

The Wesley Trust

Contact Name and Details	The Revd David G Deeks, Chair of Methodist Academies and Schools Trust David.deeks@gmail.com
Resolutions	<p>74/1. The Council receives the report</p> <p>74/2. The Council endorses the proposed Methodist Schools Committee to be the vehicle of reporting and accountability for all Methodist schools and their overseeing trusts.</p> <p>74/3. The Council approves the further actions set out in paragraph 7 to enable these developments to be ready for presentation to the Conference.</p>

1. 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 has made with the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church, we expect the Department to 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 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:

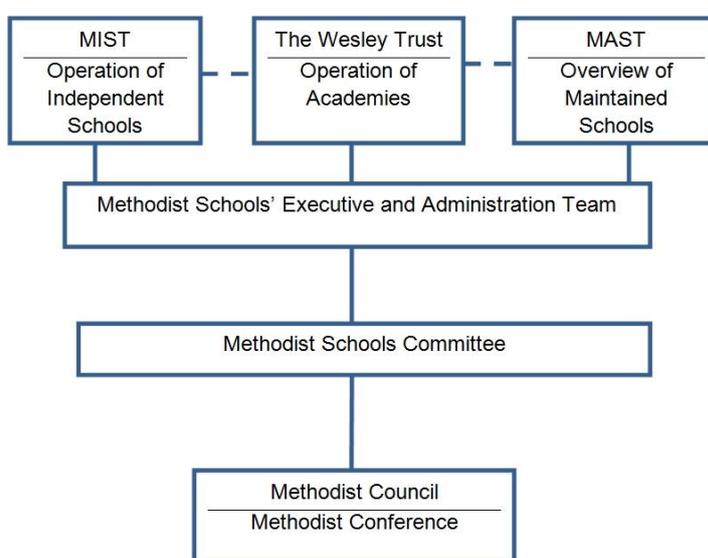
Methodist Schools are integral to the mission of the Methodist Church. Inspired by the Christian faith and infused with Christian values, Methodist Schools put the worship of God at the centre of their life and are committed to the service and well-being of everyone involved - children and young people 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 and children 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 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 Methodist Council and 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 trustees 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 demands 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 Council 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 Sir David Carter, the National Schools Commissioner, who in a meeting with representatives of MIST, MAST and the Wesley Trust has strongly encouraged our working together. Indeed Sir David has offered to scrutinise the detailed business plan of the Wesley Trust (which the trusts have worked on together and has now been submitted to him); a second meeting is scheduled with him on 3 April, to receive his feedback and constructive proposals. After the editing of the business plan, a formal procedure has to be followed to authorise the Wesley Trust to act as a multi-academy trust. We are negotiating for the first Methodist schools to join the Wesley Trust as academies.
6. It is proposed that the The Wesley Trust company has a trustee/director body of up to ten: not less than 50% shall be Methodist members and all shall be appointed by the Conference upon the nomination of the Methodist Schools Committee. The Department for Education recommend 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. There will be no need for the members to attend meetings. 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.
7. Conclusion It is proposed that:-
- 7.1 MIST take an update on the establishment of the Wesley Trust to the Conference in its report. This update will take into account comments received from Sir David Carter and our ongoing developmental work.
- 7.2 further legal advice shall be obtained on the appointment of the first trustee/directors but it is anticipated that names will need to be presented to the Conference in 2017.
- 7.3 there is a consultation with the Secretary of the Conference on a name for the Chair of the Methodist Schools Committee, for appointment by the Conference.
- 7.4 in the report to Conference, the Law and Polity Committee are directed by the Conference to consider whether amendments are required to Standing Orders.
- 7.5 from 2018 there will be a single Methodist Schools report to the Conference.

*****RESOLUTIONS**

74/1. The Council receives the report

74/2. The Council endorses the proposed Methodist Schools Committee to be the vehicle of reporting and accountability for all Methodist schools and their overseeing trusts.

74/3. The Council approves the further actions set out in paragraph 7 to enable these developments to be ready for presentation to the Conference.