

Candidate information pack

Education Director



Closing date for applications	10 th April 2026 at noon
Interview date	20 th April 2026

Great Schools at the Heart of our Communities

Learning together, making the difference

Welcome from Chair of Trustees

Thank you for your interest in the role of Education Director with Focus-Trust

Focus-Trust is a charitable primary schools trust established in 2012. We are based in the North-West of England and are dedicated to working with our 15 primary schools and welcome the opportunity for further growth. It is the core purpose of Focus-Trust to continually strive to be a learning organisation where the learning of all children and adults is valued and promoted.

We passionately believe equity of opportunity starts with education; irrespective of where you were born or where you live, a high-quality education in one of our great schools will make a fundamental difference to all our children's lives, career prospects and social mobility.

The Focus-Trust team is committed to providing a great educator in every class with a strong moral purpose, high quality pedagogy and a broad and balanced curriculum. We aim to provide inclusive and inspirational environments where our children thrive and build the social and cultural capital they need to make aspirational choices about their future, overcoming any barriers they may encounter.

Following the promotion of our Education Director to CEO of Focus-Trust, we are seeking to appoint a new Education Director from September 2026. The successful candidate will succeed Michael Rowland, who has led a significant trajectory of improvement across all Focus-Trust schools during his tenure as Education Director.

As Michael takes up his new role as CEO in September 2026, we are now looking for an exceptional leader to build on this strong foundation and continue driving improvement across the Trust.

The successful candidate will demonstrate the following qualities:

- A proven track record of sustained school improvement
- Extensive experience of leading and motivating people and building effective relationships at all levels
- A clear understanding of the current educational and political landscape
- A leader who will epitomise our ethos, communicating and sharing our vision and purpose with energy, commitment, and passion
- Honest, approachable, adaptable, resilient, patient, motivated and an excellent communicator who works with integrity and respect for all

We have a thriving partnership of schools who are driven to do the best for our children. As a team we believe in 'Collective efficacy' and have a shared commitment to work together on the things that matter to improve outcomes for all.

We are proud to have a great team of people working in our schools who always put children at the heart of our practice. We are committed to providing excellent professional development opportunities for all our staff and always aim to be an employer of choice.

Our next Education Director must therefore be an exceptional leader who is committed to moving the Trust forward in the next phase of our strategic school improvement plans.

I wish you well in your application.

Paul Spencer - Chair of Trust Board



Welcome from Chief Executive Officer

Many thanks for showing interest in this exciting position within our Trust.

Having left headship and initially joined Focus-Trust in 2013 as the Academy Improvement Partner, and then becoming CEO in 2015, I have been privileged to be part of our Focus-Trust journey from the beginning.

Focus Trust has enjoyed a successful thirteen years and I'm stepping aside from the end of August to pursue part-time, flexible working. After a rigorous national recruitment in February, trustees appointed Michael Rowland to be our new CEO from 1st September.

Trustees are now looking for a new Education Director to work in partnership with Michael Rowland, to move the Trust on to its next stage of our school improvement trajectory.

Over the past few years all fifteen of our schools have improved in all aspects and we are very proud of our great schools which are at the heart of their communities.

The new post holder will report directly to the new CEO and will work in partnership on many aspects. Just like all educational organisations across the country, our schools face challenges in the coming years. However, the level of confidence and trust that exists between our Trust Board, Central Team and our individual schools is immense and everyone highly values these strong relationships and our culture of collective efficacy.

The new Education Director will work as an integral part of our small Central Team and regularly be out in any one of our fifteen schools. Prioritising your time and support is vital. This position is one that has many challenges but the potential for much satisfaction and immense personal reward.

As the current Chief Executive, I am keen to find the right values driven person to fill this exciting position but I am equally concerned that the right person finds the position fulfilling and professionally and personally rewarding.

Should you have any questions about the role or would like to arrange a visit to any of our schools, please contact Janet Berry, Executive Assistant via email j.berry@focus-trust.co.uk or by calling 07867 423 870. Janet will arrange for you to speak with either me or Michael Rowland, our current Education Director.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Helen Rowland – Chief Executive Officer

Education Director - Job description

Job title	Education Director
Salary range	£87,000 - £92,000
Responsible to	Chief Executive Officer
Holidays	35 days + statutory bank holidays
Pension	Local Government pension
Line Manager to	Safeguarding, Ambition and Inclusion Lead (SAIL) Curriculum, Professional Learning Lead (CPLL)

Purpose of the role

- Provide professional support for schools and all colleagues to ensure they deliver the highest quality of education
- Support schools through the conversion process to academy status.
- Undertake strategic and operational responsibilities as may reasonably be requested by the Chief Executive or their representative

Main areas of responsibility

- Provide outstanding leadership on school improvement which ensures continuing improvement and success with a focus on accelerating and sustaining pupil progress
- Lead through high expectation and aspiration; being prepared to challenge mediocrity and under-performance
- Show fidelity to the commitment and ethos of Focus-Trust and to the implementation of agreed policies and procedures
- Support the delivery of the F-T 5 strategic priorities
- Model the agreed vision and values through own behaviour and language
- Manage resources to ensure the best outcomes
- Promote and secure engagement and involvement with staff, parents, and community
- Keep abreast of educational and technical developments and be an inspiring innovator for all.

Strategic leadership and development

- Work with the Chief Executive and central team to provide strategic leadership and school improvement within the Trust and for schools.
- Ensure that the commitment and vision of the Trust and schools is clearly articulated, understood and acted upon effectively by all staff.
- Provide leadership in the development of Trust-wide and school-specific projects and strands of work.
- Contribute to the development of the Trust's shared objectives and commitment.
- Work with existing excellent practitioners to empower and develop consistently strong teaching and learning through collaborative practice
- Keep abreast of current and innovative educational developments to ensure Focus-Trust schools are at the cutting edge of educational practice

School improvement

- Undertake school improvement work with schools; to include training, mentoring, coaching, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting
- Provide support, challenge and training to school leaders, staff and governors
- Use a range of data to devise hypotheses and draw conclusions
- Challenge school leaders to ensure the highest quality of teaching and learning which leads to high rates of progress and achievement

- Monitor and evaluate the work of schools, including the effectiveness of leadership & management, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and attitudes and outcomes for children and learners
- Draft and present evidenced reports on the work of schools
- Support schools pre, during and post inspection
- Liaise with Ofsted and DfE
- Lead training for Trust employees
- Take a lead role in inducting new school leaders, staff and governors
- Take a lead role in a range of forums.

School leadership

- Work in a leadership role within a school - should the need arise.
- Provide leadership support to boost and sustain capacity within a school - should the need arise.

Growth and conversion

- Identify opportunities for growth of the Trust
- Risk assess and undertake due diligence on potential converter and sponsored schools
- Work with schools and external agencies to support the conversion process
- Manage stakeholder expectations through conversion
- Identify risks and report to the Chief Executive.

Trust internal

- Research and draft documents, policies, schedules and handbooks
- Ensure that Trust policies, protocols and handbooks are followed by others
- Produce reports for internal and external audiences
- Line manage Trust staff if the need arises
- Produce written and oral reports for the Chief Executive and Trust Board
- Co-ordinate, lead and record meetings
- Contribute to the ongoing review of the Trust's objectives and formulation of strategic improvement plan
- Manage internal budgets and report accordingly with the aim of ensuring best value
- Represent the Trust at external events.

Confidentiality

- Ensure that confidentiality is maintained in line with agreed policies and protocols.

Safeguarding

- Ensure that the Trust and schools comply with all national and local safeguarding and child protection requirements.

Equity

- Ensure that the Trust reflects a vibrant and inclusive ethos which actively values and promotes diversity, unity and community cohesion, and supports pupils to become successful integrated citizens and colleagues to feel a sense of belonging
- Actively challenge and address discrimination
- Ensure a continual focus on equity as measured by pupil outcomes.

Beliefs, attitudes and personal attributes

- Relentless focus on excellent pupil achievement
- Resilient and persistent in goals, but adaptable to context and people
- Willing to develop a deep understanding of people and context
- Willing to take risks and challenge accepted beliefs and behaviours
- Self-aware and able to learn

- Optimistic and enthusiastic
- Values and promotes diversity and equity

General

The post holder will be expected to:

- Actively support work and ethos of the Focus-Trust, contributing to the Focus-Trust commitment and modelling the Focus-Trust values.
- Undertake such additional duties as may reasonably be requested by the Chief Executive or their representative.
- Participate in arrangements for appraisal and in the identification of areas in which they would benefit from professional development
- Proactively keep abreast of developments in relation to the post, and whenever possible and appropriate, attend professional development opportunities.
- Comply with and support all policies related to equal opportunities and safeguarding children.
- Comply with and support all policies of Focus-Trust and the schools.
- Ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
- Undertake such additional duties as may reasonably be requested by the Trustees

Key relationships

- Trust Board
- Central Team
- Principals and school leaders
- School business managers
- Trade Unions
- Local governing boards
- External organisations
- Community groups
- Charities
- Local and national businesses
- Local Authorities
- DfE, Ofsted

This job description is neither exhaustive nor exclusive, and it may, after consultation with the postholder, be subject to modification and amendment in accordance with the needs of the Trust.

This job description details responsibilities but does not direct any priorities or amount of time to be spent carrying out these duties.

Education Director - Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good honours Degree or equivalent • Qualified Teaching Status/PGCE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accredited SIP • Previous experience as an inspector on behalf of Ofsted/current Ofsted Inspector
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful and extensive teaching experience. • Senior leadership experience in an appropriate setting to the post • Strong record of educational leadership, raising standards and achieving outstanding results • Good record of professional development in the field of education/leadership • Experience of leading, managing and motivating teams of people, building effective relationships at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managed curriculum initiative • Experience of involvement in Head Teacher performance management
Skills and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate success in facilitating the raising of standards in education • Knowledge of the national curriculum, educational developments, including the national agenda • Ability to write clearly for a range of audiences. • A thorough understanding of educational/ safeguarding legislation, best practice and contemporary issues • Excellent interpersonal and communication skills. • Understanding of School Improvement Partner functions • Strong verbal and written communication skills, including excellent report writing skills • The ability to collate, analyse and interpret complex data to inform school development • Excellent interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence; with the ability to build strong working relationships with trustees, headteachers/principals, and other stakeholders; and to always be approachable to all staff at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective public speaker

<p>Personal Attributes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work as a team member • Compassionate and warm personality – optimistic and enthusiastic • Strong interpersonal, communication and presentation skills, including warmth and empathy whilst still holding others to account • Ability to prioritise, plan and organise yourself and others • Ability to work efficiently and accurately, particularly under pressure, to deadlines, and using own initiative • Self aware, able to learn and committed to ongoing professional development 	
<p>Other factors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to work flexibly, including any service hours necessary to achieve Trust objectives. • A commitment to Equal Opportunities. Valuing diversity and equity. • Drivers licence essential as is access to a vehicle (Travelling to multiple locations is a key requirement of the role) 	

The panel will assess an applicant against the person specification through;

- Application
- Interview
- Assessment activities
- References and other employment checks

What you might want to know about Focus Trust

Who are we?

Focus-Trust was incorporated in May 2012 as a primary trust. The Trust was originally sponsored by Focus Education, however the DfE decoupled this arrangement in 2024 and the Focus-Trust remains an entirely separate legal entity. As with all academy trusts, the Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity. The Trust's offices are situated in a newly converted historic mill conversion in Chadderton, Oldham with excellent motorway networks to access our schools.



The defining feature of Focus-Trust is that it is a specialist primary phase trust. This means that the work of the Trust is driven by the distinctive needs of primary schools. Whilst the Trust has robust systems for accountability, each school has their own distinctive identity, ethos and culture, and this is a commitment to every school when they convert and join the Trust.

Focus-Trust currently has a small centrally employed team. The members of the team are highly skilled and committed to the mission, vision, culture, values and moral purpose of the Trust.

All the schools within the Trust are willing partners who have actively chosen to join Focus-Trust and there is a very high degree of consensus, cooperation and commitment from within the group.

The Trust has robust policies and systems in place to govern and guide its work. These have been gradually implemented as the Trust has grown. The Trust has well-established productive relationships with trade unions and meets half termly with a group of national trade union representatives to discuss policy development. This has enabled us to introduce and change a range of policies in a streamlined and cooperative way.

Equity of opportunity

Focus-Trust is an equal opportunity employer, dedicated to a policy of non-discrimination in employment on any basis including age, gender, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, gender, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation and/or medical condition.

Safeguarding

Focus-Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people. There is an explicit expectation that all employees share this commitment and adhere to all safeguarding policies and procedures. Applicants should be aware that the recruitment process will include an assessment of your suitability to work with children.

Right to work in the UK

Under the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, it is a criminal offence to employ anyone who is not entitled to live or work in the United Kingdom. Applicants can expect us to ask for proof of this at interview stage, where you will be asked to provide some original documentation to confirm that you are eligible to work within the UK. Photographic proof of identity will also be required.

Validation of qualifications and identity

All shortlisted candidates will be asked to bring original certificates or relevant qualifications and identity documents to interview. These will be photocopied and kept on file and, if appropriate, may be confirmed as genuine with the relevant awarding bodies. The copies of the successful candidate will be retained on their personnel file. The copies of unsuccessful candidates will be treated as confidential waste and disposed of appropriately.

References and Social Media Checks

If you are shortlisted, we will take up references before the interview date, unless you state otherwise on your application form. However, two satisfactory references must be received before we can confirm any offer of an appointment. One of your referees must be your current or most recent employer. The information we request will relate to salary, length of service, skills and abilities, suitability for the job, disciplinary record and suitability to work with children. Copies of references or open references will not be accepted. On receipt of references, your referees may be contacted to verify any discrepancies, anomalies or relevant issues as part of the recruitment verification process.

In line with our safer recruitment policy, on-line presence checks will be undertaken if you are shortlisted. This check is designed to complement the range of standard recruitment checks and allows us to identify a candidate's online presence which potentially could damage the organisation's reputation.

Disability

To comply with the Equality Act 2010, we are legally required to consider making reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in the recruitment and selection process. We are therefore committed to meeting, wherever possible, any needs you specify on the application form. Please contact the named person on the advert, if you need to discuss this in any detail. We will consider any reasonable adjustment under the terms of the Act to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

Disclosure of a criminal record

Employment in this role is subject to an enhanced check with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Checks will also be made against the lists showing people barred from working with children. All checks must be satisfactory before any offer of employment can be confirmed and before commencement of work can take place.

Dress code

We expect all staff to dress professionally and appropriately for the roles undertaken. We pride ourselves on the high standards of dress of both our pupils and staff; these standards are led by our staff who we expect to set an example.

Knowledge and skills profile

This is an important part of your application and is your opportunity to explain how you meet the person specification for the post. You should demonstrate, using a minimum of 2,000 characters and up to the equivalent of two sides of A4, your skills, knowledge and experience and give short examples. Describe how you match the requirement of the job; include experience gained from previous jobs, community or voluntary work. Ensure that the information you give is well organised, relevant and brief. You may find it helpful to use sub-headings in order to keep your statement well focused. If you do not submit this profile, you will not be considered for shortlisting.

Policies

Focus-Trust and the schools have a range of policies and handbooks that help to make clear our expectations and ways of working. These are always shared openly with staff and are accessible to everyone. There are several policies that prospective employees should be aware of when making an application. These can be found on the Trust website www.focus-trust.co.uk and school websites. All members of staff will be asked to sign a declaration as part of the induction process to acknowledge that they have read and understand the Code of Conduct and some of the key policies, e.g. Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety, Acceptable use of IT.

Pensions

Focus-Trust contributes to Teachers' Pensions and Local Government pensions in the same way and with the same level of contribution as local authorities.

Employer Relations

Focus-Trust has a Trade Union agreement which recognises the teacher and support staff unions. This is further supported by an ongoing and productive relationship with key trade union officials. Thank you for taking the time to read this information pack. We wish you every success in any application you may make.





Focus Academy Trust (UK) Ltd

Office 7, Ram Mill Business Centre
 Gordon Street
 Chadderton
 Oldham
 OL9 9RH

E: info@focus-trust.co.uk

www.focus-trust.co.uk