Detailed Parent and Carer Briefing

Proposed Academisation and Focus Trust

Greenfield Primary School | Consultation 5th October to 6th November 2026

A message from the Headteacher

I am excited about the proposal for Greenfield Primary School to join Focus Trust. Having explored the opportunities carefully with governors and colleagues, I firmly believe Focus is the right partner to support our school's continued success.

Greenfield is performing well. We are proud of our staff and community and we want to build on those strengths for our children. This is a voluntary proposal, pursued from a position of strength. We are not being forced to become an academy.

Governors recommend Focus following a detailed review of three trusts. Visits, conversations with staff and attendance at existing forums gave us confidence in its primary expertise, collaboration and respect for individual schools.

What particularly excites me is bringing that wider expertise around our staff: more colleagues to learn alongside, specialist advice and opportunities to develop. For children, we see the potential for stronger teaching, more effective support and additional learning experiences.

Parents have asked about staff continuity, children's learning, SEND, Greenfield's identity and local decision-making. This briefing addresses those concerns alongside the benefits and responsibilities of membership. Your views matter before governors decide whether to proceed.

Ben Storey
Headteacher, on behalf of the Governing Body

The proposal at a glance

- **A voluntary choice:** We are planning for Greenfield's continued success.
- **Our recommendation:** Focus offers a strong fit for our school's continued success and development.
- **Benefits for children:** Wider teaching expertise, specialist advice and additional opportunities.
- **Greenfield's identity:** The same school, free to attend, retaining our name, uniform, values and traditions.
- **Staff continuity:** We expect our team to continue. No restructure or redundancy is proposed.
- **Your voice:** Governors will consider consultation feedback before the final decision.

Find the information you need

You can read this briefing in full or select a question below to go straight to that section. The detailed explanation supports our recommendation and sets out the practical changes, responsibilities and limitations.

Why change if Greenfield is already doing well?

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What is a multi-academy trust?

A multi-academy trust is one charitable organisation responsible for a group of state-funded schools. Joining Focus would bring Greenfield within its governance and support arrangements. Greenfield would remain free to attend.

How to share your views

Consultation runs from 5th October to 6th November 2026. Use the questionnaire on the school's Academisation webpage, email consultation@greenfield.oldham.sch.uk or contact the school office for a conversation or paper information.

Why change if Greenfield is already doing well?

Building on a successful school

Greenfield is performing well, with a committed staff team and strong relationships with families. From this position of strength, we are proactively considering how best to sustain our success in the years ahead.

Governors and school leaders have chosen to explore this opportunity because we believe the right partnership can build on effective practice and strengthen support for children and staff.

Successful schools continue to learn and improve. We value support and challenge that helps us test our thinking, identify where we can do better and draw on effective practice elsewhere. Focus would provide an established primary network with shared responsibility for improvement.

A stronger network around our staff

A formal network would give teachers, subject leaders and our SENDCo regular access to colleagues with similar responsibilities, classroom visits and specialist advice. Greenfield would also contribute its own strengths.

We can and do collaborate while remaining maintained. Trust membership would add shared responsibility for improvement, coordinated professional learning and a central team accountable for supporting our school.

Planning for future support

As more schools join trusts, we are planning for the long-term availability of primary networks and support services. This does not mean every Local Authority service is ending or that Greenfield could not succeed while remaining maintained.

Joining Focus would add support to the local partnerships we already value. We would continue working with Oldham Council and neighbouring schools alongside Trust colleagues.

Focus would become the admissions authority, with families continuing to apply through Oldham Council’s coordinated process. The council would retain its statutory SEND responsibilities.

The alternative of remaining maintained

Remaining maintained is a valid option. It would retain present governance, avoid conversion work and costs,and allow us to continue purchasing services and building partnerships ourselves.

The challenge would be securing the same breadth and continuity of support through separate arrangements. Collaboration is already possible outside a trust; membership adds shared responsibility and coordinated support.

Having weighed the benefits for children against the responsibilities, costs and reduced independence, governors and school leaders believe Focus is the right next step. We are confident it would help us build on Greenfield’s strengths and sustain our success.

How did governors compare the three trusts?

Our review has involved approximately 18 months of exploration, discussion and evidence gathering.

The aim was to identify the right long-term partner for Greenfield, using the same criteria across three trusts and testing how each organisation operates in practice.

A shared governor led process

Responsibility was shared across the Academisation Due Diligence Team. Members compared their findings and discussed differences in scoring and emphasis before making a collective recommendation to the full Governing Body.

Rachel Whiffin and Dean Ward contributed specialist fact finding to inform the team's work.

Team member	Main contribution
Ben Storey, Headteacher	Headteacher experience, school improvement and central leadership.
Tony Wild, Chair of Governors	Governance, strategic alignment and challenge.
Zoe Reuter, Vice Chair of Governors	Comparing evidence across conversations and reviewing financial information.
Lyndsey Egan, Staff Governor	Staff experience, professional development and school collaboration.
Rachel Whiffin, School Business Manager	Operational services and the business manager perspective.
Dean Ward, Parent Governor	Financial expertise, including assessing the financial health of the trusts under consideration.

Hearing from different parts of each trust

Each trust received the same broad proposal for meaningful conversations with primary headteachers, teaching and support staff, governors, central colleagues and School Business Managers. The plan sought evidence from two or three schools in each trust and included opportunities to observe existing leadership forums.

The extent to which trusts opened up that access formed part of our assessment.

We assessed the same six areas for each trust, using written benchmarks from one to five. The assessment table later in this briefing lists those areas. Visits, conversations, written responses and financial information informed the ratings. Dean, Zoe and the Headteacher reviewed published accounts and benchmarking data, including reserves, charges and value for money.

Why is Focus our preferred partner?

Values reflected in everyday practice

Focus's vision of great schools at the heart of their communities and its values of Care, Dare, Fair and Share closely align with Greenfield's community identity and whole-child approach. Visits and forums showed schools retaining their character and staff collaborating naturally.

Focus schools retain their own mottos, visions and values. Coppice Primary Academy uses 'Learn and Grow Together'. Freehold Community Primary Academy's 2023 Ofsted report recognised its values of honesty, resilience, respect, integrity and empathy. These examples show individual identities alongside shared Trust values.

Greenfield's proposal retains 'Excellence and Enjoyment for all' and our whole-child approach. This combination of shared principles and individual school identity is an important reason for recommending Focus.

An open approach to our review

Focus allowed us to choose schools and colleagues to speak with and attend existing leadership forums. Seeing the Trust working normally and comparing schools' experiences gave us confidence in its culture.

Established support for primary school improvement

Focus has established primary networks, school improvement groups, professional learning and accessible central expertise. Headteachers described feeling trusted to lead, with support and professional challenge.

One experienced headteacher from Focus described how Trust leaders supported his vision for improving his school and brought in expertise around that work. We valued the way the support responded to the school's context. For Greenfield, this offers a model of improvement that strengthens the leadership and curriculum already in place.

Useful and responsive central support

Schools and business managers described accessible, useful central support. Our review found a proportionate approach, with more active support for schools facing greater challenges and greater day-to-day independence where less support was needed.

Our financial review did not rule out any trust on financial grounds alone. Focus gave us the strongest overall confidence in the value of its support, informed by conversations with the people using those services.

Where did Focus score well, and what were the trade-offs?

The comparison workbook records the following final ratings for Focus. These are Greenfield's assessment of fit against our agreed criteria. One represents limited alignment or support and five the highest benchmark for that area. The ratings reflect our professional judgement and the evidence gathered, rather than an external inspection grade.

Evaluation area	Focus rating
Vision, values and ethos alignment	5 out of 5
Leadership, governance and autonomy	4 out of 5
School improvement capacity	5 out of 5
Staff development, wellbeing and retention	4 out of 5
Central services and operational support	4 out of 5
Community, collaboration and growth	4 out of 5
Total	26 out of 30

The other two trusts received total ratings of 17 and 15 out of 30. All three had strengths. Focus's higher rating reflects the team's judgement that it offers the strongest combination for Greenfield at this point in the school's development.

The trade-offs we considered

Focus specialises in primary education and has no secondary school within its membership. Our existing partnerships with secondary schools and work on transition would continue.

Some schools in Focus are geographically distant. Staff collaboration and Trust learning days can involve travel, so membership brings practical demands as well as wider professional opportunities. Support also comes with accountability, including formal discussions when outcomes cause concern.

Focus received four out of five in four areas, rather than the highest rating across the board. Governors weighed the benefits of established support against these considerations and the broader risks of Trust membership. The recommendation is based on the overall balance of evidence.

Interpreting school outcomes

Inspection and pupil outcomes across Focus schools are mixed. Governors considered examples of improvement alongside schools still facing challenges. Results reflect each school's context, starting point and time within the Trust. Our preference for Focus rests on the quality and relevance of its support, culture and improvement model, rather than an assumption that academy status guarantees higher results.

What could this mean for my child?

Stronger teaching and learning

The main benefit for children would come through better-supported staff. A subject leader could discuss a curriculum difficulty with colleagues, visit another school and bring back an approach to test at Greenfield. Teachers could compare expectations and pupils' work with other primary colleagues, helping them identify gaps and refine their teaching.

Focus's school improvement offer includes partnership visits in the spring and summer terms, an end-of-year roundtable and a quality of education review.

Schools also work in groups of three for peer review, with school leaders and improvement colleagues learning from one another. Leaders receive training for their part in that process. This gives Greenfield regular support and an informed outside view of teaching and learning.

Greenfield would retain responsibility for designing its curriculum within Focus's broad curriculum principles. This is a familiar way of working: we already design our curriculum within the framework of the National Curriculum, tailoring its content, organisation and learning experiences to our children and community.

Focus's principles would provide a shared framework within which we would continue to shape a curriculum that reflects Greenfield's priorities and identity.

The school would also be able to choose assessments suited to its pupils, while using shared tracking and termly information to identify where support is needed. For example, a subject leader could work with colleagues on a teaching difficulty, test an approach here and review its effect on children's learning.

Learning and enrichment opportunities

Our due diligence identified established shared pupil opportunities and enrichment within Focus, including residential experiences. Membership would give Greenfield access to that wider network, adding to the opportunities we already offer our children.

These would complement, rather than replace, Greenfield's existing trips, residentials and enrichment activities. We would choose additional activities to suit our children, with affordability and accessibility central to those decisions.

What would this mean for children with SEND?

Our SENDCo would have access to Focus's Safeguarding, Ambition and Inclusion Lead, whose offer includes school visits, direct advice and support when working with external agencies.

Focus also runs SENDCo forums three times a year and a shared SEND strategy. This gives our staff a wider network for discussing provision, adapting teaching and responding to complex needs.

The same specialist role supports safeguarding leads, attendance leads and pastoral staff. The offer includes training, an annual safeguarding strategy day, safeguarding audits every two years and attendance and punctuality forums.

For children, the intended benefit is staff drawing on advice and shared practice when planning support and responding to concerns.

Children and families would continue to work with Greenfield's staff. Academisation would not remove our SEND duties or replace the Local Authority's role in statutory assessment and Education, Health and Care Plans. It would not automatically provide extra SEND staff or guarantee quicker access to external assessments.

What could this mean for teachers and support staff?

Greenfield's staff are central to our success. Their expertise, commitment and relationships with children and families are strengths we want to preserve. We have heard parental concerns about staff leaving. We expect our team to continue at Greenfield and do not anticipate significant staff turnover as a result of this proposal. Our aim is to strengthen the support and professional opportunities available to the people who already make Greenfield successful.

No staffing restructure, redundancy or role change is currently proposed as part of conversion. Staff would transfer from Oldham Council to Focus through TUPE, protecting existing contractual terms and continuity of service.

Focus participates in the Teachers' Pension Scheme and Local Government Pension Scheme. Staff and their representatives would be consulted about the transfer, including pay, pensions, contractual terms, job security and workload.

Focus's established forums bring together headteachers, deputies, curriculum leaders, SENDCos and business managers, giving colleagues access to advice and shared practice. Its written offer also identifies funded qualifications for teaching assistants and administration staff and teacher training through apprenticeships. We believe this support would help us develop and retain our valued team.

Focus has described movement between schools as typically mutually agreed, such as a temporary secondment that allows a colleague to develop their experience or share their expertise. Staff would also have opportunities to learn alongside colleagues from other schools, with some Trust learning days requiring travel to another location.

There would be adjustments to working within a Trust. Staff would need to learn new systems and meet shared reporting requirements, including common assessment tracking and termly information returns.

The CEO would lead Headteacher appraisal with the Chair of Governors. Managing workload would remain an important consideration throughout the transition.

Staff views matter throughout the process and beyond it. Focus describes using HR information, education reviews, its annual staff survey and exit interviews to monitor retention and understand staff experience. These provide routes for feedback and identifying concerns. Our due diligence also included conversations with staff and leaders about their experience of working within Focus.

Would Greenfield still feel like Greenfield?

The school families know

Our proposal retains Greenfield's name, uniform, values and community ethos. Children would continue to attend the same school, with the Headteacher and leadership team managing its daily work. We intend to continue our traditions, productions, community events and local partnerships, including the valued role of FRoGS (Friends and Relatives of Greenfield School).

Our RULES, the Greenfield Way, Inner Strengths and the Greenfield Pledge would continue to guide our work. Trust membership would be reflected in some communications and branding.

The main organisational changes would be to governance, employment and support systems. Children would continue attending Greenfield. Improvements to teaching and additional opportunities would develop through the support available to our staff.

Who would make decisions and how could I raise a concern?

The Trust Board would hold ultimate accountability. Greenfield's Local Governing Body would continue, with responsibilities set by the Trust's scheme of delegation. The table summarises the main roles.

Focus's framework includes a scheme of delegation, committee terms of reference and a governance handbook. Greenfield would retain its behaviour policy alongside shared Trust policies.

Area	Responsibility
Daily school leadership and teaching	Headteacher and school staff, within Trust policies and delegated authority.
Local oversight and community voice	Local Governing Body, through the remit delegated by the Trust Board.
Curriculum, budget and most recruitment	Significant school responsibility, subject to Trust principles, financial controls and approval requirements.
Any future Headteacher appointment and shared policies	Trust involvement and oversight.
Ultimate legal and financial accountability	Trust Board. Delegation does not remove its responsibility.

Local leadership and Trust accountability

Our due diligence gave us confidence in Focus's support for school identity and decisions suited to local children and communities.

The Trust Board delegates responsibilities to school leaders and local governors. Delegated powers can be reviewed, changed or withdrawn. Our recommendation reflects confidence in Focus's current approach alongside an understanding of that accountability.

Retaining Greenfield's name, uniform and traditions is part of the proposal and reflects Focus's current approach.

Raising a concern or challenging a decision

Families would continue to raise concerns with school first. Formal complaints would follow the published procedure, including Trust escalation. DfE can then consider whether the complaint was handled properly; it does not normally re-investigate it or overturn the decision. Matters such as admissions appeals have separate routes.

School leaders and local governors can challenge and escalate a Trust decision through its governance arrangements. Local disagreement does not create a veto.

What would this cost, and could it help the buildings?

Investing in support for Greenfield

The central contribution would give Greenfield consistent access to shared expertise in school improvement, professional learning, HR and financial management.

Focus has quoted an annual corporate support fee of 5% of Greenfield's General Annual Grant, the main revenue funding for an academy. Pupil premium, PE and sport grant, Universal Infant Free School Meals funding, SEN income and locally generated income are excluded from the calculation.

A dedicated Business Support Accountant would visit monthly to work with the Headteacher and School Business Manager on budget monitoring. The Chief Finance Officer provides the financial framework and specialist advice. Greenfield would continue everyday transactions and budget planning using shared systems.

Greenfield already pays for services. Our comparison considers costs replaced, retained and added.

Shared purchasing offers opportunities for savings. Our case rests on the quality and value of support; conversion does not automatically mean more classroom funding.

School budgets and financial accountability

Focus does not pool schools' General Annual Grant funding. Under the proposed arrangements, Greenfield's funding would be allocated to the school, with the 5% contribution supporting the central services described above.

School leaders would set and manage Greenfield's budget within Trust controls, supported by financial advice. The Trust Board would hold overall financial responsibility, including oversight of budgets and reserves.

Supporting and maintaining the school site

We continue to pursue drainage, roof leaks and overheating concerns with Oldham Council. Focus has indicated that its legal and property expertise could support this work.

The Trust would become responsible for operating and maintaining the premises safely. Focus's offer provides for schools to retain Devolved Formula Capital for improvements and bid to the Trust for School Condition Allocation funding for larger projects.

This provides expertise and funding routes for site improvements. Larger projects would be prioritised across the Trust according to need and available funding; conversion would not resolve every building issue immediately.

What are the disadvantages and risks?

Joining Focus would bring definite changes as well as possible benefits. Ultimate accountability would move to the Trust Board, some decisions would sit beyond Greenfield and part of our funding would contribute to central services. The conversion process would also require time and changes to administrative systems.

Trust membership would be a long-term commitment. Greenfield could not simply return to maintained status or leave the Trust by a local vote. Any future transfer to another trust would require formal processes and DfE involvement.

The longer-term considerations governors have weighed

Governors have considered the responsibilities and potential challenges of joining a multi-academy trust alongside the benefits identified through our review of Focus. The considerations below explain what membership would involve and what would remain important over time.

Consideration	What this means for Greenfield
Local decision-making	The Trust Board would hold ultimate accountability, with responsibilities delegated to school leaders and local governors. Those arrangements can change over time.
Financial commitment	Greenfield would contribute towards central services. The quality and value of that support would remain important to our budget planning.
Transition and workload	Staff would need time and support to learn new systems and meet shared reporting requirements.
Benefits for children	The value of professional learning and specialist support would be judged by how they strengthen children's education and experience at Greenfield.
A lasting partnership	Trust membership is a long-term commitment. Maintaining effective support and strong relationships would remain important as the Trust develops.
Premises responsibilities	Maintaining and improving the school site would continue to require careful planning, prioritisation and funding. Existing building needs would remain relevant under either school structure.

When support is not working

If teaching, attendance, inclusion or pupil wellbeing deteriorated, school leaders would need to identify the issue, agree action and review its impact with governors and Trust colleagues. Trust membership would add support and scrutiny; it would not transfer responsibility away from those working in school.

Concerns about the Trust itself would need escalation through its governance and, where relevant, DfE's regulatory routes. External accountability provides protections but does not provide a guarantee of quick resolution or an automatic right to change trusts.

There is no guarantee of extra classroom staff, additional funding or improved results. Our recommendation reflects our judgement that the support offered by Focus would benefit Greenfield's children, alongside an understanding of the responsibilities and risks involved.

Who decides and how would we know if it was working?

How governors would reach a decision

Governors will consider consultation feedback alongside the due diligence findings and the equality implications. The team's recommendation is informed by the educational offer, values and community fit, school decision-making, staff experience, operational support and financial review. The final decision on whether to proceed will take account of the views received during consultation.

The outcome will explain the main issues raised and how they affected governors' reasoning. Consultation gives families a voice in the decision; it is not a ballot in which the largest number of responses automatically determines the result.

A recommendation in favour of Focus does not make the outcome predetermined. If consultation or further evidence identifies significant unresolved concerns about children's education, SEND, staff impact, governance or financial sustainability, governors would consider whether to change, pause or reject the proposal.

How we propose to judge the benefits if conversion proceeds

Before conversion, if the proposal proceeds, we propose recording a starting point for pupil outcomes, attendance and wellbeing, SEND provision, staff experience and costs. Our proposed approach is a termly review by school leaders and local governors, an accessible update for families each term and a fuller review after the first year.

The proposed review would examine what children experience, which support staff have used, how it has improved provision and whether services offer value for money. If benefits fell short, leaders and governors would identify action, assign responsibility and set a review date.

After the decision

If governors proceed, Focus would support staff transfer consultation, finance, HR and payroll changes, with induction and an action plan tailored to Greenfield. Families would receive practical information and contacts. Existing arrangements would continue until conversion.

If governors do not proceed, we would explain why and how alternative support would be secured.

How can I respond and what happens next?

Your questions and views

Please share what matters to your family, which benefits you would value and the concerns you want governors to address. We welcome questions and criticism as well as support.

You can use the questionnaire on the school's Academisation webpage, email consultation@greenfield.oldham.sch.uk or arrange a conversation through the school office. Paper copies of consultation information are available on request.

The current timetable

Date	Stage
5th October to 6th November 2026	Consultation with families and other stakeholders.
19th and 21st October 2026	Headteacher consultation drop-ins during Parents' Evenings in the library.
5th November 2026	Parent presentation and question-and-answer session with school leaders and Focus colleagues.
Week beginning 9th November 2026	Planned extraordinary Governing Body meeting to consider feedback and decide the next steps.
1st July 2027	Intended conversion date if the proposal proceeds and the necessary approvals and arrangements are completed.

Consultation closes on Friday 6th November 2026. If the timetable changes, we will inform families through the school's usual communication channels and publish the updated dates on the Academisation webpage.

Information and sources

This briefing draws on Greenfield's due diligence criteria, meeting notes, comparison workbook, governors' presentation and script, and Focus's written responses. The assessment table shows the final workbook ratings. Further information is available through the links below.

Greenfield consultation documents and response questionnaire

Focus Trust information and published governance and financial documents

DfE academy trusts governance guide

DfE Academy Trust Handbook 2026

DfE guidance on complaints about academies

Acas guidance on transferring employees under TUPE