



Welcome from the CEO

Welcome to the Epworth Education Trust Winter Newsletter. I am delighted to share with you a snapshot of all the wonderful news, activities and achievements from across the Trust and our family of schools.

I am particularly excited to introduce you all to our newest Trust-wide initiative, 'Infinite Eight'. It is one of the central tenets of our Trust that school should be so much more than a place of academic learning – it is just as much a place where children can safely take part in experiences that give them the opportunity to grow and learn as individuals, which is

what this programme will offer. Some of our schools have begun trialling this new scheme and the children are already making memories to last a lifetime. We can't wait to tell you more!

After such a busy and exciting start to the academic year, I hope everyone is looking forward to some well-deserved rest over the festive

period. As ever, I thank you all for your continued support and wish everyone a very Merry Christmas, and health and happiness for the forthcoming new year!

Warm regards,

Julie-Ann Hewitt
CEO, Epworth Education Trust



Infinite Eight: A New Chapter for Our Children at Epworth Education Trust

At Epworth Education Trust, we're always looking for even more ways to make school an inspiring, memorable experience for every child. That's why we're so excited to share our new approach with you: Infinite Eight.

What is the 'Infinite Eight'?

Infinite Eight is about offering more than just the usual classroom learning. It's rooted in an idea from ancient Greece called *scholé*, which means having the time and space to learn, think, reflect and grow.

As well as delivering an engaging learning curriculum, we want to make sure our children have time to explore new ideas outside of academic study, and discover what they love.

This strategy focuses on eight key opportunities that include 18 core experiences designed to make school a richer and more rewarding journey.

Julie-Ann Hewitt said of the new initiative: "Of course, academic success is important, but we also want our children to look back on their school years and remember all the special moments that helped them grow as individuals. Infinite Eight will give all our school children the chance to explore, reflect and create memories that will last a lifetime."

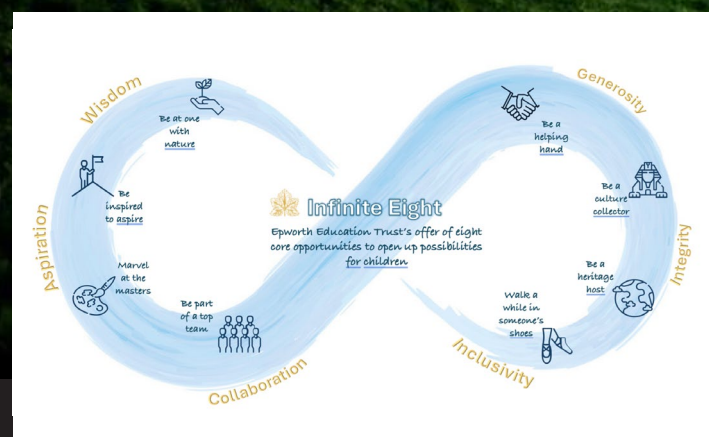
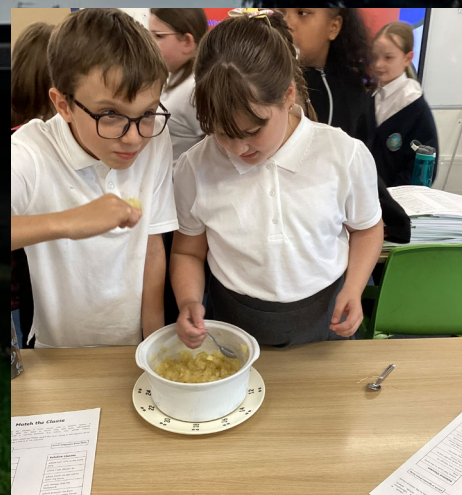
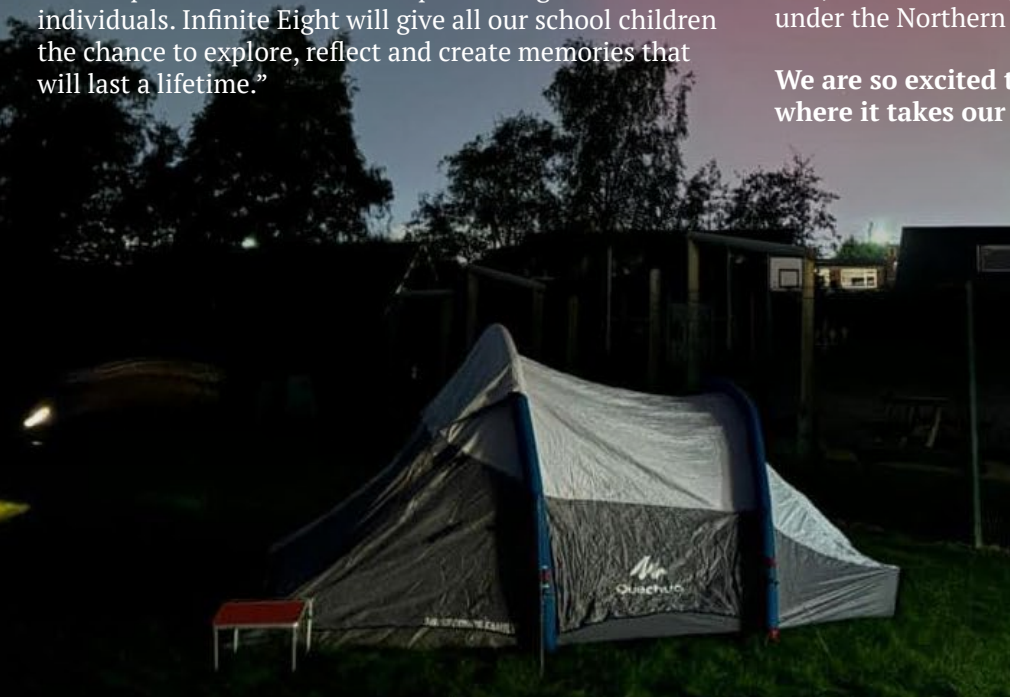
To make this even more special, each class will keep a floor book, a big, shared book filled with photos, stories and reflections on all the exciting things the children do together. These books will follow them through school, from Reception to Year 6, so they can look back and see how much they've grown.

Some of our schools have begun to put the programme into practice.

At **Wesley Methodist Primary School**, they have begun implementing Infinite Eight with exciting activities like a mini-beast visit for Years 1 and 2, forest school for all pupils and a harvest from their allotment that was cooked in school or shared with the local community.

Over at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School**, Year 4 took part in a memorable outdoor experience, sleeping under the stars, orienteering and enjoying campfire songs. They also were lucky enough to meditate under the Northern Lights.

We are so excited to roll out this new strategy and see where it takes our young people!



Epworth Education Trust Conference

This November we hosted our annual Epworth Education Trust Conference, welcoming nearly 200 staff members from across our schools to enjoy a day of connection and inspiration at The Bridge Church in Bolton.

The theme for 2024's event was Belonging, with guests invited to consider and celebrate how their work contributes to an inclusive Trust culture which allows everyone to live up to their potential and 'Do all you can'.

CEO, Julie-Ann Hewitt, set the tone for the conference by sharing her personal stories of belonging and highlighting the legacy that can be created through investing in people.

She also introduced key guests who played pivotal roles in the creation of the Epworth Trust - Kevin Meredith, the first Chair of Acorn Trust; Alan Davies, the first Chair of Wesley Trust and the visionary behind the merger; David Kershaw, the first Chair of Epworth Trust; and Stuart Ellis, the current Chair of the Trust.

Each of these individuals has made significant contributions to the Trust's success, ensuring a strong foundation for us to build upon.

Keynote speaker, Rachel Johnson, CEO of PIXL, delivered a humorous yet thought-provoking presentation on the theme of belonging, enjoyed by all.

Julie-Ann said of the day: "Our annual conference is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments over the past year and set the tone for the next. At this year's event, we took the opportunity to look back on the origin of the Trust and how our vision and our roots serve as a guiding light to help everyone in our Trust family understand our mission as we continue to grow."



Long Service Awards

During the Conference, we also celebrated our Long Service Awards with special guests: the President of the Methodist Conference, the Revd. Helen Cameron, and the Vice-President, Carolyn Godfrey. They honoured some of our longest-serving staff members by presenting them with flowers, recognising their dedication and commitment to the Trust.

Among those receiving the Long Service Awards were:

25 years of Service

- Carol Steele – Rosehill
- Cheryl Parker - Westleigh
- Julie Baxter - Bedford Hall
- Tracey Beard - Wesley

20 years of Service

- Melanie Latham – Wheatley Lane
- Sarah Brown – Wheatley Lane
- Rachel Rathburn – Rosehill
- Carmelina Preter – Nutgrove
- Amanda Potter – Nutgrove
- Sara Ridgway - Nutgrove

Julie-Ann said: "It is a mark of honour to us to have so many long-serving staff members, something which speaks to the culture of care and wellbeing we have worked hard to establish. These wonderful colleagues are what make our Trust schools so special and we thank them unreservedly for their service and dedication."



Fundraising for Edukid

Schools across the Trust are united in their efforts to raise funds for EduKid, a charity that works to remove barriers to education faced by children living in poverty and conflict in Uganda, Cambodia and Peru.

Tracy Beatty, Reception Class Teacher at **Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School**, recently visited Uganda on behalf of Epworth Education Trust.

Reflecting on her visit, Tracy said: "After a long flight to Entebbe, I travelled north to spend a week in Gulu, visiting the primary school which many children that our Trust sponsor attend. I was able to visit the families of some pupils and hear about how transformative sponsorship has been for them.

"Although life is hard, the Ugandan people are immensely joyful and grateful for their lives. It put into perspective the many things we take for granted here."

Tracy also was able to visit the Bonga Girls project for girls who have been forced to leave education. Many of the pupils that have gone through the programme desire to give something back and become teachers themselves.

Tracy continued: "One former pupil, Amos, trained as a pharmacist then decided to work for Edukid in gratitude for the life changing opportunities he has been given.

"I expected the trip to be life changing and I truly believe it has been. The children and adults I met are now in my heart and their photos are on my fridge!"

To further support Edukid, the children at Bedford Hall held a fundraising KS2 Carol Concert, featuring a creative ensemble of narration, poetry and singing. Narrators shared information with parents about the work and service of Edukid to teach their parents about the difference the fundraising efforts make.



Over at **Wheatley Lane Methodist Primary School**, a festive fundraiser is planned for the end of term: the Friends of Wheatley Lane Christmas-A-Thon. Instead of the usual carol service, each class will perform a selection of Christmas songs or poems, with the children being sponsored for their performances. The funds raised will be shared between Edukids and other school activities.

We look forward to raising even more funds for EduKid throughout 2025!



Lest We Forget: A Tribute to the Fallen

Schools across the Trust paid tribute to the brave men and women who have served their country over the years in Remembrance Day ceremonies this November.

At **Summerseat Methodist Primary School**, the school House Captains laid a poppy wreath and throughout the week, the children worked on various poppy-themed crafts while reflecting on why Remembrance Day remains so important.

Year 6 pupils ended the service with a salute and march, taught by Sergeant John and Sergeant Gary from the Army Cadets.

Over at **Wesley Methodist Primary School**, each class decorated the trees on the school grounds with poppies for Remembrance.

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School held a moving worship for Remembrance Day. As the Last Post played, the Ethos Committee placed a wreath or cross in each class and held a two-minute silence.

Over at **Westleigh Methodist Primary School**, Chair of Governors and Navy veteran, Mr Pilkington, worked Year 3 and Year 6 pupils to perfect a 'march past', which was a highlight of the school's Remembrance service.

The Westleigh Ethos Committee led the school in prayer and recited the Kohima Epitaph, while Year 6 children delivered a moving reading of the poem *In Waters Deep*. Each class contributed hand-made poppy wreaths.





We will build a family of schools with shared Methodist values, but who can support their individual communities in their own unique way. This term, our schools have been celebrating SIAMS reports, supporting local charities and making the headlines!

Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy's Fantastic SIAMS Report

Staff and pupils at Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy are celebrating after a recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspection by the Church of England led to a report praising the school for its “well-defined Christian vision used [...] to establish a school in which pupils and adults flourish.”

A SIAMS inspection reviews how effective a school is at delivering a strong Christian ethos, to enable pupils, staff and the school community to thrive.

The report praised the “warm and welcoming” school overall, stating that: “the school’s overarching value of love ensures that there is a tangible culture of care both in the school and wider community.”

Inspectors also highlighted how the school’s Methodist vision and values act as a “golden thread” and that “nurturing relationships are modelled by staff to the pupils, and between the pupils”.

The report commended the school for its “inspiring and engaging” collective worship and how “religious education (RE) is effectively led and provides a safe space for pupils to explore different religions and beliefs and what it means to live in a diverse world.”

Other highlights of the report included comments such as:

- Leaders and the governing body have a clear vision which is at the centre of decision making to improve the lives of the pupils. Senior leaders’ actions are driven by the vision, and they are proud of its impact on the school community.
- With the support of the trust, leaders have designed a curriculum for all, encouraging a love of learning. Bespoke provision for those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) ensures pupils have the targeted interventions necessary for their learning.
- Extra-curricular activities provide experiences that widen horizons for pupils, these include opportunities from Zumba to sewing. Pupils rise to the challenges these provide.
- Pupils are nurtured and feel valued and unique. There is a deep-seated recognition that only the best is good enough for the school community. Parents are suitably confident and happy to send their child to school knowing that they are loved as part of the community.
- Leaders have a strong vision for RE and the curriculum is clear and progressive. It is broad and balanced, tailored to the needs of pupils and reflects the context of the community. The breadth of the curriculum enables pupils to develop an understanding of a range of worldviews.

Gemma Yapp, Headteacher, said: “We are delighted with the results of this inspection! Our staff, pupils and wider community work so hard to bring our vision of ‘Do everything in love’ to life in all we do, and it’s wonderful to see their dedication and commitment acknowledged by the SIAMS inspection team.”



Bedford Hall pupils become Shoebox Fairies

As Christmas approaches, Year 6 at Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School has been reflecting on the spirit of the festive season and how different Christmas might feel for children in families experiencing financial difficulties.

True to the Epworth mission of 'Do all you can', the pupils decided to support Wigan-based charity, The Shoebox Fairies, a charity committed to tackling poverty at a local level by collecting and donating essential items to those living in difficult social and economic circumstances at Christmas time. An amazing 17 shoeboxes of gifts were sent off to brighten local children's lives!

Lisa Draper, Headteacher said: "Helping our children understand the world around them sometimes means talking about hard topics. We were really impressed at how the children found empathy for those less fortunate and how generous they and their families were. Thank you to everyone who donated to this wonderful cause."



Making the headlines

Two of our schools have been selected by the BBC to feature in their national news coverage to showcase how we support our children and our communities.

At Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School, BBC Breakfast came to film the school preparing for annual Christmas lunch. While every child gets to enjoy a full dinner at school, by working with local churches and businesses the school also provides festive hampers to any family who may need additional support over the festive season.

In addition, to help support the launch of the Children's Wellbeing Bill, cameras were also at Hey with Zion to film all the amazing things the school does to help pupils stay happy and healthy.

Julie-Ann Hewitt, CEO, said: "While we don't do all the good things we do for recognition, it is lovely to see the efforts that our staff go to being acknowledged on the national stage. They are credits to the profession."





Across the Trust, we pride ourselves on delivering best practice through school-based models of excellence. This can mean modelling skills and attitudes that will support our pupils to 'do all they can', in all areas of school life.

14 Days of Kindness for Wesley Methodist Primary School

This term, Wesley Methodist Primary School, marked Anti-Bullying Week this year through a '14 Days of Kindness' campaign that saw over 4500 acts of kindness carried out by the school.

These acts of kindness range from creating kindness postcards to be posted to local neighbours, artwork for the local resident's home, a litter pick around school grounds, asserting positive affirmations to one another and many more.

Rhys Jones, Headteacher, said: "At Wesley Methodist Primary School, we take bullying very seriously and do our utmost to support all our children.

"For Anti-Bullying Week this year, we wanted to look at bullying from a different perspective and demonstrate to pupils how even the smallest act of kindness can have the biggest impact on a person's day, week and life.

"Our daily record of these kind deeds has allowed the children to



reflect upon how their actions have consequences, and how in choosing kindness we all work together to make our school community a better place."

Each classroom also takes on a unique kindness challenge, extending their acts of goodwill into the local community.

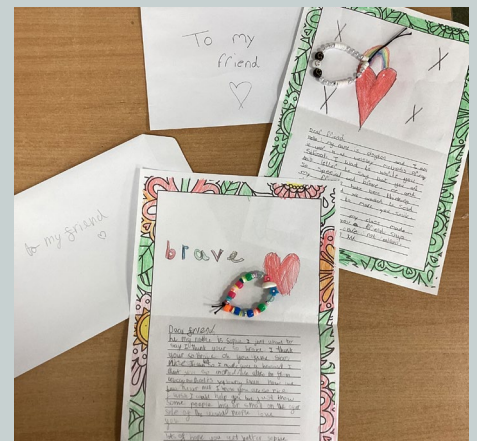
A highlight this year is that Year 4 children at Wesley have chosen to write letters and make friendship bracelets for children currently receiving care at Derian House Children's Hospice in Chorley.

"Acts of kindness can be as simple as sharing a smile, helping a sibling, holding doors open, or reaching out to someone who may be alone during break.

"We hope that these letters and bracelets will bring a little joy and connection to the children, letting them know they have friends thinking of them."

Julie-Ann Hewitt, CEO added: "It's inspiring to see pupils at Wesley leading the way in kindness and compassion. Their generosity, a core value of our Trust, is truly inspiring.

"Their efforts are a timely reminder of the positivity we can put into the world when we each 'do all we can'."



Eco Warriors at Leyland Methodist Schools

Leyland Methodist Schools are developing dedicated “Eco Warriors” in a bid to lead the way to making the schools more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

The whole school community has been working together to come up with innovative ways to recycle and reduce waste, such as using refillable glue sticks and other sustainable products.

One of the school’s projects involved creating beautiful, hand-crafted poppies from recycled materials to honour Remembrance Day. The spirit of upcycling has continued with the schools’ Christmas Tree Services, where pupils took on the task of creating their own eco-friendly tree decorations. Recycled bottles, cardboard, plastic plates and fabric offcuts were transformed into crafted stars, bells, snowmen and angels!

Karen Chadwick, Executive Headteacher, said: “With each new initiative, our schools continue to show that sustainability and creativity can go hand in hand, and everyone can do their bit to pave the way for a greener future.”



A Winning Partnership for Sports

Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy has been excited to team up with City in the Community this year, to bring extra sports coaching to pupils. This partnership has already provided wonderful opportunities for the children to learn new skills and get even more involved in sports.

Recently, ahead of the big Champions League game against Manchester City, City in the Community invited some special visitors from Feyenoord to come and see the great work happening at Rosehill. They were so impressed by the children, and they loved the friendly and happy atmosphere at the school.

As a thank you, the Feyenoord visitors gave pupils some memorabilia and the school was also presented with a commemorative scarf and shield to remember the visit. After the lovely day, everyone at Rosehill is excited to continue working with City in the Community for even more sporting fun!





One of the roots underpinning our Trust is that each school will deliver a dynamic and creative curriculum that holds no limits on the achievements and learning of all pupils. Our schools have been having adventures all over the country this term!

Year 6 Residential Trip to Robinwood

Year 6 pupils at Hey with Zion had an unforgettable experience this term when they took a trip to Robinwood in Todmorden. Over the course of a weekend, the children participated in a wide range of activities, from ziplining and canoeing to rock climbing, all while working on their crucial teamwork skills.

Some children had to face their fears to take part in activities. Despite the awful weather conditions, they all took it in their stride and kept a positive attitude all weekend.

Sara Machin, Headteacher said: "The pupils' exemplary behaviour, willingness to try new things, and ability to support one another made the trip a fantastic experience for all. Well done, Year 6!"



Nutgrove Fire Champions

This term, pupils at Nutgrove Methodist Primary School have been participating in the school's new Fire Champions Programme.

The programme, developed in partnership with Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Merseyside Police, North West Ambulance Service, and the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, aims to teach children about vital safety topics.

This initiative addresses key safety concerns, including gang exploitation, fire safety, basic first aid, water safety, antisocial behaviour, and road safety.

Rachel Bottell, Headteacher, said: "This has been a fantastic new initiative that has given our pupils valuable skills that will benefit them for life. Everyone really engaged with their learning and we were very proud of them all."



Summerseat Trips: From Museums to Muddy Boots

This term, Summerseat Methodist Primary School pupils have enjoyed a variety of trips to enrich their learning, visiting museums, national parks, and more.

One group travelled to Grasmere to explore the features of national parks. Their studies included examining rivers - learning about sources, riverbeds, banks, and floodplains. The pupils conducted human and physical geographical fieldwork before visiting Wordsworth's grave. They even stopped by St. Oswald's Church and sampled the famous treats at Sarah Nelson's gingerbread shop!

Another group visited Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry as part of their local history studies, learning about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on their community.

A great time was had by all!



Times Tables Rock Stars

This term, the Year 3 and 4 pupils at Hey with Zion have been rocking out with Times Table Rock Stars – an award-winning learning platform that makes mastering times tables a fun and exciting adventure.

During the recent 'England Rocks' event, pupils at the school took on times table challenges, earning some well-deserved certificates to celebrate their efforts.

A huge round of applause to our star performers!



Festive Visit to Cockfields Farm

EYFS children from Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy had a magical festive experience at Cockfields Farm this term.

During their visit, they had the chance to meet Father Christmas, who stayed with them for the entire visit! The children enjoyed feeding the animals and even made special reindeer food to take home for Christmas Eve.

Father Christmas and the elves were so impressed by how beautifully the children represented Rosehill, praising their kindness and behaviour throughout the visit. It was a truly festive day filled with fun and cheer for all!



Our Trust is dedicated to providing the highest standard of pastoral care. This term, pupils have learned life-saving skills and gained valuable tools for supporting their mental health.

Relax Kids

Over at **Summerseat Methodist Primary School**, the autumn term has been all about taking care of mental health and wellbeing.

As part of the school's 'Feel Good Friday' activities, the children have been enjoying Relax Kids sessions, designed to promote a sense of calm and relaxation.

Two staff members, trained as Relax Kids coaches, have been leading these sessions for the pupils. Additionally, all staff use the Calm-a-Class approach throughout the week, ensuring that the principles of Relax Kids are consistently embedded in daily routines.

Julie Whittaker, Headteacher, said: "Helping children to manage their own emotional regulation is so important and contributes to learning and overall wellbeing. We are really pleased with our new Relax Kids techniques and are already seeing an impact in the classrooms and playgrounds."



Give Racism the Red Card

Year 6 pupils from **Westleigh Methodist Primary School** recently had the opportunity to visit **Wigan Athletic** as part of a special project on racism.

During the visit, they met football players, explored the stadium and engaged in meaningful discussions about hate crimes and stereotypes.

The children impressed everyone with their thoughtful insights and showed great understanding of the topic. They confidently presented their learning through powerful speeches and creative posters, sharing the message with other schools. It was an inspirational day for the Year 6 class that highlighted the importance of standing together against racism.





Kindness, connection, community and faith are golden threads woven through all we do as a Trust. We are always so moved by the thoughtful ways in which our schools and children work hard to demonstrate these values, and support each other and those around them.



Christmas Cards at Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy

At Rosehill Methodist Primary Academy, the pupils have been busy spreading festive cheer.

Each class has created beautiful Christmas cards, which will be sent to the children's ward and the elderly ward at the local hospital.

We are proud to share that over 100 cards have been made, bringing joy and Christmas cheer to those in need of some festive joy.

Well done to all the pupils for their kindness and creativity!

Bedford Hall Shines at Light Up Leigh

This festive season, Leigh shone bright with the dazzling Light Up Leigh Christmas lantern parade and the Frost Feast pop-up food market.

Bedford Hall Methodist Primary School was proud to be the only primary school in the parade, alongside 16 community groups in partnership with Wigan Council and the Turnpike Gallery

As part of the project, all classes received an artist workshop led by professional parade artists and dancers to create props. Year 2 had several sessions and created their own light up costumes!

The parade lit up the streets of Leigh, followed by a lively event with performances, activities, and stalls.





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