

36. Transforming Lives: A Schools' Educational Strategy for the Methodist Church

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Building on the work of the Education Commission (Conference 2012), this report outlines a strategy for the Methodist Church for 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.

2. Introduction

- 2.1. Methodism has been involved in establishing and running schools since the 1740s. During the 19th century, significant numbers of primary schools were created by local Methodist churches; and several larger (originally boarding) schools were founded. In total almost 1,000 schools were set up in the name of Methodism. During this period, the Church worked with the climate of establishing schooling for all and built a reputation for good education within a 'free church' ethos. It also founded two teacher-training colleges and contributed considerably to the teaching profession, in which many Methodists found a vocation.
- 2.2. During the 20th century, with the establishment of state-provided education, crystallised in the 1944 Education Act, Methodism transferred most of its schools to the state. Those that remained were a number of primary schools relating in some way to the local authority and a few independent schools. Methodism continued to contribute to education at all levels and in particular encouraged men and women to teach within the state system. Alongside this, churches and Circuits engaged with schools in their communities in a variety of ways seeking to enhance the life of the schools and to share something of the gospel.
- 2.3. The 21st Century has seen very radical change in the way schools are set up and run. In particular, the diminishing role of local authorities and the growth of academies and multi-academy trusts (MATs), recognised in the 2012 Education Commission Report, have continued. We now find ourselves in a very different landscape from previous centuries and our approach needs to take account of the challenges and opportunities facing school education today and act accordingly.

3. The Context

- 3.1. The context for schools in the UK continues to be challenging. The 'landscape'

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continues to evolve: by January 2020, the DfE annual census recorded that 37% of primary schools and 77% of secondary schools had converted to academies. Momentum for this move has come from governments of all flavours over the last 20 years pursuing the objective of an increasing number of schools becoming academies, resulting in a diminishing capacity of many local authorities to support their schools. A model which accesses appropriate expertise for particular needs and projects is emerging in preference to the pattern of retained local staff.

- 3.2. Schools of religious character make up about one third of all maintained schools and some 37% of maintained primary schools. These schools continue to make a distinctive contribution to the variety of educational settings which include voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools as well as schools which retain a faith ethos, although most schools do not have a religious affiliation and the National Secular Society and Humanist Movement are gaining more prominence. The daily act of collective worship is still a requirement of all schools and Religious Education continues to be part of the National Curriculum for all schools. Both are positive features in schools of religious character, while in non-faith schools the daily act of worship has often become a weekly focus on the school's values, and the teaching of Religious Education may not be seen as a priority. Certainly, it is more difficult than it used to be to find teachers with a background in RE.
- 3.3. A changing inspection regime characterised by high levels of accountability with a focus on specific outcomes and data is set against curriculum specifications that are frequently revised to respond to political inclinations. Demographic waves mean that there are now more children than ever in secondary schools, and whilst overall funding has increased, schools are finding it difficult to manage with a real term reduction in per pupil funding, creating a sense of 'having to do more with less'. Teacher training institutions regularly fall short of recruitment targets, and retention of teachers is not as strong as it was, meaning that it is more difficult to attract good teachers to schools and leadership roles are often very difficult to fill.
- 3.4. Societal demands of what schools should cover have also grown, with concern for safeguarding and preventing radicalisation as well as mental health and wellbeing. Continuing rapid developments in technology, and expectations of blended learning, present both challenges and opportunities for educational settings as schools seek to understand how to use exciting ways to engage learning whilst helping children to stay safe in a virtual world where misrepresentation and cyberbullying are present. Expectations from parents are high with what feels like a growing culture of complaint and grievance and likelihood of challenging the authority once protected by expertise.

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3.5. In spite of this background, schools are making a positive contribution to embracing diversity and dealing with racism, homophobia and the changing nature of family units. Requirements for Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) were updated in 2020. The revised Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) framework guides Methodist schools to live out a Christian vision, enable robust religious literacy and deal with contradictory convictions. The importance of 'the pupil voice' has grown in schools with a focus on causes such as sustainable living.

4. Theology

4.1. Previous Conference statements and reports have set out Methodism's commitment to education in theological terms. Below are reminders of the theological bases for our engagement with schools.

4.2. Every human being made in the image of God. The Education Commission affirmed the uniqueness of each person, loved by God and full of potential.

4.3. *'We are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27) and called to know God, to find full life in Jesus (John 10:10) and be part of God's mission (Matthew 28:19-20). As individuals we have self-awareness, autonomy and possess certain rights and duties which through education can enable us to gain wisdom and insight, a sense of what is right and just and fair and a direction we can follow through our lives (Proverbs 1:3-4). Through the power of God's transforming love, instead of conforming to society, we are called as Jesus's disciples to seek in this world what is good and acceptable and perfect to God (Romans 12:2). 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.'* Paragraph 7.1

In other words, God values all God's children equally even though they are created differently: and not only that, but God also desires fullness of life for all. For Methodists, the notion of **Christian Perfection** articulates a belief in the transformative potential that belongs to all who follow Christ, in the power of the Spirit. As one expression of this, we believe that, as human beings grow into perfect love, they are also led to lives of mission. In mission, God's people express that divine love, at work in their own lives, in diverse ways: seeking justice, transforming society, working alongside the vulnerable, being peace-makers, proclaiming the good news of the gospel, and fostering reconciliation. In this mission, education has always been a central priority for Methodism, because of its ability to draw out and develop an individual's gifts and contribute to the transformation of people and society. Education allows us to understand

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our failings and our potential; through it we come to appreciate the freedom and responsibility that comes from God; and we are able to grasp the importance of a life dedicated to serving God and other people, and the means by which to do so. Wesley sought to embody this vision in his school in Kingswood as well as in his societies.

Whilst the purpose of our schools is not specifically to produce Christians (and we recognise the value of staff and children of other faiths, and none, in our schools) we do expect that our schools will give pupils a lively, attractive exposure to Christian faith, help to develop a robust religious literacy, and engage with ways of being and learning that contribute to each person reaching their full potential in God.

- 4.4. Creation endowed with divine wisdom and purpose.** The 1999 Report, *The Essence of Education*, points to the creation as made by a loving God with the 'astonishing promise that a fellowship of mutual love will be established between itself and its creator'. The creation in and through Jesus Christ is imbued with the presence and purpose of God and through the spirit of God dwelling within all God has made, creation is guided and guarded on its journey towards its intentional fulfilment. (paragraph 2.2) Made in the image and likeness of God, all human beings are called to participate in the transforming work of God and to be themselves transfigured within this divine purpose to experience abundant life. The Church, as a witness to all humankind, is called to be a school of discipleship, fostering the conditions in which all things are redeemed in the light of God's gracious gospel of love. Schools and other educational institutions can play a part in this purpose by exploring what it means to be human; by investigating truth in all forms and through all means; and by allowing learners to consider what it might mean to develop spiritual life.
- 4.5. Creation's divine purpose links to another theology of education, namely **God as Teacher**. Clement of Alexandria named one of his three major writings 'The Paedagogus'. The word means tutor or teacher but was also the name given to those slaves or other persons of the household who accompanied children to and from school. The work is the middle part of what appears to be a curriculum of Christian education, but what is of significance is that Clement identifies God as the Paedagogus. His conviction is that God is the teacher or, perhaps more accurately, the one who accompanies the learner in his or her journey of growth to the fulfilment of their human and spiritual calling. The underlying theology implicit in Clement's writing embraces both a view of God (a proper theology) and of human beings (an anthropology) which is fruitful 1800 years later. Within an understanding of the universe as expanding and human beings as the product of evolution, learning takes on a different meaning. Learning is deeply embedded in

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the evolutionary process, which in turn arises out of an evolving universe and thus is central to any contemporary understanding of life. We are not the only animals who learn but we are, as far as we can tell, the most adept species at learning and learning has been central to the success of humans in populating the earth (and perhaps, in the future, populating space). It would appear, consistent with Clement's view, that learning is essential to us, in the sense of 'at the core of our being', within our DNA, and that God not only intends this as part of the order of creation but also accompanies us and actively works with us in our learning.

4.6. Mission. Christians are commissioned, sent (John 20:21) and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be witnesses (Acts 1:8); to 'proclaim the gospel in all the world' (Mark 16:15); and 'to make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). 'One can hardly imagine a Christian missionary strategy that does not involve a stress upon education'. So says the 2002 Conference report, *School with a Religious Character* (paragraph 14). It is certainly true that thousands, perhaps millions of schools across the world were established by Christian churches alongside hospitals and churches to express concern for the whole person and as a witness to the call to service implicit in the gospel. Sometimes building and running a school has enabled the Church to establish a base for its worship, witness and service. Sometimes, in situations where Christianity has met with suspicion or hostility, denominational schools by their commitment to nurturing the best from its pupils of whatever faith and background, have been the single most effective witness to the gospel in that location. In our context, sponsoring schools, especially in new areas of housing and/or challenging locations, is a way of Methodism having both a presence and bearing witness. Practically, a school may provide a meeting and worship space for a Christian community and thus be a springboard for other forms of mission in the area. But even where there are no other forms or patterns of witness, a school may itself be an expression of the gospel in its way of being and learning, exposing children to the good news of Jesus Christ, which may in turn contribute well beyond its walls. Testimony from such figures as Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan indicate the significance of Methodist schools in shaping not only individuals but also the wider world.

4.7. Arminian theology does not, of itself, provide a theological rationale for involvement in schools but it does shape the nature of how we should go about the business of setting up and running an educational establishment. The ethos we bring to our work is a Wesleyan form of Arminianism, which stressed both inclusion and participation. For the Wesleys, and contrary to the prevailing theology of the 18th century, no one was predestined to be saved or lost. Rather, God's love is for all, Christ's death was for all, and all are invited to the salvation feast. It is not difficult to carry that conviction into an approach to schooling. As the Education Commission (2012) puts it: "salvation for all" naturally leads to

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“education for all” as everyone matters to God and therefore none should be deprived of the opportunity to develop to their full potential’. Arminian inclusion, as it was worked out by John Wesley, went further, intentionally communicating the good news with those often marginalised or excluded, so that all might discover that they were loved by God and that their persons and talents were significant to God and in God’s mission. This too needs to inform our approach.

- 4.8. Alongside inclusion, Wesleyan Arminianism places a strong emphasis on participation, which involved the exercise of human will. It is not surprising that the Wesleys were accused of being (semi) Pelagian because they expected believers to choose to travel the Christian journey, doing good wherever and whenever they could. This practical expression of holiness (and means to holiness) moved the theology of the period from passive reception of grace to active participation in grace. Participation is a key plank in our understanding of education. Good education requires active involvement, and good educators do not impose understandings on their pupils but rather evoke curiosity and nurture the hunger for wisdom, so the natural desire for learning grows into a life-long passion.
- 4.9. It is surprising that the notion of **prevenient grace** is not emphasised in any of the reports to Conference noted above, for this key emphasis of Methodist theology supplies Christians with the confidence to enter any and all spheres of life. God’s grace, prior to any action on our part, means we can engage with institutions, communities and individuals believing that what we bring will connect with and build on what has already been given in divine love. Moreover, it allows us to be open, expectant recipients of the grace that will meet us. Prevenient grace can be seen in the admissions policies of Methodist schools, which are open to people of all faiths and none, and in the care with which we attend to each individual, seeking their fulfilment and flourishing.

Whilst the preceding paragraphs do not constitute a systematic theology of Education, they provide a clear theological grounding, which gives shape to our involvement in schools. We do not believe that further theological work is needed to build an educational strategy for schools.

Strategy

The strategy has two major parts to it: 1) a continued engagement of churches and Circuits with schools of all types; 2) a specific strategy for Methodist Schools.

5. Strategy Part 1: Engagement with local schools

- 5.1. It is impossible to set out all the work done by Methodist churches, ministers,

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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.

- 5.2. Many go into schools to lead or help with Collective Worship, others to support RE as guest speakers or panel members and some to participate in Sixth Form or GCSE conferences. Some churches have provided chaplaincy teams for schools. Across the country, Methodists choose to be school governors, seeing that as a good place for Christians to be involved. Then there are those who hear reading, provide expertise or help with gardening clubs, art projects and accompany classes on school trips. One church, with an eye to supporting staff, takes a cake into the staff room each Friday. The calling of the school chaplains brings particular strength and opportunity to the life of Methodist Schools. Within and through the schools, the church has the opportunity to work with, literally, thousands of people at the margins of the church's reach. The schools offer a platform to build wider recognition and relationships, bridging church and community. The chaplains bring to the school a grounding in the spiritual dimension and skill in articulating the things of God to the range of people in the school. They are also first call for support in the many crises of families' lives. The Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) chaplains are fulltime and residential in the school community, including boarders from many countries unfamiliar with Christianity; Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) chaplaincy is a role of local ministers or circuit children and youth workers. Increasingly strong networking within and between the sectors nourishes the whole group and offers a hub of training and digital community for people doing similar work in non-Methodist schools.
- 5.3. *Open the Book* is to be found in lots of primary schools, with volunteers telling Bible stories in imaginative ways. Godly Play is also widely used and there are many locally developed programmes for festivals, such as *The Hope Journey*, in Ellesmere Port and *Rewind* in Yorkshire and elsewhere.
- 5.4. As well as going *into* schools, churches often act as hosts for a variety of school visitors. Some churches have created a Godly Play room for classes from local schools to visit, with volunteers trained to run sessions. Churches have discovered that they often have the right space for pupils' A Level Arts exhibitions. Others host school class visits to explore architecture and church design, which provide a wonderful opportunity to share the meaning of Christian symbols, stained glass windows and historical artefacts, as well as giving people an experience of a worship space (sometimes for the first time).
- 5.5. Some of the most creative work happens in partnerships between churches and

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schools. In one school, the local Methodists help facilitate a 'sleep out under the stars' night for Year 6 pupils in the local primary school. This involves collecting sleeping bags for children who do not have them and cooking the morning-after breakfast. Another church works with a school towards a crib festival. Children receive worksheets to take home about the Nativity and they are asked to make cribs. These are all displayed at the local church and there are prizes for the best cribs.

- 5.6. A number of Methodist churches host Early Years provision on their premises and there are real opportunities for synergy between church and school-based provision. Most MAST schools have expertise in provision for 40-60 months and MIST schools often have provision for much younger children. This is a real offer by churches into their communities, but practitioners can feel somewhat at sea, unsupported with either practical requirements or the ever-raising educational bar. Both MIST and MAST have strength to draw on here but there are resource implications which fall outside the current remit of either group.
- 5.7. In addition to this are those Methodists employed in schools who find their vocation in education. This includes teachers and teaching assistants but also secretaries, administrators, cooks, caretakers, cleaning and other support staff. Many are fulfilled in these roles, believing they are helping the school do its work and children to flourish. Methodists engaged in schools are encouraged to join in the national discussion realigning our schools with a broader curriculum, skilful use of technology, a greater focus on wellbeing, and placing creativity at the heart of school life.
- 5.8. Following the Education Commission, some districts have successfully appointed District Education Officers or Committees to support those in education and to engage in issues facing schools and other educational establishments. Running training days for those who lead worship in schools and holding a special commissioning service on Education Sunday for those involved in schools not only encourages them, but it is also an opportunity to invite local school heads and governors to share in the celebration. We believe more could be done by District and perhaps Circuit Education Officers, with greater centralised support.
- 5.9. **Resolutions:** Methodists to engage wherever possible with schools in their locality:

36/2. The Conference:

- a. **affirms all those who work in schools and those who voluntarily give time and talents to support education.**

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- b. urges Circuits to undertake a regular audit of the schools work in their area as part of their mission.**
- c. encourages Districts to appoint District Education Officers, if not in place, and to plan appropriate events for those who go into schools to lead worship or communicate the Christian story. This to be supported by the Learning Network, the Children, Youth and Families section of the Connexional Team and the Methodist Schools Network.**
- d. invites its young people to explore education as a vocation and Circuits to support its people to explore teaching as a valued area of Christian ministry both within and outside Methodist schools.**
- e. encourages Circuits and churches to recruit governors for schools in their communities.**
- f. asks Circuits and Districts to be alert and, where appropriate, be active in sponsoring new Methodist schools in their area with the support of the Methodist Schools Network.**

'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.'

Methodist School

'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 well being will extend to care for whole families - an area in which the church has a ministry.'

Superintendent Minister

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Strategy Part 2: A Methodist Schools Strategy

The strategy for Methodist schools can be summarised in a strapline:

Growing schools, offering excellent education with a confident Methodist ethos, working together, and prioritising areas of need.

This breaks neatly into five sections.

Growing Schools

This phrase intentionally covers the dual aspirations of the Methodist Church to increase the number of schools that it runs (as determined by Conference 2012) and also to ensure, through working to the highest possible professional standards that all Methodist schools flourish in providing an excellent education in the fullest sense and in line with our Methodist ethos and values.

- 6.1 Methodist schools have a small but significant place in the school system of England. We currently have 83 schools, of which 66 are maintained and 17 are independent schools. Twenty-six schools are in the North West of England, but we have schools in 40 different local authorities scattered across the country. Through these schools we are in touch with 25,000 children and a community of 100,000 people each school day. For most of these people this may be their only experience of church and Methodist values. These schools are recognised as successful through a variety of measures including Ofsted and SIAMS, demonstrating performance higher than those seen nationally in all schools. This strength is seen through their organisational culture demonstrated in an ethos that continually strives to serve the needs of the pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

'My school is situated in one of the most deprived areas of Birmingham where there are high instances of child neglect, domestic violence and substance abuse. The Ward has the highest number of child protection issues in Birmingham. There is an absence of church life on the estate since the closure some years ago of an LEP which was based in the school. [Another] Church had been meeting in the school until Covid-19 struck but is not able to do so at the moment. 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

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6.2 The current landscape of schools' education combined with a highly regarded reputation for quality education in Methodist schools suggest that this is the time to extend our presence in schools' education to reach more children, to benefit more lives. This is in continuity with the Methodist Conference resolutions of 2012, which, having received the report of the Education Commission, affirmed "its commitment to the provision of schools of a religious character" and aspired "to increase the number of Methodist schools". There are good reasons for such growth.

- Believing in the importance of education, we will want to encourage high educational standards, and, where possible, to share in its provision, believing that we have something distinctive to offer. Where there are opportunities to increase this provision, Methodism should take them.
- There are characteristics of a Methodist school we would like to see as a feature of all schools. Wesley established Kingswood School as a model school, which, in many ways, he hoped would challenge the educational practices of his time. Methodists will continue to see the establishing of schools as an important strand of their mission to society as a whole, as well as for the individuals who attend them.
- As suggested above, schools, especially in new housing developments and areas of greatest need ensure that Methodism has both a presence and a witness in these places, in line with connexional priorities for Church at the Margins. Practically, they may provide a meeting and worship space for a Christian community and thus be a springboard for other forms of mission in the area.
- The provision of even a comparatively small number of schools, enables the Methodist Church to participate in the national debate about education in a way that other free churches do not. A larger number of schools would increase our right to expect 'a place at the table'. Groups of schools working together are taken more seriously than an individual school speaking alone.

6.3 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. It is also about developing the quality of all staff, governors, school leaders, through support and research and deeper engagement with church communities. That is why the proposal here is not to expand rapidly but at an appropriate pace ensuring that the infrastructure is securely in place to support quality. The Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST), Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) and the Epworth Education Trust (EET) established by the Methodist Church, each have a part to play in the growth of schools in the broadest sense.

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- 6.4 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. The Trust aims to grow at an appropriate pace with an initial focus in the NW of England, where the current schools are. It is vital that EET will be responsive to government initiative and educational change.
- 6.5 MAST continues to support all schools in the state sector which reference Methodism in their trust deed, either as solely Methodist or shared, ecumenical schools. This includes schools which have become academies with various trusts, local or Methodist, and voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools. Under Standing Order 342, the Methodist Council has responsibility for the schools' standards and distinctive Methodist ethos, which are delegated to, and delivered by MAST. Grants from Southlands Methodist Trust and Westminster College Oxford Trust have helped to finance a staffing infrastructure so that schools can be supported within a group context. MAST works with the Church of England in the development and implementation of the SIAMS, which helps to ensure the character of the group.
- 6.6 MIST has expanded and contracted its number of schools over the last few years. It works closely with Associated and Affiliated independent schools, with MAST and EET. MIST has also sought and responded to opportunities to work with other schools of Methodist foundation not only in the UK but also overseas.
- 6.7 Our schools currently have 25,000 children enrolled, which means we have contact with 100,000 people each school day in one form or another. Our ambition is to extend this number to enable more children to benefit from a distinctive Methodist educational provision. Within 5 years we aim to extend our influence in strong strategic, responsible and sustainable ways.
- 6.8 Resolutions:** Maintaining and extending our engagement with schools

36/3. The Conference:

- a. encourages the Epworth Education Trust to expand its number of schools through adoption, merger, and sponsoring new schools.**
- b. directs MAST and MIST to continue to be open to affiliation and partnership with other schools, consistent with their established strategic plans.**

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- c. directs churches and Circuits to seek or take up creative partnerships with any Methodist school within their Circuit, or, if already established, to continue to develop this partnership.**
- d. encourages Methodist schools to play a role in bringing new schools to the Methodist Schools Network.**
- e. directs the Connexional Team to support churches and Circuits in their work with local schools (whether Methodist or not) in the use of school and church premises.**

Offering excellent education

- 6.9 Excellence in education is considerably more than high academic achievement. It means firstly, an all-round education for all human flourishing. As *The Essence of Education* puts it

'Academic learning is important; it is not possible to imagine a good education system which scorns high standards and sound scholarship. Such learning must not be undervalued; but education is much more than this: it can never be exclusively concerned with the life of the intellect which feeds on academic learning. It is also concerned with the effective domain - the refinement of the emotions through art, music, literature, dance and drama. And it must affirm the practical and creative faculties which find outlets through making things and the application of knowledge through design and technology.' (paragraph 3.12)

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. Excellence in education 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.

- 6.10 Secondly, excellence in education means 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.
- 6.11 Finally, it is important to commit to excellence in developing school leaders, governors, volunteers, teaching and support staff and all connected to

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the school. The benchmarks of this excellence are a deep commitment to improvement, a healthy school community, positive relationships with partners and local community. In other words, an excellent environment for learning and achievement, rooted in our Methodist ethos.

6.12 Resolutions: Pursing educational excellence

36/4. The Conference

- a. directs Methodist schools to continue to develop improvement plans designed to ensure the best possible education for pupils.**
- b. encourages Methodist schools to engage in an ongoing critical conversation on 'What does excellent look like?'**
- c. directs the three schools Trusts to monitor, strengthen and support performance and outcomes for all their schools.**
- d. directs the Methodist Schools Committee (MSC) to monitor that the Trusts are fulfilling their responsibilities and to seek to nurture a climate of belonging and partnership with the wider church**
- e. directs the Methodist schools Trusts to continue to develop more support for governors in all our schools.**

With a confident Methodist Ethos

6.13 Strategic support for developing a confident Methodist ethos is crucial in Methodist schools. It is noted that there is a changing landscape with less religious literacy. Consequently, Methodist schools need to articulate to society their distinctiveness. This has to be more than a tick box exercise. 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.

6.14 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. When our pupils articulate what is most valuable to them about their Methodist education, what they describe chimes with our ethos and values. This is a good indicator that our ethos is being lived out in our Schools.

6.15 For this purpose, an Ethos Development Group (EDG) was established in 2017. The EDG works with all three Trusts to nourish, strengthen and resource Methodist ethos throughout all Methodist schools, reporting regularly to the MSC.

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Conversation with pupils at Methodist Primary 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.'

'Everybody is equal and special'

What do you enjoy about collective worship?

'We enjoy singing in collective worship, we sing lots of songs.'

'In our worship I like listening to the Bible stories that teach you stuff. Like the story of the boy that leaves his dad, spends all his money and then comes home and asks his dad to forgive him.'

'We have learnt the Lord's Prayer and say this prayer and it really helps us.'

'I really enjoy saying [of] John Wesley "Do all the good you can"'

How can we use the John Wesley rule?

It means do your best everywhere and never give up when you're doing something.

It has already facilitated conversation on worship, chaplaincy, RE and leadership. Through SIAMS and SERVE, all schools articulate and evaluate their ethos development in theological, as well as values terms. It is important to be able to measure the effectiveness of the impact of values and ethos on wellbeing. As reflective practitioners this will give us insight into how our values and ethos are translated into practical living and the consequences this brings.

6.16 Currently every school associated with the Methodist Schools Network works to a mission statement:

The Methodist Church is engaged in education as part of its Christian mission in the world. Its schools will seek to extend the Methodist ethos and character and contribute to diversity in education.

The schools aim:

- *to be caring Christian family communities committed to the development of the full potential of each individual, having regard for their personal attributes in addition to their academic aspirations;*
- *to maintain high educational standards in all their academic, cultural and sporting activities, stimulating excitement in learning and requiring discipline in study whatever the ability of the child;*
- *to work with and in the communities they serve;*

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- *to worship as Christians in the Methodist tradition; to uphold Christian values in practice as well as in theory and to make religious education a strong feature of the curriculum, whilst welcoming members of other faiths (and none) in a spirit of openness and tolerance;*
- *to encourage pupils in a critical examination of the standards and values current in society and to discover and develop a personal faith to guide them throughout their lives.*

6.17 Research has shown that RE has been under threat, undervalued and under resourced in national education policies over many years, leading to a shortage of qualified teachers. In an age when religious literacy has never been more important for mutual understanding and personal development, as well as heritage and cultural reasons, Methodist schools are committed to excellence in RE teaching and aim to be beacon institutions, outstanding in RE provision and in the support of specialist staff development. Through its own voice, and working with other faith partners, Methodism, through its schools officers, is able to contribute to the national picture in religious education: for example, in its initiation of the acclaimed Anti-Racist Teaching in Religious Education resource, developed in partnership with the Free Churches Group, and in its role in the RE Council. This contributes to the wider experience of children in learning about religion, well beyond the schools themselves.

6.18 Resolutions: Developing a confident Methodist ethos

36/5. The Conference:

- affirms the Ethos Development Group and encourages it to continue to give strategic support to the development of a confident Methodist ethos for the Trusts and schools.**
- encourages the Trusts to use SIAMS and SERVE further to develop the Methodist ethos in all schools.**
- encourages engagement between schools and local Circuits in exploring Methodist ethos, what it means and how it may more effectively impact life in the local community.**
- requests MIST to commission research on the impact of values/ethos in our schools on wellbeing.**
- urges the Trusts to work together to further develop training in Methodist ethos for chaplains, district school officers and Methodist school governors.**
- supports the Trusts in working together with Methodist founded teacher training institutions, the Connexion and alongside ecumenical colleagues (eg The Cathedrals Group) to:**

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- **promote teaching as a Christian vocation, enhance teacher training and to encourage and develop research skills of our teachers.**
 - **engage more effectively, in line with Connexional priorities, with marginalised communities.**
- g. encourages all Methodist schools to cultivate excellence in RE and share resources developed both locally and centrally.**

Working Together

- 6.19 The schools will work in partnership with their local church and circuit. This requires districts, circuits and churches actively to embrace the schools as part of their mission and entails schools in identifying what they can contribute to the Methodist community. This is not just a matter of mutual benefits, but relates to the wider community. What our children have learned and how they take on board Methodist characteristics and Christian values through their actions is changing lives in the wider local communities – see, for example, Appendix D.
- 6.20 As the mission statement (paragraph 6.13) indicates, a key part of the schools' mission is to work with and in the communities they serve. This takes many forms. Several 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, for example, in communities with high levels of domestic violence; in work with refugees and asylum seekers; in helping families access wider services. The schools are also active in supporting the work of food banks, participating in local environmental projects, visiting care homes (including those run by MHA), supporting projects led by Action for Children, sharing facilities with local community and church networks and hosting community events. As the schools often operate in areas where there is no longer a Methodist church presence, their work (especially through the activity of the chaplain) also provides a hub to speak to the spiritual needs of the community in creative and appropriate ways.
- 6.21 Following the recommendations of the Education Commission (2012), close working and mutual support has developed between the independent schools and those within the state system. This is an exciting model in our current landscape, which enables the sharing of resources, staff development and innovation. The intention is to continue to extend this partnership and further develop the strategic alignment of the Trusts. We are ambitious to deepen this partnership nationally and wherever we have a Methodist school in the region.

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- 6.22 A key part of the strategy is to continue to network schools (including ecumenically) for mutual support, collaborative working and sharing of Trusts' resources. Clearly, this strategy sets out a vision rooted in our ethos and values. It is not meant to restrict unhelpfully individual school strategies which are best locally delivered.
- 6.23 In recent years, opportunities for working together with new partners on the international scene have arisen. The establishment of Kent College Dubai came about as part of a plan to increase access; a management fee and a share of revenue from the enterprise is used in bursary provision in Canterbury. A similar school is planned in Cairo, supporting Coptic Christians and another Methodist school has been welcomed by the Methodist Church in Hong Kong. Several MIST schools have partnerships with Methodist Schools overseas; the Trusts and the schools are developing closer association with the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities (IAMSCU). Across the Methodist Schools Network there are examples of working with schools that serve challenging areas of the world and new opportunities are being explored, through the Global Relationships Office and Edukid. These are far from colonial enterprises. They represent Methodists in mutual partnership working now on a world map to provide the best education possible.
- 6.24 In collaboration with IAMSCU, Methodist schools plans to host an international conference in Bristol in April 2023. This event will bring together school leaders and governors from schools with a Methodist foundation in the UK and all over the world. It is hoped to extend an invitation to Methodists engaged with community schools too. The Conference will both celebrate Methodist Education and provide a Call to Action for the future. Through sponsorship and other means the conference will be self-financing.

6.25 Resolutions: Working together

36/6. The Conference:

- a. urges all Methodist schools to engage with local Circuits and Districts by hosting events, sharing facilities, and drawing on the Methodist Modern Art Collection.**
- b. encourages all Methodist schools to build on their strong commitment to local partnerships and the use of their facilities by local community groups.**
- c. directs the three Trusts to continue to work together in more areas, reporting to the Methodist Schools Committee on new opportunities and actions.**

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- d. **encourages a strengthening of the partnership between Methodist Schools Network and Southlands College (University of Roehampton) and Westminster Institute of Education (Oxford Brookes University):**
- **to encourage young people to explore teaching as a vocation, and to pursue those vocations in Methodist-related HE contexts;**
 - **to explore new and meaningful ways of collaborating across the primary, secondary and higher education sectors for their mutual flourishing;**
 - **to pursue appropriate research and development.**
- e. **encourages Methodist schools, in collaboration with the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities, to host an international conference in Bristol in April 2023.**

Prioritising areas of need

- 6.26 Methodism cherishes its commitment to go to those 'who need us most'. Whilst Wesley's text has the word 'want' rather than 'need', we have recognised that those who are most in want are often those in most need and our social action has carried a concern for the deprived and vulnerable. Currently Methodist schools span the range of children from those with some privilege to those with significant challenges. Methodism should remain committed to serve all children but where choices are to be made, its Trusts prioritise the needy in line with connexional priorities, such as *God For All* and an emphasis on Church at the Margins.
- 6.27 Need takes many forms. Methodist schools are committed to supporting children with **Special Educational Need**. All our schools, independent and state funded, have good track-records in providing significant support to pupils with a range of learning needs/disabilities e.g. visually impaired, aurally impaired, dyslexic, dyscalculic, children on the autistic spectrum and with ADHD etc. We ensure pupils who need them have special access arrangements for public examinations and provide support for children for whom English is not their first language. The EET aims to add special schools to its portfolio both to support the specialist work of such schools and to share the expertise across all its establishments.
- 6.28 Emotional needs** are equally important. All schools witness the impact of family breakdown, serious illness, bereavement, peer pressure; they affect rich and poor alike. Indeed, there are some types of emotional need that can be seen more in so-called "privileged" families than those with fewer material possessions. Methodist schools are primarily pastoral communities committed to care and

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compassion. As witnessed in the recent COVID-19 pandemic, they act as an extended family, recognising and tending to the emotionally vulnerable.

6.29 Spiritual needs are a key concern of faith schools. Those deprived of opportunities to hear the gospel are invited into its grace; those with no language to articulate their spiritual experiences are given words, images and music; those with many material advantages but ignorant of the good news are to receive its gift and to engage with its challenge. From the New Testament onwards, the rich as well as poor have been called to enter the kingdom and to create a new world of justice and peace. Young people in Methodist schools are often awakened to a new perspective of the world and new possibilities of service.

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

6.31 MIST schools are committed to extending their means tested bursary provision to 10% of income, so that some 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. In addition, MIST schools have given free places to unaccompanied minors who have come to Britain seeking asylum and vulnerable children placed on the recommendation of the local authority and supported by children's charities.

6.32 Many of our primary schools serve areas of great social need and serve to address these needs through both the curriculum and the pastoral care they offer. For example, we have a number of schools within Wigan Local Authority, which has a domestic violence rate significantly higher than the national average; these schools address these needs through teaching what healthy relationships look like in PHSE lessons. Alongside this, they have offered practical care for families fleeing domestic violence including sourcing furniture for them.

6.33 Whilst being proactively committed to applying for sponsorship of challenging schools and the opening of new schools in disadvantaged areas, there is an understanding that the final decision regarding these applications lies with the Department for Education. Methodism is committed to bidding for the opportunities to provide schools in deprived areas. While financial resources for the establishment of such schools will be provided by the government, it is important to ensure good provision of other forms of resource (e.g. governors) by strong and committed support from the local church and circuit as well as other Methodist school networking. Where presented with a choice of options we will choose to go to those who are in most need.

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6.34 Resolutions: Prioritising areas of need

36/7. The Conference

- a. **directs the Trusts, when opening a new school, to keep in view those 'who need us most'.**
- b. **encourages Epworth Education Trust to seek to include Special Educational Needs schools, when appropriate.**
- c. **requests the publicising of good news stories especially where pupils have become courageous advocates and agents of change in people's lives and communities.**
- d. **encourages MIST to pursue bursaries provision in order to support vulnerable young people, for example, refugees.**

Syrian Refugees at Methodist Schools¹

Working alongside local Christian charity, CHARIS Refugees, we were delighted to welcome one family of three Syrian children in September, 2017, before another family of two joined 12 months later.

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 they were bringing into Taunton under the Government's Community Sponsorship Programme, we immediately knew this was something our community would wish to support. We had all seen the pictures of the news of the terrible events in Syria and, as a member of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust, this was something which fell within our remit of helping the most vulnerable in society.

Every year we provide means tested financial support to a third of families locally with a significant number of local children from disadvantaged backgrounds receiving a complete education at no cost. 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.

Headteacher, MIST School

1 Several other MIST schools provide free places for refugees and for young people where local authorities needed to meet the particular needs of a young person. For more information, see <https://www.royalspringboard.org.uk/>

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Student (Year 12)

We left Syria for Lebanon when I was 11. Syria was dangerous and you could not get out of or into the country but we managed to leave when they opened the border for one day.

We moved to England in 2017 to help me and my brothers with our studies because a higher education would give us a better future.

CHARIS helped us come and settle in England and then we were able to come to [the school]. Joining a new school in a strange country was really hard for the first year and my English was really basic....I soon made friends ... and they, and the staff, helped me to settle in. The staff are all really helpful and supportive. 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 & Nutrition.

I am hoping to go on to university to study Pharmacology and would like to eventually become either a pharmacist or a doctor looking after small children. Coming to [this school] has changed my life.

Glossary

- CCUC** **Council of Church Universities and Colleges** (also known as 'The Cathedral Group') is a UK association of establishments founded as teacher training colleges of the Anglican, Roman Catholic or Methodist Church.
- DfE** **Department for Education** is the government department responsible for children's services and education, from early years to Higher Education in England.
- EDG** **Ethos Development Group** was established in 2017 to ensure that the characteristic Methodist ethos flourishes in all schools for which the Methodist Church has responsibility.
- EET** **Epworth Education Trust** is a Multi-academy Trust, formed in 2020 as a merger of the Wesley Trust with Acorn Trust, committed to the ethos statement shared by all Methodist schools. It currently involves six schools.
- HE** **Higher Education** is for students beyond the compulsory years of education and usually leads to the award of an academic degree
- IAMSCU** **International Association of Methodist Schools** was established in 1991 to promote integration and encourage a common understanding amongst around 1000 higher education institutions which have a Methodist tradition.

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- LEP** **Local Ecumenical Partnership** is where a number of Christian denominations work together under a formal agreement, often to create a single ecumenical congregation in shared premises.
- MAST** **Methodist Academies and Schools Trust** enables the Methodist Church to discharge its duty and encourage its ethos to flourish as a provider of education in the state sector.
- MAT** **Multi-academy Trust** is a trust that operates more than one academy school which operate with shared objectives under a shared funding agreement with the government. (The Wesley Trust was a MAT set up by the Methodist Church in 2017 to support schools wishing to become academies.
- MIST** **Methodist Independent Schools Trust** enables the Methodist Church to discharge its duty and encourage its ethos to flourish as a provider of education in the private sector.
- MSC** **Methodist Schools Committee** was set up to monitor the work of the various Methodist Trusts responsible for all types of schools, to encourage their continued working together and to develop their place within the wider church.
- PHSE** **Personal, Social, Health and Economic education** is an important subject within the school curriculum, designed to be moulded to specific local needs, to equip pupils with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions in life.
- RSE** **Relationship and Sex Education** is the new area of compulsory curriculum introduced by the government in September 2020. The Relationship Education is a statutory requirement for all primary schools. Relationship & Sex Education is a statutory requirement in the secondary sector.
- SERVE** **Spirituality, Ethos, Relationships and Values Evaluation** is a self-evaluation framework (based on SIAMS) designed for use by those schools which are solely of Methodist foundation.
- SIAMS** **Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools** is a statutory framework for inspection and review for all schools that are Anglican foundations (including where this involves a Methodist partnership) to enable continued development of their Christian vision.

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***RESOLUTIONS

36/1. The Conference receives the Report.

36/2. The Conference:

- a. affirms all those who work in schools and those who voluntarily give time and talents to support education.
- b. urges Circuits to undertake a regular audit of the schools work in their area as part of their mission.
- c. encourages Districts to appoint District Education Officers, if not in place, and to plan appropriate events for those who go into schools to lead worship or communicate the Christian story. This to be supported by the Learning Network, the Children, Youth and Families section of the Connexional Team and the Methodist Schools Network².
- d. invites its young people to explore education as a vocation and Circuits to support its people to explore teaching as a valued area of Christian ministry both within and outside Methodist schools.
- e. encourages Circuits and churches to recruit governors for schools in their communities.
- f. asks Circuits and Districts to be alert and, where appropriate, be active in sponsoring new Methodist schools in their area with the support of the Methodist Schools Network.

36/3. The Conference:

- a. encourages the Epworth Education Trust to expand its number of schools through adoption, merger, and sponsoring new schools.
- b. directs MAST and MIST to continue to be open to affiliation and partnership with other schools, consistent with their established strategic plans.
- c. directs churches and Circuits to seek or take up creative partnerships with any Methodist school within their Circuit, or, if already established, to continue to develop this partnership.
- d. encourages Methodist schools to play a role in bringing new schools to the Methodist Schools Network.
- e. directs the Connexional Team to support churches and Circuits in their work with local schools (whether Methodist or not) in the use of school and church premises.

2 The Methodist Schools Network is a term which refers to all schools, whether state or independent, which carry the Methodist name and the Trusts that support them.

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36/4. The Conference:

- a. directs Methodist schools to continue to develop improvement plans designed to ensure the best possible education for pupils.
- b. encourages Methodist schools to engage in an ongoing critical conversation on 'What does excellent look like?'
- c. directs the three schools Trusts to monitor, strengthen and support performance and outcomes for all their schools.
- d. directs the Methodist Schools Committee (MSC) to monitor that the Trusts are fulfilling their responsibilities and to seek to nurture a climate of belonging and partnership with the wider church
- e. directs the Methodist schools Trusts to continue to develop more support for governors in all our schools.

36/5. The Conference:

- a. affirms the Ethos Development Group and encourages it to continue to give strategic support to the development of a confident Methodist ethos for the Trusts and schools.
- b. encourages the Trusts to use SIAMS and SERVE further to develop the Methodist ethos in all schools.
- c. encourages engagement between schools and local Circuits in exploring Methodist ethos, what it means and how it may more effectively impact life in the local community.
- d. requests MIST to commission research on the impact of values/ethos in our schools on wellbeing.
- e. urges the Trusts to work together to further develop training in Methodist ethos for chaplains, district school officers and Methodist school governors.
- f. supports the Trusts in working together with Methodist founded teacher training institutions, the Connexion and alongside ecumenical colleagues (eg The Cathedrals Group³) to:
 - promote teaching as a Christian vocation, enhance teacher training and to encourage and develop research skills of our teachers.
 - engage more effectively, in line with Connexional priorities, with marginalised communities.

3 The Cathedrals Group (officially the Council of Church Universities and Colleges or CCUC) is an association of universities and university colleges in the United Kingdom. Members were founded as teacher training colleges by the Church of England, Roman Catholic Church or Methodist Church.

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- g. encourages all Methodist schools to cultivate excellence in RE and share resources developed both locally and centrally.**

36/6. The Conference:

- a. urges all Methodist schools to engage with local Circuits and Districts by hosting events, sharing facilities, and drawing on the Methodist Modern Art Collection.**
- b. encourages all Methodist schools to build on their strong commitment to local partnerships and the use of their facilities by local community groups.**
- c. directs the three Trusts to continue to work together in more areas, reporting to the Methodist Schools Committee on new opportunities and actions.**
- d. encourages a strengthening of the partnership between Methodist Schools Network and Southlands College (University of Roehampton) and Westminster Institute of Education (Oxford Brookes University):**
 - to encourage young people to explore teaching as a vocation, and to pursue those vocations in Methodist-related HE contexts;
 - to explore new and meaningful ways of collaborating across the primary, secondary and higher education sectors for their mutual flourishing;
 - to pursue appropriate research and development.
- e. encourages Methodist schools, in collaboration with the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges and Universities, to host an international conference in Bristol in April 2023.**

36/7. The Conference:

- a. directs the Trusts, when opening a new school, to keep in view those 'who need us most'.**
- b. encourages Epworth Education Trust to seek to include Special Educational Needs schools, when appropriate.**
- c. requests the publicising of good news stories especially where pupils have become courageous advocates and agents of change in people's lives and communities.**
- d. encourages MIST to pursue bursaries provision in order to support vulnerable young people, for example, refugees.**

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Appendix A

Membership of the Methodist Schools Committee

- The Revd Dr Roger Walton (Chair, MSC)
- The Revd Dr Calvin Samuel (Chair, MIST)
- Keith Norman (Deputy Chair, MIST)
- Steven Colledge (Chair, MAST)
- The Revd Paul Martin (Deputy Chair, MAST)
- Barbara Easton (Head of Service, MAST)
- The Revd Sally Ratcliffe (Trustee, MAST)
- Dr David Kershaw (Chair, Epworth Education Trust)
- Julie-Ann Hewitt (CEO, Epworth Education Trust)
- Dr Christopher Stephens (Head of Southlands College)
- The Revd Dr Jonathan Dean (Director of Learning for Ministry in the Connexional Team)
- David Humphreys (General Secretary, MIST)
- Barbara Easton (Head of Service, MAST)
- Dr David Lamper (Executive Head, Kent College)⁴

Appendix B

SIAMS Methodist Appendix 2017

In inspecting a Methodist school, or a joint school where Methodism forms part of the Trust Deed, inspectors should use the following guidance to understand how the Methodist character of the school can be identified in the context of the overall inspection framework.

1. Pupils should learn aspects of the Methodist story, its history, traditions and identity and understand what it means to belong to the Methodist Church today.

Inspectors must therefore consider:

- whether pupils have an understanding of the life and influence of John Wesley and its implications for present day Methodists
- the ways in which the community life of the school reflects a breadth of Methodist practice, tradition and perspective
- the extent to which the school is rooted in the Methodist community, local, national and global, reflecting its traditions and perspectives as follows:

4 David was seconded by MIST to be the founding CEO of the Wesley Trust. He handed over to Julie-Ann Hewitt in October 2019. He remained part of the strategy working group until the work was complete.

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2. **'Consider, with deep and frequent attention, the peculiar circumstances in which you stand'⁵**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which the school has thought through its Christian vision and values according to its context, so that it works effectively as a church school within its particular community
- how the school expresses connexionalism through its relationships with MAST, with other Methodist schools and with the Methodist Church locally and nationally

3. **'The world is my parish'⁶**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the ways in which the activity of the school encourages children to live on wider map, to understand and challenge injustice and to engage in active global and local citizenship, doing **'all the good you can'**⁷

4. **'Let everyone enjoy the full and free liberty of thinking for himself'⁸**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which pupils learn to 'live with contradictory convictions' through their experience of a liberal education in which they develop reason, engagement and participation.
- the ways in which the school is underpinned by a Methodist approach, guided by scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

5. **'For all, for all'⁹ and 'I am more assured that love is of God than that any opinion whatsoever is so'¹⁰**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- how the school reflects the fundamental Methodist commitment to the value of all people through strong policies for inclusion which are evidenced throughout the everyday life of the community;

5 John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

6 John Wesley Journal (June 1739) (the exact wording is 'I look upon all the world as my parish').

7 Attributed to John Wesley –although not a direct quote as a whole, it reflects several of the phrases in his extensive sermon writings.

8 John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

9 Charles Wesley, from the hymn Let earth and heaven agree (358 in the current Methodist hymn book). The final verse ends: 'For all my Lord was crucified, for all, for all my saviour died'.

10 John Wesley Letter to James Erskine (March 1745).

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- the extent which the school's vision for the value of education is empowering for the people of its community, enable all children to aspire, flourish and achieve

6. **'watching over one another in love'¹¹ and 'the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion'¹²**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which the school is characterised by high quality relationships between its members and the way children are learning to live together in community; the strength of the school's pastoral care; and the opportunities that children have to support each other's physical and spiritual wellbeing

7. **'singing the faith'¹³ and 'hearts strangely warmed'¹⁴**

Inspectors might therefore consider:

- the extent to which pupils have the opportunity to experience worship in the broad Methodist tradition: engaging and inclusive, formal and informal, traditional and modern, enthusiastic and contemplative
- how music and singing is used as means of confidently expressing deeper values and convictions.

For additional appendices, please see www.methodist.org.uk/conference-programme

11 John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

12 In his preface to the 1739 hymn collection, John speaks of the importance of community in faith development, quoting advice given by an un-named 'serious man' whom he had sought out while trying to find his own way in faith as a student at Oxford.

13 Singing the Faith is the title of the Methodist hymn book authorised by the Conference of 2010. The title reflects the emphasis, from the time of the Wesleys, on singing together as a way of consolidating community and learning the faith.

14 Wesley describes his transformative experience of God's love, in May 1738, in his journal at the time 'I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.'

People interested in deepening their understanding of the Methodist presence in public education might watch the Methodist Schools introductory video 'Doing all the good we can' at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utzOW6fLRQQ> or read Wesley's short 'Advice' about Methodism at <http://www.umcmission.org/Find-Resources/John-Wesley-Sermons/The-Wesleys-and-Their-Times/Advice-to-a-People-Called-Methodist>. People might, however, also look at the practice of contemporary Methodism to see how Methodism is active today – in worship, in Fresh Expressions of church, in foodbanks and social care, engaged in national issues through the Joint Public Issues Team, Action for Children and Methodist Homes and internationally through All We Can and Christian Aid. For example, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gLtn2z_NaXY