

Bakewell Methodist Junior School
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Derbyshire Healthy Schools
Community Award



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Headteacher, Mrs Sarah Owens

20th January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers.

Bakewell is a Methodist school which believes deeply and passionately about the values we live by and the education and support we provide to our families.

The events of the last couple of years have presented real challenges for BMJS and many other schools like us. Over this time, we have found that the support we received from the local authority did not always match our needs and expectations. However, through the network of Methodist schools, we have received support from an organisation called the Epworth Education Trust and have found this to be enormously valuable.

In fact, when Ofsted came to visit us in the autumn term, they said lots of positive things about what we are achieving together, and the contrast between the support we received from the Epworth Education Trust throughout this process versus the lack of support that we received from the Local Authority was striking.

Having seen the value of this support, the staff and Governors now feel that formally joining their family of schools is the best way to ensure the long-term success of our school

Why do we think this?

There are lots of reasons, but some of the key ones are:

- Our school does lots of things well, our staff are hard working. We always, however, know that there is more we can do – this is a challenge when we are faced with limited resources. By building our links with other strong schools we can better share ideas and resources. We don't have to keep reinventing the wheel!
- Joining a trust will give us better access to more operational support – so our staff can focus on helping our children to thrive in the classroom.
- The Government is continually making changes to how they fund schools, and what they expect schools to use that funding for. These changes have added pressure to our already tight resources. It is important that we take some positive steps now to support us in the future.

One of the reasons we also think Epworth Education is right for us is that they allow every school to keep their identity and encourage links to their local community. That means they are not requesting uniform changes etc – they like us for who we are!

The view of the Methodist Church is that the church should do all they can to enhance the education that children receive in Methodist schools across the country. Their hope is that all Methodist schools join the Epworth Education Trust, as effectively schools are joining together based on ethos and approach.

What happens next?

We want to give you the opportunity to find out more and ask any questions you have. We are running what is called a listening period that will finish at the start of the February half-term.

To help this, we have set up a dedicated website where you can find out more and share your views through a survey. You will also be able to watch a video from the leader of the Epworth Education Trust to find out more about them.

Please visit www.epwortheducation.co.uk to find out more.

There will also be an FAQ section on the site where we will respond to all the questions we receive through the survey. This way you can all see what is being asked of us.

At the end of the listening period Governors will then make a decision about how to proceed. We expect to make this decision later in the spring.

Please do take your time to be involved in this process. The listening period is your opportunity to not only share your views, but also to put forward thoughts and comments about how we can support our school to flourish moving forward.

Thank you for all your continued support.

Warm Regards,

Sarah Owens- Headteacher

Hugo Reynolds- Chair of Governors