



Greenfield Primary School

Excellence and Enjoyment for All

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Consultation regarding the proposal to convert to Academy Status and join Focus-Trust. Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the proposal?

Our proposal is for Greenfield Primary School to convert to Academy Status and join Focus-Trust.

2. How would this proposal benefit our school?

We believe that pupils and staff will benefit greatly from the formal partnership that belonging to a Multi Academy Trust offers, which will include opportunities such as:

- Enhanced school improvement offer
- Potential for extended learning and increased enrichment activities
- More opportunities for sharing and exploring best practice within teaching and learning
- Bespoke responsive professional learning for teaching and support staff
- Cost and resource efficiencies allowing for greater economies of scale

The support of Focus-Trust will mean Greenfield can draw upon expertise in school-to-school support, access a range of high-quality services and benefit from system leadership.

We believe that we can bring enhanced benefits and opportunities to pupils and our whole school community by formalising our existing working relationship and ensuring greater accountability and responsibility.

3. How will the children benefit?

If the schools convert to academy status within the MAT, each will still have their own identity and degree of autonomy. The pupils will still belong to their school as before and will be taught in the same classrooms by the same teaching staff, so initially there is much continuity. Our school will continue strive for "Excellence and Enjoyment for All" and "to be a great school at the heart of our community".

Pupils will also have wider opportunities to learn new skills and experience new activities across the Trust.

4. Are there any reservations associated with joining a MAT?

As with any significant change there are things that need to be considered before being able to make a decision about which way to proceed. The common areas for concern when opting to join a MAT are:



- Potential loss of identity of individual school profile
- Potential loss of autonomy as a result of central accountabilities
- Potential short-term increase in costs before longer-term benefits are realised
- Isolation from the rest of the system
- Rapid growth of MAT causing capacity to be stretched and weakening individual schools

Governors and school leaders have considered the above issues at length and whilst we recognise these are areas of concern, we do not feel that they are issues that will necessarily affect us.

The operating model of Focus-Trust is the one that has already brought success and is one that existing leaders have developed. Ultimately, we feel the very real benefits massively outweigh any concerns and that a decision to convert to academy status and join Focus-Trust will support us in our vision for all our children to be happy, healthy, successful and able to learn together.

We will continue to be active in the wider association of Oldham schools and have no intention of becoming isolated. On the contrary, we believe that MAT membership will enhance our position in the whole system to the benefit of our pupils and staff. Focus-Trust are very conscious of the need to not grow the MAT beyond its capacity and will ensure that we manage a growth strategy that is never of detriment to the schools that belong. Rather than weaken our capacity we feel that we have increased opportunity to confidently plan recruitment, retention, training and development of staff from within the MAT and our associated partners.

5. What will be the impact on staff?

Currently, all staff are employed by Oldham Local Authority. After conversion, all staff will be employed by Focus-Trust. Staff are legally protected to transfer under the same employment terms and conditions, including pensions. If the decision to proceed with academisation join Focus-Trust is made staff will be provided with further information on how they are affected and a comprehensive consultation will take place. Being part of the MAT will provide greater opportunities for career progression and development. Already some Leaders and Staff are working together on a range of teaching, learning, curriculum projects.

6. What is an academy and what is a multi-academy trust?

An academy is an independent state school that is run by an academy trust. The academy trust enters into an agreement with the Secretary of State for Education that sets out its responsibilities and accountabilities for the effective running of the academy. The academy is funded directly by the Government and is no longer run (maintained) by the Local Authority. The academy trust is given charitable exemption, which means it must operate much like a charity. A multi-academy trust (MAT) has two or more academies as members.

7. How will the MAT and the schools be run?

Focus-Trust has a board of Members and Trustees, all with particular skills and expertise to help it run efficiently, effectively and compliantly.

Although the Board would have a number of legal and regulatory powers it would delegate many of its powers to Trust committees and Local Governing Bodies. Our local governing body would continue to have a mixture of representatives which are made up from parents, staff and local communities.



Each Headteacher and all senior leaders would still be responsible for running their own school.

8. Would the school have to change its name, logo or uniform?

There is no obligation to change any of these things on conversion. There will need to be an element of change to the existing branding of both schools to incorporate the name of the MAT within each school. However, there will not be any need to change the name or uniform at Greenfield Primary School.

9. Will we get more money as an academy?

Academies receive the same amount of per-pupil funding as they would receive from the Local Authority as a maintained school. They also receive additional funding in the form of the Education Services Grant to cover the responsibilities of the MAT, instead of Oldham LA receiving that money, and to cover the additional costs of academy status. The whole of the school budget would come direct to the school from central government allowing the school to control the whole of their finances and spending. As part of a multi-academy trust, we may also achieve greater efficiencies through increased buying power and joint commissioning of services; such as school equipment, catering and cleaning. The school has already prepared future budgets and is suitably confident of the proposed MAT's financial viability. The Department for Education would not support conversion without confidence in the financial management of the school budgets and these continue to be monitored closely after conversion.

10. How will admissions to the school be affected?

The application process for parents and carers will remain the same. The MAT will become the admitting authority and would have its own admissions policy. Any future policy changes would need to be clear and fair and in line with the admissions law and the School Admissions Code. The Local Authority will continue to have responsibility for making sure there are sufficient school places locally and to coordinate the admissions process for all schools.

11. Will our responsibilities in relation to SEND and exclusions change?

No. Responsibilities in an academy in relation to Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) and exclusions will be just the same as they are now.

12. Can a child with an Education, and Health Care Plan nominate an academy as their school of choice?

Yes. Schools converting to academy status can retain the admissions criteria they currently use. These arrangements and related processes must always comply with the School Admissions Code.

13. Will academies be free from the Ofsted inspection regime?

No. Academies are inspected in the same way as maintained schools. Each school will continue to be inspected individually. The performance of all schools will continue to be monitored and if there are signs of deterioration, or other factors likely to cause concern, these could trigger an inspection.

14. What is the process to become an academy?

There are two ways that a school can become an academy; in the case of Greenfield, the governors would be voluntarily applying for academy status. This is known as a voluntary conversion.



In this case, the decision to apply for academy status is taken by the governors. Having registered their interest in academy status with the DfE, the governors have to vote in favour of a resolution to convert to academy status. The application goes to the Secretary of State for Education but in practice will be considered by the Regions Group school decisions team. Once the academy application is approved, an 'academy order' is issued which gives the school the legal right to start the conversion process, apply for the conversion grant, establish new governance arrangements, register the academy trust and so on. Once all the legal arrangements are in place, the academy trust signs the funding agreement with the Secretary of State or her representative and the academy conversion process is complete. The whole transfer process can take approximately 4 to 8 months to complete.

Governors, Headteacher and other senior leaders have, for a considerable length of time, been exploring academisation and MAT status. This proposal for the governance, leadership and management structure of a MAT has already been presented to the LGB. We need to seek approval for the conversion from the DfE. The findings of the consultation process will be shared as part of the application process.

Greenfield has the opportunity to join Focus-Trust and become a converter academy.

Following this consultation period, a report sharing the findings of the consultation will be prepared and presented to the LGB. If the outcome is to proceed with the proposal, the necessary steps will be taken with the DfE in order to obtain an Academy Order for Greenfield. It is proposed that the new MAT and the conversion of the school will take place at an appropriate point during 2027.

15. I have further questions/would like to make comments, who do I contact?

We understand that this change needs careful consideration and as our community your views will be taken into account before final decisions are made. We will also be working with the pupils and staff to take account of their views in this important decision about their school. The formal consultation period is to be held between **5th October and 6th November 2026**.

'Consultation Q&A drop-ins' will be held on 2nd November for Staff and 5th November for parents, carers and members of the wider community. These drop-ins will operate between 3.30 and 4.30pm for staff and between 4.00 and 5.00pm for families where parents, carers and members of the wider community will be welcome to come into school and meet with school leaders and governors to ask any additional questions they may have. We have also produced an online questionnaire which can access on the school website (www.greenfieldprimaryschool.com) and also set up a special email address for you to either return the questionnaire or send in any comments and these will be considered by the governing body. If you have any feedback on the proposal which you would like governors to consider please complete the online questionnaire or email your comments to: consultation@greenfield.oldham.sch.uk by 1pm on Friday 6th November 2026.

