

29. Methodist Schools: The Wesley Trust

Contact name and details	The Revd Dr David G Deeks Chair of Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) david.deeks@gmail.com
Resolutions	<p>29/1. The Conference receives the Report.</p> <p>29/2. The Conference welcomes the development of the Wesley Trust.</p> <p>29/3. The Conference adopts the proposal for the Methodist Schools Committee and directs: the Council to appoint the members of the Committee; the Committee to provide annually a coordinated report to the Conference through the Methodist Council on behalf of all Methodist schools; the Law and Polity Committee to consider whether amendments are required to Standing Orders to give better effect to this decision.</p> <p>29/4. The Conference appoints Mr Alan Davies as a Trustee and Chair of the Wesley Trust, Mrs Barbara Easton and Mr David Kershaw as Trustees of the Wesley Trust for a period of three years concluding 31 August 2020; and Mrs Elaine Cleland, Mr Tony Harris and Ms Heather Wheelhouse as Trustees of the Wesley Trust for one year concluding 31 August 2018.</p>

Summary of content

Subject and aims	Update on the development of the Wesley Trust. Report on the establishment of the Methodist Schools Committee. Appointment of the chair and members of the Methodist Schools Committee. Appointment of Trustees of the Wesley Trust.
Background context and relevant documents	Response to government policy on academies.

The Wesley Trust

- The Wesley Trust is a multi-academy trust which will welcome:
 - Methodist primary schools as they choose to academise*;
 - Any joint Anglican-Methodist primary schools who choose to academise with the Wesley Trust;
 - Community schools who wish to join the Wesley Trust or are referred to the Wesley Trust by a Regional Schools Commissioner, knowing the ethos of the Trust.

The Wesley Trust will also be a vehicle for establishing new schools, primary and secondary, in areas where there is a proven need, in locations where these schools can be supported by existing Methodist schools (independent schools and maintained schools and academies); however, the Wesley Trust has no intention of establishing selective grammar schools.

***NOTE**

In line with the agreements the Department for Education (DfE) has made with the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, the Department will support Methodist-only schools being held together under the Wesley Trust as they academise. This ensures that the identity and ethos of the schools are sustained and enhanced and Methodist property is appropriately used and managed.

In the case of joint schools who choose to academise with the local diocesan multi-academy trust, consent is given by Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST) on condition that the school and the diocese sign a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the continuing appropriate involvement in and concern for the Methodist dimensions of a joint school.

2. The Wesley Trust will envelop all it does and all the academies it oversees with the same Methodist ethos that already applies in all Methodist maintained and independent schools. The executive summary of the agreed Ethos Statement is this:

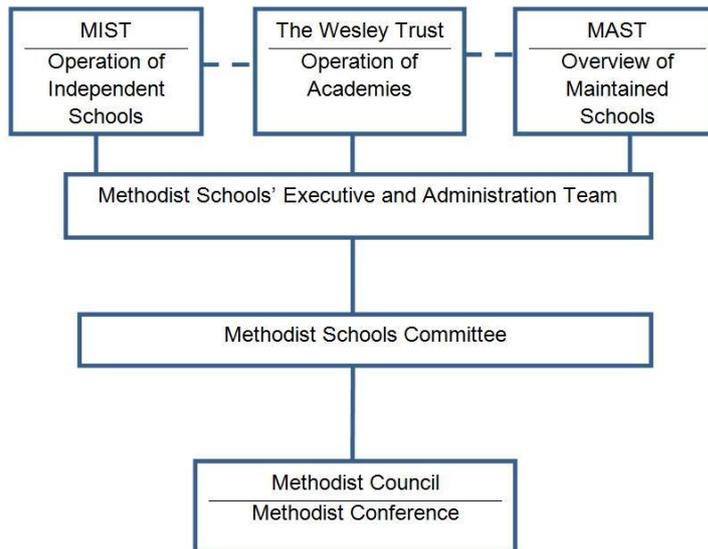
Methodist Schools are integral to the mission of the Methodist Church. Inspired by the Christian faith and infused with Christian values, Methodist Schools put the worship of God at the centre of their life and are committed to the service and well-being of everyone involved - children and young people and their families, staff and governors.

Methodist Schools are inclusive and welcoming communities where individuals are valued, good order is respected, relationships cherished, and where excellence in its widest sense (academic, extra-curricular, lifestyle) is pursued. Methodist Schools encourage a sense of belonging, seek to improve lives and boldly expect the impossible. In Methodist Schools educational experiences and activities bring mind and heart, intellect and passion together. Methodist Schools work in mutually beneficial partnerships with each other and the wider Methodist Church.

3. Inspired by our Christian ethos, the Wesley Trust's **vision** demonstrates our commitment to work with people of all faiths and none; the Wesley Trust **aims** to:

- *offer a high-quality, all-round education for all children and young people*
- *ensure every child and young person can achieve excellence*
- *provide high-quality continuous professional development for all staff*
- *respect and develop leadership at all levels in each school*
- *support the development of local communities through education*
- *work in partnership with all Methodist schools and with other trusts and their schools*
- *grow the Trust, so that its values and aspirations reach as many children as possible*

4. The Wesley Trust is being launched within an organisational arrangement that brings together the Wesley Trust, Methodist Independent Schools Trust (MIST) and Methodist Academies and Schools Trust (MAST), in a coordinated way through the purview of one committee. It is proposed that this committee is appointed by the Council and called the Methodist Schools Committee (MSC).



This structure covers:

- MIST - operates 13 independent schools within the group.
- MAST - provides oversight of the Methodist ethos and standards in publicly funded Methodist and joint Methodist/Anglican schools, as required by SO 342. Ensures compliance in respect of matters like foundation governors and oversees Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) for Methodist and some joint schools.
- MIST will provide additional financial support for the Wesley Trust to ensure adequate funding over and above any DfE funding.
- The Wesley Trust will operate any schools that convert to academies and any new schools established subject to DfE approvals.
- A single executive and administration team will ensure efficient resourcing, support and leadership across the three trusts to best effect so that the benefits of collaboration are targeted and mutual.
- The Methodist Schools Committee (MSC) will:
 - encourage the development in all the trusts and schools of the Methodist ethos (and will have reporting to it a standing Ethos Development Group representing the trusts);
 - oversee and encourage collaboration across the three trusts;
 - receive reports from the trusts and provide a unified report to the Methodist Council and the Methodist Conference on school performance and progress against the charitable objects and aims of the trusts.

It is proposed that the Committee membership shall be:

- An independent chair
- The chair and a trustee of MIST
- The chair and a trustee of MAST
- The chair and a trustee of the Wesley Trust

Seven members in total

Consideration shall be given to whether this committee needs to be formalised in Standing Orders but this work will be undertaken in the next connexional year with proposals being brought to the Council.

5. Assessing the significance of these institutional arrangements:

- 5.1 In 2012 one recommendation of the Education Commission, approved by the Conference, was that MIST and MAST should combine by 2017. Public policy has developed so that the need for a multi-academy trust is now evident, and the groups of expertise and knowledge appropriate to the three trusts demand that there be appropriate separation of purposes and clarity about lines of accountability (to public authorities, for example) for each of the trusts. However, the structure sketched above is our joint response to the Conference resolution. It will creatively fulfil the Conference's ambitions in the new situation, namely the sharing of resources of money, experience and expertise across the network of trusts and schools, to mutual advantage; and the provision of a sure mechanism for a coordinated accountability for all the schools together to the Council and the Conference.
- 5.2 The Conference needs to know that these arrangements have been energetically developed not simply to comply with the Conference resolution but principally because ever closer working together to mutual advantage, celebrating our differences as well as learning from one another, springs naturally out of engagement with the Methodist ethos that permeates all our schools.
- 5.3 Such collaboration will make a major contribution to social cohesion. Even more importantly, these arrangements hold the potential significantly to enhance and broaden the learning experience of children and to inspire all Methodist schools to ever greater levels of all-round improvement. So, by way of examples:
- i) The arrangement offers opportunities for staff in the maintained sector schools and academies to work with colleagues from the independent schools to contribute to school improvement, professional development and the embedding of best practice in, say, an academy (previously a community school in difficulty) that needs to be turned around.
 - ii) Staff from schools in both sectors, working within a group sponsored by the Wesley Trust, can contribute their expertise to plan a new school paid for out of public funds; and in the process learn from each other so that professional development feeds back into their own schools.
 - iii) Children from maintained and independent schools can use shared resources that will enrich their engagement with the Methodist ethos (eg on global education and citizenship, RE and worship) and can plan some activities together, as already happens between Methodist maintained and independent schools in East Kent.
- 5.4 In diverse ways, therefore, MIST corporately and its schools will add significantly to the public benefit that each of the MIST schools currently makes (and for which each school is accountable each year to MIST itself). This happens to chime with the pressure from the government on the independent sector of education. Our proposals have been brought to the personal attention of the National Schools Commissioner, who in two meetings with representatives of MIST, MAST and the Wesley Trust has strongly encouraged our working together and endorsed the Wesley Trust's business plan (which the trusts have worked on together). A formal procedure is now underway to authorise the Wesley Trust to act as a multi-academy trust. The Trust is negotiating for the first Methodist schools to become part of the Trust.
6. It is proposed that the Wesley Trust company has a trustee/director body of up to twelve: not less than 50% shall be Methodist members and all shall be appointed by the Conference upon the nomination of the MSC. The DfE recommends that there are five members of the trust company. It is proposed that these are the President, Vice-President and Secretary of the Conference, the Chair of the MSC and the Chair of the Wesley Trust. In the start-up phase of the Wesley Trust, the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of School Improvement will be part-time seconded staff from a MIST school and a MAST school.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

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Reasoned statements

Mr Alan Davies

Methodist. Career in education as school leader, including involvement in academies.

Mrs Barbara Easton

Methodist. Director of Education in the Connexional Team.

Mr David Kershaw

Methodist. Long involvement as head of secondary schools, and chief executive of a multi-academy trust in Coventry.

Mrs Elaine Cleland

Methodist. Former Head of a school; school governor; educational consultant specialising in leadership development and assessment.

Mr Tony Harris

Methodist. Experience as property consultant and school governor.

Ms Heather Wheelhouse

Chartered accountant, former auditor of the Methodist Church, Methodist Independent Schools Trust and several Multi Academy Trusts. School Governor.