

SIAMS Methodist Principles for Education

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Methodist Schools



**THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND**
EDUCATION OFFICE

SIAMS Methodist Principles for Education

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.

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.

MA1. 'CONSIDER, WITH DEEP AND FREQUENT ATTENTION, THE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH YOU STAND'¹

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.

MA2. 'THE WORLD IS MY PARISH'²

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'.³

MA3. 'LET EVERYONE ENJOY THE FULL AND FREE LIBERTY OF THINKING FOR HIMSELF'⁴

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.

¹ John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

² John Wesley Journal (June 1739) (the exact wording is 'I look upon all the world as my parish'.)

³ Attributed to John Wesley –although not a direct quote as a whole, it reflects several of the phrases in his extensive sermon writings.

⁴ John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

MA4. 'FOR ALL, FOR ALL'⁵ AND 'I AM MORE ASSURED THAT LOVE IS OF GOD THAN THAT ANY OPINION WHATSOEVER IS SO'⁶

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

MA5. 'WATCHING OVER ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE'⁷ AND 'THE BIBLE KNOWS NOTHING OF SOLITARY RELIGION'⁸

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
- the opportunities that children have to support each other's physical and spiritual wellbeing.

MA6. 'SINGING THE FAITH'⁹ AND 'HEARTS STRANGELY WARMED'¹⁰

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.

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.

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.

⁵ 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'

⁶ John Wesley Letter to James Erskine (March 1745).

⁷ John Wesley Advice to the People Called Methodist (October 1745).

⁸ 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

⁹ 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

¹⁰ 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.'