

## Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST)

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Resolutions</b>	<p>82/1. The Council receives the report in Section A.</p> <p>82/2. The Council approves the work the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust is doing with the Department for Education to formalise an agreement whereby the Methodist schools may stay together as a coherent group as they become academies.</p> <p>82/3. The Council directs that, in the interim, the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust should not give consent to a Methodist school becoming an academy under a Multi-Academy Trust which is not directly related to the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust.</p>

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	To provide an update for the Council on MAST's progress and seek approval with regard to the establishment of a separate MAT and confirmation that Methodist Schools should only join the MAST MAT.
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## Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST)

### 1.0 Section A - For the Council's Information

- 1.1 In its recent White Paper, the government revealed that it has negotiated separate Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church for their diocesan families of schools in the maintained sector to stay together under the oversight of appropriately structured and accountable Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) when the schools become academies. A written statement has been made by the Department for Education (DfE) that all other faith-providers of schools and faith schools should operate with the same expectation. MAST is actively exploring with the DfE, a formal agreement to be shaped to ensure that Methodist-only schools come under the oversight of MAST's own MAT. This will enable the Church, at all levels, to foster and encourage the Methodist/Christian ethos of the schools as a wholesome and holistic environment in which the Methodist schools offer the highest possible all-round quality of education for all children in each school's natural community (irrespective of the faith-commitment or otherwise, of the children and their parents).
- 1.2 Schools must seek consent from their foundational body to become an academy and currently there are many alternative MAT options available to them that they might consider joining. In order to be sure (in line with the expectation of the Conference) that we retain and grow our Methodist Schools, MAST reviews all consent applications made to the local circuit and, on behalf of the Council and in full consultation with the circuit, it takes the final decision for consent on the basis of fair and reasonable criteria being applied robustly in the interests of Methodist Education.

### 2.0 Section B - Together Stronger Stewardship, Security, Autonomy

- 2.1 Currently, MAST is working on two distinctive streams:
- A. as a provider of education, monitoring the performance of, engaging with and supporting where appropriate schools in the Methodist family;
  - B. actively working to establish its own MAT, with professional advice and in the light of experience gained by some of our Anglican partners who have already developed their MATs. The participation of staff from our sister trust, the Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST), in this work is invaluable. The MAT should be active within the next 6 months. A minute of the recent SRC refers to this (see below) and a full report on this development will be given to the January Council.

**Minute from the September 2016 meeting of the SRC:  
Methodist Academies and Schools [SRC/16/32]**

*The Committee noted:*

*MAST is working with business consultants who are experts in the field. The developing business model entails taking on schools, not necessarily Methodist or Methodist/Anglican schools, but those which could benefit from being aligned with a Methodist Trust.*

*The model is helping those who need it most, which is key to the ethos of the Methodist Church.*

*Some non-Methodist schools see the Methodist Church offering longevity in an ethical context.*

*The indications are that there will also be a good number of sole-Methodist schools who will convert with MAST.*

*A one off grant of £75k has already been awarded to MAST, but it is clear that some additional funding will be required to ensure that the business model will succeed, this would be around £20-40k. The committee was content to agree to this if necessary.*

*All the schools are primary schools with one exception, MAST does not currently operate in the secondary school sector so will not be significantly impacted by the current Grammar School debate.*

*Education in a Methodist context is core to the missional work of the Church and the Church will in due course revisit the resolutions of the 2012 Education Commission.*

*The Committee passed the following Resolution:*

**32/1. The Committee noted the update on the work of MAST.**

- 2.2 In September 2016, another joint church academy joined our family in Ely. Ermine Street Church Academy is a 3-form entry Church of England/Methodist primary academy, developed, bid for and project managed in true and effective collaboration with the Church of England Diocese of Ely. As with other joint schools, the school formally sits within the Diocesan MAT and our work in support and in pursuit of the best outcomes for children is significant and welcomed by both the school and the Diocese. And, it is possible that further opportunities may develop in this area as a result.
- 2.3 There are currently 66 Methodist or joint maintained primary schools. Of that group, 24 are Methodist 'only' schools, 2 are academies with the Acorn Trust, 1 is a 'stand-alone' academy, 8 schools are academies with our local Church of England Diocesan partners and 2 schools are currently seeking academy orders with the DfE to convert with MAST. In addition two further schools from within our family have indicated a very strong likelihood that they will become academies with MAST during this academic year. Our schools are performing well. Approximately 90% of our schools are judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted and there are no schools in our Family that are in an Ofsted 'category' of serious weakness. Our objective is to maintain and further improve this quality of educational opportunity and experience provided in our schools and therefore to the children.
- 2.4 The MAT which MAST is establishing will be able to exercise oversight of the Methodist-only schools when they become academies. The DfE will rigorously hold the MAT to account for school improvement, the use of public funds, high quality trusteeship at the MAT level and the commitment and ability of the MAT to promote and hold to account high quality leadership of the MAT and of the academies under its oversight.
- 2.5 The MAST MAT will be able to receive into its oversight any of the joint Church of England-Methodist schools who choose to become academies under MAST. The MAT will also be able to work closely with Circuits and Districts to increase provision in communities that need them through the establishment of new Methodist schools. We are currently working with three such groups in the North West, the East Midlands and the South West.
- 2.6 Other joint schools, understandably, will become academies as they choose under their diocesan MAT or within the policy guidelines of their diocese. For such cases, MAST is developing a consent procedure which will include the implementation of a standard MoU, to be signed by the diocesan-approved MAT, the Chair of governors and MAST, and which arranges for appropriate support and care to continue to be provided from the Methodist Church at all levels.

2.7 As resources permit and experience of running a MAT is gained, the MAST MAT will be open also to accept other community schools who choose to become academies under MAST or whom the DfE may recommend should come under the oversight of the MAST MAT because the school's current performance means they must be converted to an academy with a supporting sponsor. In such circumstances, the Methodist ethos, vision and mission will always be made clear as the enveloping context in which the MAT will operate for such schools; it will be promoted as a contribution to the common good and appropriate loyalty to its tenets will be expected.

### **3.0 Section C - Endorsement**

3.1 MAST now seeks the Council's endorsement of:

A. This work with the DfE (modelled on what has been agreed with our sister Churches, but given a connexional character in our case); and

B. MAST's view that currently consent should not be given by MAST to any Methodist school to join a MAT not established by MAST that might prejudice our ability to hold the schools together as a coherent group.

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTIONS**

**82/1. The Council receives the report in Section A.**

**82/2. The Council approves the work the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust is doing with the Department for Education to formalise an agreement whereby the Methodist schools may stay together as a coherent group as they become academies.**

**82/3. The Council directs that, in the interim, the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust should not give consent to a Methodist school becoming an academy under a Multi-Academy Trust which is not directly related to the Methodist Academies and Schools Trust.**