form or another, others rely on what parents can scrape together from their modest incomes. But what unites all these schools is a belief that all children are made in the image of God, all have potential and all can be part of what God wills for creation, here at home, abroad and everywhere because the world is our parish too. Despite our many differences, we recognised that we are better together, seeking to ‘do all the good we can’.

**“Do all the good you can, By all the means you can, In all the ways you can, In all the places you can, At all the times you can, To all the people you can, As long as ever you can.”**

**John Wesley**

I promised more than the Conference, however. In this issue you will read about net-zero initiatives in our schools, chaplaincy, spirituality, and from the aspirational and inspirational to the ‘business’ side of education, governance. Schools want you to be involved. Read on to find out more.



**Revd Dr Roger Walton**  
Chair of Methodist Schools Committee





# 'THE WORLD IS MY PARISH'

The Wesleyan quote, 'The World Is My Parish' reflects the belief that the message of Christianity should be spread far and wide, to people of all races, nationalities, and social backgrounds.

Wesley's sentiment was a radical departure from the view of the time, which saw religion being confined to geographical areas and social classes. It was a ministry based on the belief that all people were equal in the eyes of God and that the gospel message was meant for everyone. The relevance of this quote is still important in the context of twenty-first century education where the world is more interconnected than ever before.

The call of a twenty-first century Methodist school leader, such as myself, is a unique one. We are here to not only uphold the values of the Methodist faith while navigating the complexities of school life, but to share the gospel in a way that is both accessible and relevant to the pupils, families and communities we serve. Leaders in education are called to model their Christian faith and live out their values even when it is difficult to do so, in times of great adversity and when facing one of the most significant challenges of all time – the navigation of a cultural landscape that often values secularism over faith.

Methodist core values are needed not only to meet the needs of the individual school, and local communities, but also to address the ever-increasing list of challenges we face as school leaders: reduced budgets, increased workload, raised expectations, Ofsted, the decline of wider support services, increased safeguarding and mental health issues. Combined with a change in societal attitudes, the cost-of-living crisis and life in post-pandemic Britain, the educational backdrop we work within becomes even more challenging. Education leaders require ways to reclaim our radical Methodist heritage and endeavour to become a force for change within our communities. We must make the implicit sentiment of John Wesley explicit.

Despite the many challenges faced by Methodist schools, we are still succeeding not only in academic achievements, but also in the ability to create nurturing and inclusive environments for all. The

foundation of this success is intrinsically rooted in the core values of hope, love, and inclusivity. By incorporating these values into the everyday parlance, policy and practices of schools, leaders are creating strong Christian cultures which promote character development, build strong community relationships, draw on educational excellence, equity and social justice in education and thus help to create a brighter future. It is the practice of these values that allows us to reach out and engage with the world, minister to the world and be in mission to the world.

Love is a consistent message found throughout scriptures. When the apostle Paul wrote to the church of Corinth, 1 Corinthians 16:14, he instructed them to do everything in love. This defines the approach of Methodist schools to education. With love as the core value, the culture and the daily climate is set. It is present in the big decisions and in the smallest and unremarkable acts. It is demonstrated to make a positive contribution to our communities, and in the belief that pupils deserve the very best. A culture of care and concern fosters a sense of belonging and connection. At Trinity & St Michael's Church of England and Methodist Primary school, we use our vision thread 'Do Everything In Love' to impart Paul's message and ensure that all members of our school family know that they are loved and have a practical understanding of the two important aspects of Christian life: Faith and Love.

Hope is the essential value that drives the educational philosophy. Methodist schools believe that every pupil has the potential to succeed and achieve their dreams, regardless of their background, abilities, or circumstances. This belief is reflected in the ways that schools design their curriculum, approach their teaching and their pastoral care. Environments are created that encourage aspiration and provide the tools and support needed to achieve. All members of a Methodist school community can develop a sense of confidence and optimism that empowers them to overcome challenges and persevere in the face of adversity.

Inclusivity is central to the success of twenty-first century Methodist schools. Diversity is a strength, as is the belief that everyone has something valuable to contribute. This creates environments that celebrate and promote an understanding of culture, race, religion, sexuality, and different perspectives. At Trinity & St Michael's we strive to create an inclusive

school culture where all believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every individual and ensure that everybody can be their authentic self and welcomed. We no longer have admissions policies that are dependent on a parent's attendance at church. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are embraced, rather than being turned away because they are deemed to be 'not good for the school's data'. All members of our community embrace diversity and learn from each other and sustain a global perspective that is essential in today's interconnected world.

In addition to the core values of hope, love and inclusivity all schools develop curriculums that prepare pupils for their next stage in education, the modern workforce and an ever-changing society. Education is designed with a global perspective in mind, developing a greater understanding of innovation and creativity. Pupils are the change-makers.

Community engagement in education is essential and integral to the work of Methodist school leaders. As Christian hubs in communities, schools spread the good news while also serving the most vulnerable. As the leader of an ecumenical school, it is important that we are the vehicle to host and lead ecumenical, community services. Worship led by pupils and local clergy builds a sense of unity rather than encouraging a community to remain fractionalised. This moves away from the risk of individual elements working at cross purposes.

Education is a fundamental right, but access to it is still not equal across the world. Methodist leaders and schools continue to address this issue by creating opportunities for those who are disadvantaged and marginalised, through outreach programs and initiatives. Bursaries and scholarships increase access to quality education for all.

'The World Is My Parish' presents both challenges and opportunities for Methodist schools in the twenty-first century. For this to be achieved, schools need to be innovative, adaptable, and willing to reclaim their radical Wesleyan roots to pursue a brighter, more connected and just world for all reflecting the core of Christ's teaching.



**Claire Procter**  
Head, Trinity and  
St Michael's VA CofE/  
Methodist Primary School



## The World Is My Parish

Music by Richard Mainwaring  
The words of J Wesley

### Chorus

Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can,  
In all ways, in all places, at all times,  
To all people you can,  
As long as ever you can.

### Verse 1

What one generation tolerates,  
The next generation will embrace.  
Give me a tender heart resigned,  
Pure and full of faith and love.  
Be Thou my strength, my light, my way,  
And bid my soul the call obey.  
To love is all my wish,  
I only live for this.

### Chorus

### Verse 2

"Ah! Give me Lord" I still would say,  
"A heart to mourn, a heart to pray".  
My business this, my only care,  
My life, my ev'ry breath be prayer.  
Lord I am blind, be Thou my sight,  
Lord I am weak, be Thou my might.  
A helper of the helpless be  
And let me find me all in Thee!

### Chorus

### Language Section

Individual students from around the world say  
"The world is my parish" in their own languages.

### Chorus (x2)



**Watch:**  
The song performed by  
Methodist students

SCAN ME





# NURTURING SPIRITUALITY

Nurturing the spirituality of each and every child is integral to the design of the curriculum in schools in England in which SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural) is a 'golden thread' through all aspects of school life. They are even inspected, through Ofsted and SIAMs, on the impact of spirituality in pupils. Yet grasping hold of what we mean by spirituality and how we develop it in children is deeply complex.

Spirituality is inherent in each and every one of us, whether adult or child, and to support a child to flourish and succeed we must ensure that we create a climate and space in which they may explore their spirituality and facilitate its flourishing. This isn't just an ambition of Methodist schools, or Ofsted, but is embedded within the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in which spiritual and religious rights are explicitly mentioned and includes the right to freedom from discrimination and the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Spirituality is unique for each child. Dr Rebecca Nye, author of *Children's Spirituality: What it is and Why it Matters*, describes it as unique as a signature or a fingerprint. Our expression and experience of spirituality often relates to what matters to us as an individual and the way this is lived out through personal context and circumstances.

Our schools have children that have a faith or belief and some that have none, some may worship as Methodists but typically most won't. Yet each and every one must have equal opportunity to explore and nurture their spirituality. It is understood that whilst spirituality may be expressed through religious faith, it transcends beyond both language and religion. In the book *The Spirit of the Child* by D Hay and R Nye we are encouraged to consider spirituality as 'relational consciousness' as an expression of an emerging awareness of our relationship with self, others, the world and beyond which some would express as God.

As schools we are challenged to create a space and climate within which this can be nurtured and explored. 'Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me', Psalm 42:7. In matters of faith and spirituality, within and between religions deep does call deep. Lat Blaylock from RE Today draws us to call to the deep in every child through enabling creativity to flow and utilising art, music, drama, poetry, scripture, wisdom to provide a conduit to express their personal spirituality creating a sense of connectedness, awe and deep sense of the world around them. Providing the effective stimulus for them begins this spiritual journey but then our role is to 'get out of the way' and provide the space for children to explore what 'calls to deep' within themselves. The expression of this is often profound.

NATRE holds an annual Spirited Arts competition which annually attracts thousands of entries. The competition provides the children and young people with a stimulus through which they are encouraged to explore a wide range of creative expressions. Providing the children with space to interpret the stimulus through their own lenses of context, and circumstances, provides each the opportunity to deepen and express their spirituality in their own unique way.

Visit:  
NATRE website



SCAN ME

## Jack, Age 7 Long Melford CEVC 'Where is God?'

I thought about where God might be. My picture shows God standing next to the earth. He is really big. I wrote a poem with loads of questions.

Where is God  
Is God in my hed [head]?  
Is God in this room?  
Is God invisible?  
Is God in the trees?  
Is God in the clads [clouds]?  
Is God next to me?  
Is God in hevone [heaven]?  
Is God awt side [outside]?  
Is God above me?



## Amneek, Age 14 Stratford Girls Grammar School 'God's Mystery'

My painting is influenced by Job 12:7-10. The bottom half of the painting is in greyscale, to contrast with the bright colours above. This is to show that Job doesn't see the full wonders of the universe – only God can see because he is omniscient, omnipotent and omnibenevolent.

The man at the bottom is meant to be Job, and the river leads him to the Earth. I drew a plant, a dove and a turtle in reference to the old scripture: "But ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish in the sea inform you"(Job 12:7-8).



## Poppy, Age 11 Monkseaton Middle School 'The Vision – A View of the World'

This piece is inspired by the hard times everyone has gone through. We have all had a time in our lives where we want to put our glasses on and be put in a "perfect world." I have shown this

by putting a colourful world in the glasses lenses and a broken, harmed world around the edge. If we don't stop harming our planet, it might end up broken and it could turn out to be like this.



These entries from the competition demonstrate the depth of spirituality that can be nurtured as children express their spirituality on areas that matter greatly to them, particularly through their view of themselves and their relationship and impact on others and the world around.

Utilising faith scriptures and texts, and considering them from their own perspective, can provide a deeper spiritual meaning of these writings. For example, in Revelations 21 when John talks about a new Jerusalem coming down from Heaven to Earth, what if children considered what their town would look like if it was made perfect, what would it be like? Children are able to reflect upon what is important to them, is it how people treat each other, is it about what aspects a place does not bring joy or peace that they would like to be removed? Enabling them to investigate what they value, bringing a sharper focus on this as they are present in the moment yet reflecting on the potential of what could be, and how they are connected to it.

This strategy could be utilised with the Covenant Prayer encouraging children to consider what they

would include in their own covenant prayer, which can be particularly powerful for them during periods of transition. Considering themselves and what they have already completed, what lies ahead and what commitments they will make in this period.

We have a significant mandate as schools, churches, teachers and ministers to consider how we develop and nurture the spiritual nature of each and every child so that through this they learn to live well in the world with hope, courage, thankfulness, resilience and a deep sense of purpose. Learning that in a deepening expression of our own spirituality we enable an understanding and love of self, others, the world around us and our loving God.



**Julie-Ann Hewitt**  
Chief Executive Officer of  
Epworth Education Trust  
and Methodist Academies  
and Schools Trust





# KEEPING THE RUMOUR OF METHODISM ALIVE

Our chaplains often speak of their work as ‘keeping the rumour of God alive’, but how do our schools enable new generations of children to understand the Methodist story, keeping the rumour of the Wesleys and their heritage alive for our times?

We sometimes speak of our schools as, ‘schools that say Methodist above the door’. People coming into the building recognise that it is Methodist but may have little understanding of what that might mean in practice. This often includes the staff – even though they are key in holding the Methodist genome and shaping the school as a Methodist community. It is important for our schools therefore that, besides the support of the local church, they have high quality resources available to educate and engage the school’s adults and children alike.

In order to keep ‘the rumour of Methodism alive’ our resources take a number of different approaches. First, we have activities which engage learners with the things which make Methodism distinctive including our history, our practices and our priorities. People within the Church sometimes say that they don’t think there is anything ‘different’ about Methodism so, in working with others, it is really interesting to ‘see ourselves as others see us’ – picking out not just the Wesley stories or our enthusiasm for singing hymns, but

also things such as the Covenant Prayer as a way for everyone in the class to reflect on their own commitments.

However, there’s more opportunities for learning from Methodism in the wider curriculum – for example, the Methodist Art

Collection is a fabulous resource for exploring art in religion but also makes a brilliant backdrop for collective worship. The opposition of Wesley and his friends to the slave trade offers a different perspective in history lessons while the work of Charles Jacob, the Methodist ‘inventor’ of ethical investment at the Central Finance Board, makes a good case study in economics. The local presence of Methodism is often an important strand when the National Curriculum directs study of local history, such as Mary Bosanquet’s enduring presence in the Telford of the industrial revolution or William Pickles Hartley, of jam fame, in the North-West.

The most comprehensive of the Methodist materials used in our schools is the Methodist RE Curriculum Project, often simply called ‘the Methodist RE Handbook’. This was written for the Church by the team at RE Today, so is of the highest quality and credibility; it provides units for children from Early Years to the end of Year 11.

Besides specific learning about Methodist belonging and back story, there are units which tackle general RE themes but from a Methodist point of view – such as looking at the work of All We Can in the topic on the impact of charities with older children. RE Today also worked with Methodist Education and the Free Church Education Committee to produce materials highlighting Free Church perspectives for Reformation 500 and the national Anti-Racist RE resource. This is one of our proudest achievements and is now used in, literally, thousands of schools. One of the ‘off the peg’ lessons is, ‘A tale of two statues’ which puts the work of Wesley in front of a much wider audience than just Methodist schools.

**Download:**  
Methodist  
RE Resources  
Lesson Plan



SCAN ME

**Download:**  
Anti-Racist  
RE Resources



SCAN ME

Several years ago, I led staff training on ‘what it means to be Methodist’ on a hot afternoon at the end of a very long term. The conditions were all set against me and yet at the end of the session, as they went out, I overheard one young teacher say to his friend, ‘It’s quite good, isn’t it, this ‘Methodist?’ As a schools group we aim to be confident and compelling in communicating our story and we continue to curate good quality resources to support our work. The good news is that many of these materials are available online – so are accessible to people in any setting who want to know more, or share more, of our Methodist story. You can find many of them here:

[www.methodistschools.org.uk/primary/humanities](http://www.methodistschools.org.uk/primary/humanities)



**Barbara Easton**  
Head of Service, Methodist  
Academies and Schools Trust

## CASE STUDY

### Education at John Wesley’s New Room

- Who was John Wesley and how did he make a difference?
- Why was there a riot when he spoke out about the transatlantic trade in enslaved persons?
- How do his beliefs link to our world today?

These are questions which are all covered in resources for schools produced by the team at John Wesley’s New Room, Bristol.

At the oldest Methodist building in the world, schools can visit the historic chapel and museum and take part in fun, interactive workshops on three different themes:

**Introducing John Wesley (KS 1, 2 and 3)**

**Causing A Riot (KS 2 and 3)**

**A Tale of Two Statues (KS 2 and 3)**

While *Introducing John Wesley* provides a basic introduction to Wesley and his life and beliefs, *Causing A Riot* takes a deeper look at his opposition to the transatlantic slave trade and his

support for abolition. *A Tale of Two Statues* compares and contrasts Wesley’s views with that of the now notorious slave trader Edward Colston, whose statue in Bristol was pulled down (while Wesley’s statue remains intact).

Schools who feel they are a bit far away to plan a school trip can access downloadable lesson packs for a small fee. Online lessons and assemblies can also be tailored to a school’s particular needs.

To find out more visit:  
[www.newroombristol.org.uk/schools](http://www.newroombristol.org.uk/schools) or email Mandy Briggs: [education@newroombristol.org.uk](mailto:education@newroombristol.org.uk)

**Revd Mandy Briggs**, Education Officer







## CASE STUDY

### Wesley's Chapel London & Leysian Mission

The story of Methodism is well and truly alive at Wesley's Chapel London and Leysian Mission! The education provision is free and includes site visits, in-person outreach and digital outreach.

Various themes can be explored during a site visit; from abolition, Church history, and finding out about how Londoners lived in the eighteenth century. During Easter Holy Week we provide imaginative and engaging workshops linked to the KS2/3 History and RE Curriculum. The workshops are fun, relevant, and thought-provoking along the way.

In-person outreach is delivered across London and explores inequality in eighteenth century London through the lenses of food and medicine. There are two outreach sessions available; 'Great Georgian Bake Off' and 'John Wesley's Guide to Staying Healthy'. Both introduce John Wesley, the work of the early Methodist Church and delve into the life of ordinary people in Wesley's day.

For those unable to visit Wesley's Chapel (even if you are and want to know more!) the team is proud to be able to offer digital outreach.

'An Introduction to John Wesley' is specifically designed with Methodist schools in mind and delivered online, via Zoom. Areas discussed include John Wesley's early life, the development of the Methodist movement and what makes the Methodist Church unique. The session finishes with an interactive tour of John Wesley's London home.

'Migration Stories' is a stand-alone downloadable workshop designed for KS4 students exploring themes around migration. Additionally, it looks at how different people experienced welcome, or not, from the Methodist Church in the 1950s and 60s.

For more information please email Gemma Smith on [Iso@wesleyschapel.org.uk](mailto:Iso@wesleyschapel.org.uk) or visit our website [www.wesleysheritage.org.uk/learning-programmes](http://www.wesleysheritage.org.uk/learning-programmes)

**Gemma Smith**, Education Officer



## WORKING TOGETHER

# TRAINING OUR TEACHERS TODAY

Vocation Sunday, celebrated in May this year, is always an ideal time to consider how we, as members of the Methodist Church, can fulfil the calling to serve.

Teaching is often seen as a career where making a difference to children's life chances is one of the main drivers for those engaged in it. Methodist church schools will always welcome church members wishing to teach but the Church encourages service outside its own community as well.

Those called to serve are likely to have a much keener motivation to undertake such a difficult but rewarding job. Teacher training institutions play a very important role in preparing new teachers for the joys and rigours of the life of a teacher. Southlands College was established by the Methodist Conference and opened in Battersea, London in 1872 as a training college for women teachers. This education of teachers has continued in an unbroken line for over 150 years, now within the University of Roehampton. This year, 825 new teachers are being trained at the University. The principles on which Southlands College was founded, and those of the other three colleges which merged to form the Roehampton Institute in 1975, remain the cornerstone of provision. Leaders at Roehampton recognise that teaching is an act of service and teachers need to be physically, emotionally and spiritually prepared for this mission. The Chaplaincy at Roehampton acts as an important support base, available to all new teachers.

How can the Church support the training of teachers? Districts and Circuits which link strongly to their communities are welcomed to focus on training to teach as an important way of playing one's part in the Body of Christ. I encourage Circuits to find your local teacher training provider and see how you can help promote teacher training. The University of Roehampton is a member of the Cathedrals Group of

universities, all of whom started as church-founded institutions of teacher education. These will always welcome contact from local Circuits ([www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk](http://www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk)).

Districts and Circuits with a local Methodist school will have a strong relationship with it. Church members should already be encouraged to volunteer in these schools, and this can range from support with reading and mathematics in the early key stages to helping young people prepare for the world of work as they progress through their school years. And just because there is not a local Methodist school, this does not mean that links cannot be formed. These are particularly important in areas where social pressures contribute to lower outcomes for children.

A major problem in schools today is the number of teachers leaving the profession. I would encourage the churches to consider what practical solutions could be found to help. My local Circuit is very active in practical groups to support people in the local area, and I am also aware that there are many retired teachers worshipping in Methodist churches every week. What practical support can be offered? Perhaps a local support group for teachers, offering a non-judgemental place to unburden themselves in a supportive atmosphere? What other practical solutions could your church and community do to help?

Finally, I would encourage all church members and leaders to advocate for the most vulnerable by lobbying, in whatever fora you work, for the needs of schools to be properly funded and for teachers to be supported to do their very best for the children in their care.



**Prof Peter Flew**  
Dean of the School of Education and Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor at Roehampton University



# CREATING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

**“Do we want to go down in history as the people who did nothing to bring the world back from the brink in time to restore the balance when we could have done? I don’t want to.”**

**HM King Charles III**

High levels of greenhouse gases are warming our planet and carbon dioxide generated by humans is having a devastating impact on land, habitats and wildlife. The overwhelming impact of global warming can be seen in countries across the world. For example, in Fiji where rising sea levels and tidal changes are affecting coastal villages making it impossible for some children to attend school. This occurrence is also creating degradation of vital land resources. In Brazil, deforestation of the rainforest has resulted in loss of biodiversity and reduced rainfall which is critically affecting agriculture and climate change.

To avoid the worst climate impacts, global greenhouse gas emissions need to drop by nearly half by 2030 and ultimately reach net zero. Change can only happen if constructive practical global partnerships are built to support positive change.

**“The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”**

**John Wesley**



As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said, “The future of our fragile, beautiful planet home is in our hands. As God’s family, we are stewards of God’s creation. We can be wantonly irresponsible, or we can be caring and compassionate. God says, “I have set before you life and death... Choose life.”

Recognising an urgency for change, a growing number of governments are making a commitment to reach net zero. For this to happen human-caused emissions must be reduced to as close to zero as possible, with remaining emissions balanced with an equivalent amount of carbon removal. This can happen through a range of natural approaches like restoring forests and reducing wider deforestation.

Following COP26, sustainability in education has been put front and centre. We all understand our responsibility to ensure that children and young people have a perspective which goes beyond their own experience and promotes a natural appetite to make the world a better place. Educational settings have the potential to set the example in the communities they serve to shape and foster the attitudes of the next generation through identifying and developing local needs. And change is happening...

Various approaches are taking place including encouraging students to walk or cycle to their place of education in order to reduce CO2 emissions created by traffic; switching to renewable energy and setting up recycling schemes.

## CASE STUDY

### Sustainability at Brontë House

In today’s modern world we’re all acutely aware of the impact our daily lives are having on the earth’s precious resources and the environment around us. At Brontë House, one small way that we are trying to develop our sustainability is through the growth of our cottage garden.

Following the Covid period of the previous few years, our garden area was more closely resembling a jungle and was not an area of school to be shared with visiting families. Thanks to the enthusiasm and skill of one of our members of staff at the senior school, the vegetable patches were cleared and poly tunnels erected. New equipment and seeds were purchased: a cause that our Ashdown Brontë Association were keen to support.



The help and assistance of the children was central to the garden’s re-development and we now run two co-curricular Gardening Clubs after school. Always over-subscribed, these are amongst our most popular clubs and provide the opportunity for us to enthuse a love of the outdoors and the natural environment in our children.

We now have a range of fruits, vegetables and salad items that are harvested at regular intervals and used in the school kitchens, with any surplus sold to parents. Our catering team are adept at using the fresh produce to enhance meal times and repurposing meals to ensure minimum wastage: yesterday’s vegetable curry is today’s spicy vegetable soup; today’s vegetarian chilli is tomorrow’s homemade pasta sauce.

Whilst this is very much a work in progress, we hope we are contributing in some small way to the sustainability of our school.

**Sarah Chatterton**  
Head of Brontë House



Many educational settings are developing outdoor spaces to grow food that appears on their menu and devising a curriculum which equips children with the skills and knowledge to cook nutritional meals from scratch using locally sourced fresh produce. This focus on improving the efficiency of food production, changing dietary choices, reducing food loss and waste has significant potential to reduce emissions and will not only transform lives but protect our planet.

There are numerous charities and organisations working in partnership with educational settings across the globe enabling such changes to happen.

The message is clear, great things happen when a series of small things are brought together. We can all make changes which will ultimately lead to a sustainable future. Be that change.

**“He who governed the world before I was born shall take care of it likewise when I am dead. My part is to improve the present moment.”**

**John Wesley**



**Amy Burkes**  
Executive Headteacher,  
Bedford Hall Methodist  
Primary School





## PRIORITISING AREAS OF NEED



### CASE STUDY

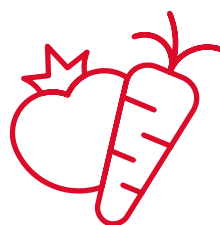
#### Allotment at Wesley Methodist Primary School

Since September 2021, the team at Wesley Methodist Primary School have developed our outdoor curriculum for all learners. The focus is the development and promotion of the children's independence, self-esteem, confidence and creativity.

Alongside enhancing the Forest School environment, which all children have access to regularly, we have also developed a working allotment to support our journey of sustainability. The allotment provides the opportunity to grow a range of fruit and vegetables, teaching the children about seasonality and sustainable cookery.

It went further, due to our children's courageous advocacy, they wanted more. The children wanted to have access to the produce regularly, and for all children to be able to benefit from this. Therefore, we now have regular sales of our produce with the use of an honesty-pot for parents. All proceeds go back into the work completed at our allotment. We also use what is grown by our children on our school menu, with a range of vegetables being incorporated into our daily meals and filling up our salad station for all to enjoy.

The use of the allotment has provided many real-life opportunities and also a range of experiences outside of the classroom, including designing and building planters. These planters are cared for by the children and the wider school community, through focussed lessons and community outreach days. Everyone is involved.



Since the beginning of this outdoor curriculum journey, we have been awarded the Gold Award from the Woodland Trust for our work. We have also been selected to do focussed work with the Trust. In addition we are proud to have been shortlisted for the 'Young Nature Champion of the Year' in the South Pennines Park Awards 2023.

This is an incredibly exciting journey, and we all look forward to how we can further develop our sustainability in years to come.



### CASE STUDY

#### Farringtons Journey to Net Zero

Over the past few years, the focus has been on energy efficiency measures in terms of window and door replacement and also the LED light replacement project which is approximately 90% complete. We have been working with *ReEnergise* on the Estates De-carbonisation plan looking at a phased implementation of ground source heat pumps because of the limited size of the school estate. All electricity used on the site is currently from renewable sources.

In terms of waste management, we have for a number of years achieved zero-to-landfill and have dramatically reduced the amount of single-use plastic used within our catering function. Where disposables are used now, they are compostable vegware.

We have had a *Bike to Work* scheme in operation for staff for several years now and have recently introduced a new employee benefit which is an Electric Vehicle leasing scheme.

Forest School is a core part of our Junior School offering. We are fortunate to have access to our own woodland on the site. Forest School provides hands-on experiences in the natural environment and encourages the children to explore the environment and learn in it. Our Forest School leaders are also hugely focused on preserving the natural environment and biodiversity whilst providing this opportunity for the pupils.

**Sally-Anne Eldridge**  
Bursar at Farringtons School







# CHAPLAINCY IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS

At the recent *Transforming Lives* Methodist Education International Conference held in Bristol and Bath at the end of April one of the workshops was entitled “Chaplaincy in Schools: Keeping the rumour of God alive (Standing in the Gap).”

The workshop explored the experience of chaplains and the relevance, value and importance of School Chaplaincy today.

John Wesley’s emphasis on the importance of education has left a remarkable legacy in terms of educational institutions throughout the world. Looking at the United Kingdom specifically, many communities continue to benefit from Methodist Education.

“Over 20,000 children attend Methodist schools and when you add their families and staff, it means that chaplains routinely connect with the lives of over 100,000 people, many of whom will have little or no direct experience of the church.”

In a largely secular society chaplains have a unique place at the heart of spiritual and pastoral lives of the communities they serve. They bring the Church’s mission into the daily life of the schools as they ‘stand in the gap’ between churches and their communities.



**Read our information sheet:**  
Calling Ministers: why consider School Chaplaincy?



SCAN ME



Sian Murray-Williams, baptist minister, theological educator and writer at the convention of the Churches’ Higher Education Liaison Group (CHELG) in January 2017 had this to say about chaplaincy:

“So I hope you sense God’s smile on your pioneering passion and work, which I know can seem hidden and undervalued by church institutions – which, of course, themselves are facing major changes. The work that you are involved in (what was the phrase?) – ‘keeping the rumour of God alive’ – among people who may not know what to do with the percolating fire of spirituality that lies within them.”

Chaplains have a unique place in school as they are able to stand alongside pupils, teachers, heads, support staff and governors. Some chaplains might do so following what might be called ‘the military model’ of chaplaincy. The chaplain stands outside the rank structure and has access to come alongside all, whether it be the soldier, all the ranks or the commanding officer. Always one rank below the person in charge!

Another model or picture of chaplaincy is that of a village pastor. Here in terms of school chaplaincy, the chaplain pops in to see the Pre-Prep, the Prep School, the Finance and Human Resources Team or the Marketing Team and Former Students Office, the Sixth Form Common Room, having lunch with the grounds team and regularly visiting the Medical

Centre. Being available to pupils and all staff. Supporting concerts, plays and sporting fixtures and having a cup of tea with parents. The presence of the chaplain, not only in leading worship and sometimes conducting baptisms, confirmation, weddings and funerals, also provides a sign of the presence of God in the day-to-day life of the institution.

Sian Murray-Williams speaks a word of encouragement to those in this ministry, who for some time may well have been seen as being on the periphery of the Church’s mission, and more recently recognised to be at the forefront. The words catch a glimpse of the relevance, value and importance of school chaplaincy.

“So whenever you’ve had a sandstorm day – and end up thinking ‘What on earth am I doing here?’ – be encouraged that the very fact that you are here makes a difference. Those snatched conversations, the glance of compassion, the provision of time and space for encounter, the wisdom-drenched question dropped into conversation at the right time, the offer of prayer, the presence of the sacrament, all of that – speaks of a deep love that loves someone because they are someone.”



**Revd Aubin de Gruchy**  
Truro School  
Chaplain and MIST  
Pastoral Visitor

## My Approach to Chaplaincy

As a Presbyterian with responsibility for four churches and staff across the Circuit, the balance is not always easy to manage. However, I set time aside and block off Wednesdays as “Rosehill time”, with Collective Worship, preparations with the worship leaders and meetings usually happening at that time. I have the benefit of being a parent with children at Rosehill, so when I drop off and pick up my children it gives me additional time for conversations with other parents, staff and pupils.

There are over 500 members of the Rosehill community of staff and children, with many more parents and family members. The school is a place where the Church is and is seen as a witness. We

## A Chaplain’s Reflections

My role as School Chaplain began at the tail end of Covid measures, delivering Chapel Services remotely from my office desk and only seeing masked students in the corridors. By 9am the biggest event of my day was over! I realised that I needed to ‘find my fit’, to work out how I could contribute to the life of the school whilst keeping the rumour of God alive.

I began by lots of visits to the staff room, drinking too much coffee but enabling conversations to take place. Staff need to know who you are, know that you care, before they will reach out to seek help for a student or for themselves. In a school which excels in pastoral care of students, with a counselling service, I realised that I wouldn’t be the first point of call for pastoral care. What to do? I found a gap chairing a Charity Committee, overseeing and offering support at charity events. I offered skills in interviewing and serve on panels and as an advocate. I began storytelling in nursery and reception, took on boarding duties and began a small amount of teaching. I am finally building up a student faith group and recently set up Afternoon Teas for local residents living alone, enabling students to host.

Two years in I am now called upon to support students and staff in pastoral need. Days are long and busy but full of energy and opportunity to support the community. I keep smiling and greeting everyone I meet, doing my best to keep the rumour of God alive.

**Revd Katy Thomas**  
Kingswood School Chaplain



witness through our pastoral support, time, energy, and money to help the families in our communities. This enables us to have a direct impact on our doorsteps.

It is to me an essential part of my role and is also something that is important to the Circuit. Having the backing of the churches and the Circuit is immensely helpful in this role. The time in and around school is energising, inspiring. It is a privilege and a gift being able to see and be involved in conversations about God and faith.

**Revd Robert Balfour**  
Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy Chaplain





## ‘REMEMBER THAT AN OUNCE OF LOVE IS WORTH A POUND OF KNOWLEDGE.’

John Wesley was passionate about education. He saw the combination of faith and reason as ‘a never-failing remedy’ to the world’s problems. He promoted self-education through the publication of hymns, sermons, journals, tracts, anthologies, etc., and the education of the young was given a high priority from the outset of his work.

Between 1739 and 1744 Wesley created four schools in Bristol, Kingswood, London, and Newcastle for the children of the poor ‘to read, write and cast accounts, but more especially... to know God and Jesus Christ’. Wesley saw in every child a huge untapped potential for ‘doing good of every possible sort’ and he believed giving them Christ as a role model was the best way of unleashing that. In 1748 he opened the purpose-built Kingswood School as a model for what a Christian school should be. It was the country’s first co-educational boarding school but opposition to this aspect forced him after three years to cease girls’ admissions into the school. From 1756 onwards he encouraged his itinerant lay preachers to send their sons there. Kingswood was also designed to act as a college where his lay preachers could improve their education.

“Wesley saw in every child a huge untapped potential for ‘doing good of every possible sort’ and he believed giving them Christ as a role model was the best way of unleashing that.”

The education at Kingswood School was based on four principles:

- 1 That education involves gaining an understanding and not just rote learning. He said ‘It is our duty to contemplate what God has wrought, and to understand as much of it as we are able’.
- 2 That there is more to education than academic success. Education should be first and foremost about communicating values and not just knowledge. He said children needed to be taught that ‘without love, all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of spirit’.
- 3 That it is vital to encourage self-discipline and not permit children to become ‘spoilt’ and self-centred. It was his experience that a child who had acquired self-discipline learned more in a few hours than a self-willed child did in a month.
- 4 That children are precious in God’s eyes and so teaching them is a privilege. Wesley expected teachers to be not just academically rigorous but also be absolutely dedicated to the welfare of the children they taught.



There has been much modern criticism of Wesley’s principles (often based on misunderstanding of what he was seeking to do) but it helped create a very positive educational legacy within Methodism. Wesley placed an emphasis on the importance of academic rigour and hard work and he promoted:



That teachers must take a real interest in the welfare of their pupils



That a school should be a caring community in which bullying is unacceptable.



That education should encompass values and not just knowledge and so a school should embrace the moral and spiritual as well as the academic development of its pupils.



That all pupils should be encouraged to become more aware of the needs of others and seek social justice.



That each pupil should be encouraged to be the best that he or she can be, knowing that things do not have to be the way they are and that each individual can make a difference.



**Dr Gary Best**  
Historian and former  
Head of Kingswood School





# KINGSWOOD SCHOOL TODAY AND ITS WESLEYAN VALUES AND HERITAGE

The *Transforming Lives* Methodist Education International Conference 2023 has been at the heart of our planning as we celebrate the 275th anniversary of our founding by John Wesley in 1748.

The timing of this anniversary has been fortuitous in relation to my own appointment as Headmaster in September 2020 because it gifted me another reason to grow in my knowledge and understanding of Wesley's motivation for establishing our school, and many opportunities to reflect on how his vision for the school and wishes for his pupils back then continues to influence what we do today.

Of course, the information age of the twenty-first century seems light years away from the pre-industrial age of the mid-eighteenth century, and yet, I have come to appreciate that the essence of our vision today absolutely bears the hallmarks of our founder. Training up children in "every branch of useful learning" so that our pupils are well qualified to lead lives of service, is as important to us now as it was to Wesley. What drove him on in his own ministry as he travelled hundreds of thousands of miles on horseback and on foot, preaching and teaching across the country, was a desire that people should be happy, virtuous and useful to others. The same could be said about what motivates us today.

The reason that the pastoral care of each individual, pupil and staff member, is our most important priority is because we have taken to heart Wesley's words to one of his young schoolmasters that "an ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge." At Kingswood we value knowledge very highly indeed, offering our pupils instruction in "every branch of useful learning", ensuring that our excellent teachers inspire them on to first choice universities and next steps. And yet we also know, as Wesley did, that in the words of St Paul to the Corinthians without love, we are nothing. Love is the value that is central at Kingswood, and this is made manifest in the core purpose of Kingswood which is to educate people with knowledge, understanding and personal qualities to enable them to live meaningful lives of service.

This academic year, the Independent Schools Inspectorate visited Kingswood to conduct a full Educational Quality Inspection. They concluded that the academic and other achievements of our pupils and the personal development of our pupils were both excellent, the highest rating possible. As Headmaster, I know that this accolade comes as a result of the outstanding teachers and staff who serve the school. Wesley set the bar high when it came to recruiting teachers insisting that they had



both learning and wisdom to guide the formation of pupils in mind, body and spirit. We are blessed today with gifted and dedicated teachers who are committed to knowing and caring for each child as an individual. This remains a key ingredient in our mission to transform lives.

Two heart-warming realisations during our recent Conference were firstly that education in the Wesleyan tradition has expanded from a single school in 1748 to a thriving network of over 1000 educational institutions on six continents, and secondly, that we remain bound by the shared values passed down to us from John Wesley and most succinctly captured in his instruction that we do all the good we can... for as long as ever we can. There is great opportunity for future collaboration within this global network and we look forward at Kingswood School to embracing it with enthusiasm.



**Andrew Gordon-Brown**  
Head at Kingswood School



# INSPIRING LIVES EDUCATION TRUST

**Transforming lives  
through education  
rooted in love**



In 2021, the Methodist Conference encouraged Methodist Schools to extend the commitment to doing 'all the good we can' by expanding in more places and in a wider range of settings, as opportunities arose.

In 2022, opportunity arose in the form of the Government's Education White Paper.

The Department for Education (DfE) instructed Methodist Schools to develop a strategy that would align our work with their new national initiatives. Although the government has now stepped back from enshrining this White Paper into law, the DfE is still looking to that same White Paper as the blueprint for school provision in the future.

What does this mean for us? Well, we are now required to set up a second national Trust to work alongside The Epworth Education Trust (EET). This new Trust will focus on the southern half of the country, whereas EET serves schools and academies in the north of England. This affords an exciting opportunity to extend the reach of Methodist Schools across the country and work with new communities.

The Inspiring Lives Education Trust (being set up as we write) will be a new Multi-Academy Trust underpinned by Methodist principles. This new Trust feeds into the *Transforming Lives* Strategy, whereby we aim to follow John Wesley's injunction that his followers should go not just where we are needed, but where we are needed most. The Inspiring Lives Education Trust (ILET) welcomes everyone into a world of education where schools and their pupils are the beating hearts of their communities.

ILET warmly welcomes community schools alongside Methodist and joint Methodist/ Anglican partner schools, primary and secondary phase as well as alternative and special schools. The Trust believes fundamentally in connexionalism, that there is strength in diversity and cross sector partnerships – performing together with sister Trusts under the

Methodist Schools Committee, and working to deliver the *Transforming Lives* Strategy, all with the betterment of pupils first and foremost.

The aims of our new Trust are anchored in John Wesley's transformative influence in education. By building families of schools, sharing the privilege and responsibility of educating future generations, ensuring that pupils feel cared for and validating the authentic selves of pupils and staff, ILET hopes to foster compassionate, well-educated and emotionally literate pupils.

ILET's mission is to provide 'Education for All'. Together for all, and with all, the Trust will work to unlock the economic and cultural prosperity in communities, thus transforming lives and contributing to the common good. Working for, and with, purpose the Trust will seek the transformation of people and society through high quality teaching and learning.

How will we do this? By working together to share best practice and workload, teaching teams, harnessing effective research-based pedagogy to ensure every pupil and adult fulfils their potential and is enabled to flourish.

## Underpinned by five core principles, ILET's vision is:

- ◆ To nurture ways of being and learning that contribute to each person reaching their full potential educationally, spiritually, culturally and socially.
- ◆ To work in unity to improve and maintain excellent educational standards and outcomes.
- ◆ To develop strong partnerships with parents and communities.
- ◆ To advance social mobility by unlocking economic and cultural prosperity for the next generation.
- ◆ To work in supportive collaboration with the wider education service.



**Inspiring Lives  
Education Trust**

**Visit:**  
The Inspiring  
Lives website

For further information visit:  
**[www.inspiringlivestrust.org.uk](http://www.inspiringlivestrust.org.uk)**

Or contact: David Kershaw, CEO:  
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 **SCAN ME**



## GET INVOLVED!

If you would like to get more involved in our schools which are located all over the country, you might consider becoming a Governor. There is a huge variety: from small to large; primary and all through; some in local authorities, some in academies and some independent. Have a look for a school near you with the map on the next page.

Our schools may be varied but they all have one important thing in common: they have foundations that reflect their roots in Methodism. We need Governors who understand the basic beliefs of the Church and can make these relevant in the daily operation and management of the schools. Schools need Governors who are prepared to volunteer their professional expertise to assist the Head, and the whole school, to make the experience the best it can possibly be for our pupils and staff alike.

### So, what does being a Governor involve?

You will attend meetings/sub-committees and contribute to those offering your perspective and experience; you will get to know the school, staff and community; you will get to know its strengths, weaknesses and where it might develop. You will be trained and prepared for the role which also includes visiting the school to see it in operation, supporting events and getting to see the pupils' work, talents and enthusiasms.

Schools transform lives and being involved in them is a humbling and amazing experience. If you want to be a part of a thriving community, bringing your own expertise and experience to a school (for example in HR, finance, property and buildings, the law and of course, faith and spirituality), then please contact us! **[admin@methodistschools.org.uk](mailto:admin@methodistschools.org.uk)**

**Find out  
more:**  
Why should  
you become  
a school  
governor  
information

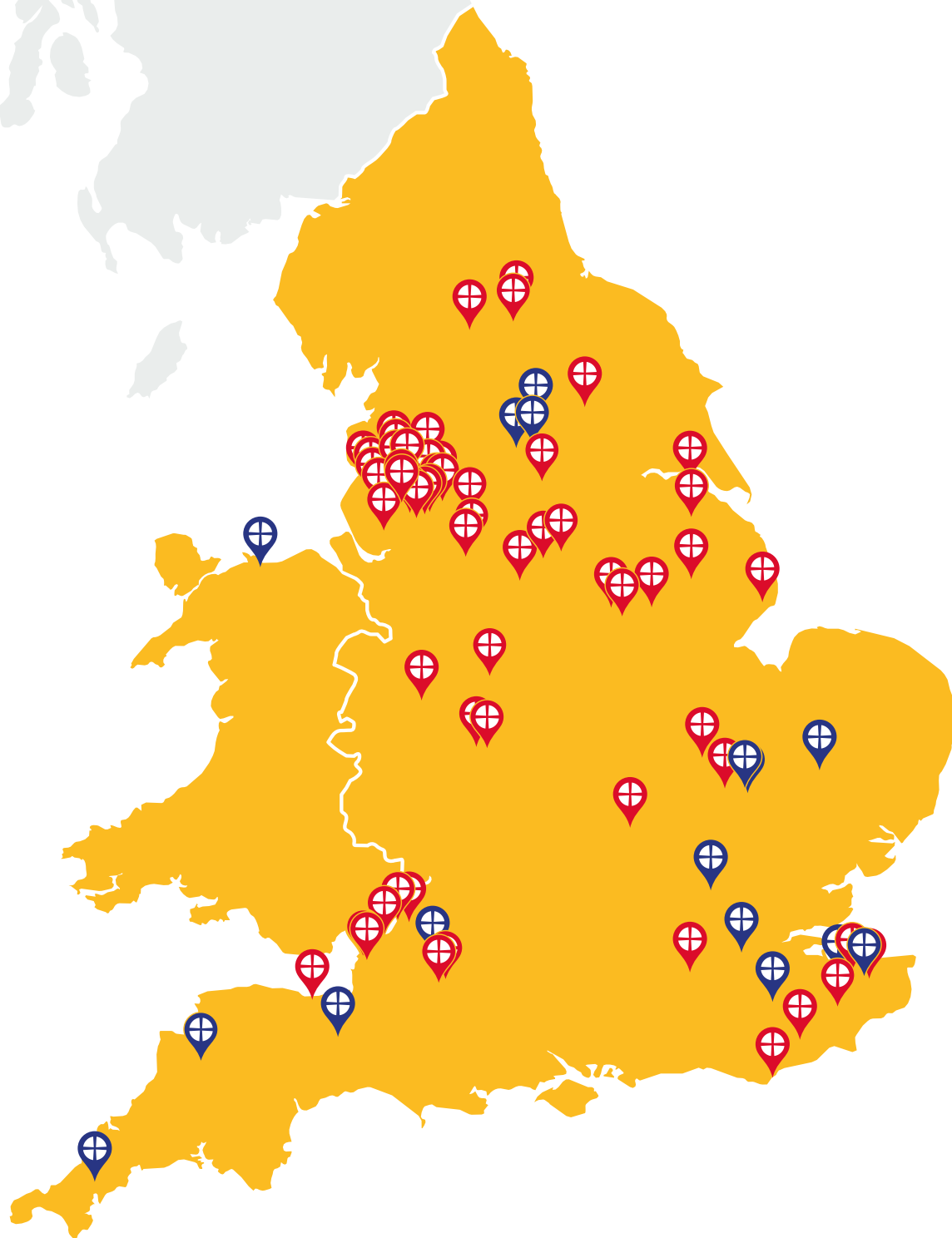


 **SCAN ME**



# Methodist Schools in England and Wales

-  Methodist  
Maintained  
Schools
-  Methodist  
Independent  
Schools



## Methodist Schools

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