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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in this exciting opportunity with Focus-Trust.

I would like to welcome you personally, and I hope you will find here all the information you need to inspire you to join our team.

We’ve come a long way together over recent years and our current Chief Executive leaves us in an enviable position, poised to take our next step forward. We’ve built strong relationships with our academies, founded on professional trust and respect, and have a track record to prove that we have made a difference in the lives of the children who learn with us.

We’re delighted to report that over the past year each of our academies has shown growth and improvement - standards have risen, progress has improved, adjustments to the curriculum have been made and governance has been strengthened – as has school leadership at every level.

So these are exciting and rewarding times for the whole team. This role is genuinely an opportunity for a new leader to make their own impact on the future of Focus-Trust, building on our new vision and direction for the organisation and leading our teams to achieve their very best.

Reporting directly to the Trust Board, our new Chief Executive will know that they will enjoy the support and professional challenge they need to succeed.

Our commitment to partnership, integrity and quality is paramount, especially as we’ll be working together through challenging times. Just like all educational organisations across the country, our academies will face new pressures in the coming years. Getting to grips with the new assessment arrangements is just one major aspect that needs attention.

This position is one that has many challenges but the potential for rewards are unlimited. As a sponsor I am personally keen to ensure the right person takes up this exciting position. But I am equally concerned that the right person finds the position fulfilling, as well as professionally and personally rewarding. So I look forward to getting to know candidates throughout the recruitment process.

I wish you well with your application

Clive Davies OBE
Founding Member and Trustee
About the role

The role of Chief Executive at Focus-Trust offers a fascinating blend of strategic and operational responsibility. The role combines vision and delivery, shared responsibility alongside accountability and communication, engaging with as wide a stakeholder group as you are likely to meet.

As such, the role will suit a leader who likes to be hands on, shaping and setting the direction, but also getting into school to see things in practice. Most likely you’ll be bringing leadership experience from a school setting, as an executive or system leader from a trust or federation.

Whatever your background, you’ll find at Focus-Trust a committed, professional central team and a talented group of academy principals, middle leaders, teachers and support staff.

The Chief Executive balances their time between central activity and close working with the academies and academy leaders. You’ll work centrally to lead the Focus-Trust team, managing risk, monitoring performance across all our academies and growing the Focus-Trust network.

But you’ll also be out in the academies themselves: providing direct challenge and support to Principals, developing capacity through training and facilitation, and also supporting improvements in the classroom through observation and evaluation.

We hope this is an exciting proposition for a passionate leader committed to making a difference.

Other activities likely to feature in your diary in the first six months will also include:

- Getting to know the central team, reviewing strategy and direction.
- Meeting one to one with our Principals every term to review their self-evaluation and to prioritise and target the support they need from the Trust.
- Collecting and analysing the performance data to ensure that the Trust is on track to meet (and exceed) its targets.
- Facilitating key meetings, including theLeaders’ Forum and Governors’ Forum.
- Delivering leadership training to emerging leaders, middle leaders and aspiring senior leaders.
- Observing lessons with members of the academy leadership teams.
- Ensuring that the board has the information that they need to make judgements about how best they can carry out their roles and responsibilities.
About Focus-Trust

The Focus-Trust was incorporated in May 2012 as a multi academy trust. The Trust has links with Focus Education (sponsor) but is 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 in the same building as Focus Education. These are in an architect designed converted church; a unique and amazing place to be based.

The commitment of the Focus-Trust is to: ‘Learning together, making the difference. The Trust currently has nine academies and one further school has passed a resolution to join the Trust and is currently in the process of conversion.

Our Values

Professional honesty is at the heart of everything we do. The Trust knows the academies well because of the strong working partnership between academy leaders and the Trust team. It is only by being honest and transparent that we can move forward and get the best for all our children.

Our work is underpinned by the following core values:

- **Care** for people and the learning environment
- **Share** for the benefit of others
- **Be fair**, honest and inclusive – demonstrating integrity
- **Dare** to do things differently and have a go

We want all children to:

- achieve well
- feel safe and secure to take risks and make mistakes;
- want to improve and know how to improve;
- have high aspirations and be ready for the next steps in learning and life;
- have high expectations of self;
- be independent, resilient and respectful of self and others;
- be tolerant and open-minded;
- be happy and confident;
- have both independent and collaborative learning skills; and
- be proud of their community and know how to contribute to it.
Working with our academies

The defining feature of the 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 academy has their own distinctive ethos and preserving these unique characteristics is a commitment to every school when they convert and join the Trust.

The Trust currently deducts a 5% management fee (top slice) from academy budgets to fund the central function. All the academies use the same accounting system (PS Financials). We submitted our first set of accounts to the DFE with no exceptions, a significant achievement.

The Focus-Trust currently has a small centrally employed team. The members of the team are highly skilled and have all been in place since the early days of the Trust. The team currently consists of:

- Chief Executive
- Finance Director
- Finance Officer
- Head of HR and OD
- Academy Improvement Officer
- PA to Chief Executive

The Trust also outsources a range of other functions, including HR, Payroll, IT, Legal and accounting.

The Chief Executive is the line manager for the academy principals and leads on their appraisal.

A partnership approach

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

From the outset, a half termly Leaders Forum (attended by Principals and their Deputies) has met. The purpose of the Leaders Forum is to deal swiftly with operational issues and focus mainly on pedagogical/educational issues. This has enabled a great deal of sharing of best practice from within the academies.

During 2013-14, a range of other forum groups were established and have received overwhelmingly positive feedback and support. These include:

- English Leaders – externally facilitated
- Mathematics Leaders – externally facilitated
- Science Leaders – externally facilitated
- Early Years Leaders – externally facilitated
- Governors
- SENCOs
- Business Managers
- Y2 teachers
- Y6 teachers
From September 2014, the Trust has run its own programme for the induction of newly qualified teachers, and commenced forums for Y4 teachers and phonics leaders, this has gone well and will mirror the Trust’s approach to “growing our own”, developing talent from within.

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. We have also established productive relationships with trade unions and meet half termly with a group of trade union representatives to discuss policy development and employee relations.
## Academy information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academy</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Teachers FTE</th>
<th>Support staff Headcount</th>
<th>Budget 2014/15</th>
<th>Pupil Premium 2014/15</th>
<th>Date of conversion</th>
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<td>165</td>
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<td>Dec 2014</td>
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More about Focus Education in the UK

For 22 years, Focus Education has provided training, consultancy services and support materials to drive improvements in the schools sector. We are wholly committed to making a difference where it matters most, and our range of partner schools and client networks demonstrate both our reach and the quality of our support.

Our clients have come to recognise Focus products and services: practical, simple and clear. Above all they are connected to our deep love of learning and our belief that working in partnership, with integrity and common purpose has the biggest impact.

We’re a leading publisher of support materials, regularly run conferences and seminars that reach almost 4000 schools a year. With expertise across all aspects of school improvement, our inputs range from teaching and learning, through to leadership, curriculum development and inspection.

As Sponsor to Focus-Trust, we’ve built a powerful partnership.

Visit Focus Education here (http://www.focus-education.co.uk/)
How to apply

Thank you for your interest in this exciting opportunity with Focus-Trust.

In order to apply, please submit the following completed application forms:

- Application form
- Equal opportunities form
- Disqualified by association form

We also ask that you submit a supporting statement that sets out the reasons for your interest in the role and how you meet the required criteria, with evidence of impact from your career track record.

Please include in your statement your thoughts on where you see the future for academy trusts. Your supporting statement should be no longer than three sides of A4.

Application closing date: Wednesday 4th February 2015

Completed applications should be returned by email to: focus@navigategroup.co.uk

All applications will be acknowledged within 24hrs. Should you fail to receive a confirmation, please call 0844 800 5300.

Please ensure that your application accounts for any gaps in employment.

Please include the names and addresses of two professional referees (one of which must be your current employer). Referees will not be approached until the final stages of the process.

Interview dates (please note these are indicative and subject to change)

1st interview 13th February 2015,
Assessment day 25 February 2015
Formal interview 2nd March 2015

If you have any questions regarding the role, or would like to arrange a visit to one of the academies please do not hesitate to get in touch by calling James Sturdy on 0844 800 5300, or by e-mailing focus@navigategroup.co.uk
Job Description: Chief Executive

**Post type:** Permanent

**Salary:** Negotiable up to £100k

**Pension:** Centrally employed Trust staff are able to access the local government (Greater Manchester) pension scheme. (Candidates from a teaching background should note that it is not possible to contribute to the Teachers’ Pension Scheme in this role.)

**Office base:** Talking Point, Huddersfield Road, Scouthead, OL4 4AG. There is an absolute expectation that the successful candidate will be able to travel between the office and academies by car (driving licence – essential for duration of employment).

**Purpose**

To support the Focus-Trust Board in the efficient and effective delivery of the Trust’s commitment, strategic aims and corporate plan, to uphold the Trust’s values, and to provide visible leadership across the organisation.

**Key accountabilities**

**Strategic educational leadership and performance management**

- Provide strong and effective leadership, vision and strategic direction to Focus-Trust staff to achieve the highest levels of performance and ensure a culture of continuous improvement. This includes leading the formation of the corporate plan.
- Ensure that education and, in particular, the transformation of performance of Focus-Trust academies is central to what Focus-Trust does and is delivered successfully.
- Ensure that appropriate performance management and wider administrative and governance arrangements are in place to ensure the effective implementation of the organisation’s Corporate and Business Plans.

**Financial accountability**

- As Accounting Officer, ensure robust systems are in place so that the funds available to Focus Trust are used properly, efficiently and effectively.
- Take personal responsibility for propriety and regularity in the management of public funds and in the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

**Operations**

- Manage Focus-Trust’s strategic operations and the delivery of key objectives, with accountability to the Board.
- Take responsibility for the institutional development of Focus-Trust and the implementation of the annual work plans and long-term strategies.
• Provide direction and management oversight to all Focus-Trust operations, including overall line accountability for safeguards and security.
• Take responsibility for the safety, health and environmental performance of all academies and offices under the direction of Focus-Trust.

Board management and stakeholder relations

• Support the Board in the formulation and development of strategy, and ensure that all decisions made by the Board are recorded and implemented.
• Work effectively across the full range of external stakeholders, including government, funding and regulatory bodies.

Communication

• In partnership with the Chair, ensure that an effective internal and external communications strategy is in place.
• Communicate effectively with academy principals, teachers, pupils, parents and governors.
• Represent Focus-Trust effectively to key external partners, the media and the public on a national platform.

Confidentiality

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

Safeguarding

• Comply with Trust policies and procedures on safeguarding and child protection.

Equality and 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.
• Actively challenge and address discrimination.
• Ensure a continual focus on equity as measured by pupil outcomes.

Beliefs, attitudes and personal attributes

• Relentless focus on high quality.
• 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 diversity and equality.
• Flexible.
Person Specification: Chief Executive

Qualifications

• Educated to degree level, with evidence of continuing professional development.

Experience and knowledge

• Successful experience and a proven track record as a Senior Leader in education.
• An excellent understanding of the schools sector and education more broadly, with a strong grasp of contemporary educational issues including the inspection agenda;
• Knowledge of the strategies for raising students’ achievement and advancing effective teaching and learning set within communities where there are higher-than-average levels of deprivation;
• Proven experience of strategic financial management, including budget formulation, medium-term financial planning, monitoring and control and strong business acumen;
• Sound track record of performance managing professional staff; driving morale, raising standards and promoting a team ethos, particularly with regard to a multi-site organisation;
• Proven success in building effective partnerships and links including with central government, schools, local authorities, to maximise networks and opportunities;
• Experience of working effectively with a Board/Governing body to create a vision and form the direction for an organisation;
• Experience of identifying and managing a risk register to include diverse areas such as finance, reputation and safeguarding as well as managing change in a fast moving environment;
• Successful experience of promoting equality and diversity in relation to employment and service delivery.

Skills and abilities and personal qualities

• A strategic thinker who can work with the leaders, Board and others to develop a compelling vision for the organisation, underpinned by a strong moral purpose.
• Committed to the highest standards in all areas of school life, including behaviour, academic, and enrichment;
• Committed to maintaining the unique ethos of the Focus-Trust with empathy and understanding of maintaining individual academy ethos;
• Well-developed presentation skills and comfortable with public speaking; the analytical ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences, acting as an effective ambassador for the Trust;
• Experience of dealing with Government officials and policy makers would be desirable;
• Effective leader who can build a positive organisational culture, encourage reflection, delegate responsibility, build teams, strive for continuous improvement and inspire staff to achieve their full potential;
• Committed to primary education and to the raising of academic standards among pupils;
• A leader who can analyse and process complex information and data quickly and rigorously in order to make the best of opportunities.