

focusing on **education**



focusing on **people**



Focus Learning Trust

Direction, Management,
Programmes and Support in
Education

What is Focus Learning Trust?

Focus Learning Trust, a registered charity, was established in 2003 to provide expertise and support for schools in view of their working systematically and to uniform high standards. Focus also acts as a central body making representation to government on matters such as funding, National Curriculum, inspections, examinations, etc.

What are Focus Affiliated Schools?

There are currently in excess of 30 schools which are affiliated to Focus Learning Trust, and all these schools are registered as 'Independent Schools with a Special Religious Character' to meet legal requirements.

Pupils are not selected according to their academic ability nor the ability of parents to pay for their child's education. Only the dedication of parents and other supportive persons has provided the operative impetus for these schools. Constant fundraising, personal commitment and charitable trading are the only sources of income for educating nearly 2,000 pupils.

Staff at Focus schools are selected for their educational ability and sympathy for the Christian ethos.

How did Focus Schools start?

During the 1990s several education centres were established by Christian parents who for a time had educated their children at home (as provided for in the 1944 Education Act). Parents worked together to share tutors and resources and these arrangements became the embryos that developed into independent schools.

Thus these schools have a unique character in that they have not been established by ecclesiastics, but from the inception have been motivated by parental initiative.

Quality of Education?

High standards of education are being achieved at FOCUS schools, based on the National Curriculum plus additional subjects. A total of over 500 professional teachers are employed at Focus schools taking the pupils through to public examinations. The curriculum is constantly being developed with the objective that all pupils reach their full potential in view of becoming mature, responsible and broadminded adults who will contribute to society. This is particularly demonstrated by our strong citizenship programme that has been praised by inspectors. Most pupils stay on for further education beyond the compulsory schooling age.



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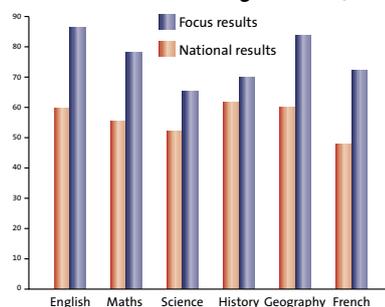
Legal Standards

Schools are inspected by professional inspectors to comply with DfES stringent regulations on independent schools. Focus also carry out their own 'monitoring inspections' to maintain high standards at all times. Policies such as Child Protection, Health & Safety, Bullying, SEN, etc. are provided by Focus and are used in all the schools.

The following is an extract from The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2004/5:

'Among these schools, the group of 38 Focus schools catering for around 1,300 pupils (sic) aged 11-17 made particularly good progress. Since their first visits, which identified the improvements needed, all the schools have progressed sufficiently such that by the end of July 2005, 37 have been finally registered and the remainder have been recommended for registration. The schools now offer pupils full-time education of a high standard - the curriculum is well planned, teachers are well qualified and experienced and the vast majority of lessons seen by inspectors were good.'

% of Candidates achieving A* to C 05/06



83% pass rate A* - C for GCSE exams

Future Development

Focus schools are committed to the Professional Development of teachers and are continually introducing new concepts such as 'Virtual Classroom' to improve the quality of education.

MPs, police, local authorities are encouraged to visit Focus schools to help 'social cohesion' of students and to increase public awareness of what is being achieved through the dedication of parents, staff, trustees and volunteers.

The Focus Development Plan includes large investments into primary education and into new school buildings across the UK.

Sustainability

Focus schools currently meet a total annual budget of over £10,000,000 with an estimated capital investment programme of up to £30,000,000. This investment includes staff training, professional development, new schools, equipment, research, etc.

Staff at Focus schools enjoy unique challenges and opportunities which help further their career path.



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Focus Primary Schools

Primary Schools Development Plan

Up to September 2006 all Focus affiliated schools were secondary schools catering for pupils aged 11 to 17 (Years 7 to 12). In September 2006 three pilot schemes were set up at existing Focus schools to provide education for Years 5 and 6. These schools are in Hull, Alton and Falkirk.

Initial feedback from the pilot schemes is extremely positive. In the light of this, and utilising experience gained in these trials, many more schools are preparing to set up primary provision for Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 to commence in September 2007.

Staff Opportunities

Whilst staff working at these schools will be directly employed by the local school trust, they will benefit from the central resources, support and Professional Development offered on a continuing basis from Focus Learning Trust. It is a unique experience working in a small school with small groups of pupils but having the backing of a large organisation with more than 500 professional staff to share experiences with.

"The experience of being part of a Focus Primary School has given me scope to be involved in many management and planning issues that, as a class teacher in a state school, I would not normally have experienced.

Teaching in a class with smaller numbers of pupils allows me to spend more time in direct teaching and especially meeting the needs of individual pupils.

This initial period has been a significant challenge and I am extremely encouraged by the commitment and support I have received."

Focus Primary School Teacher



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Focus Secondary Schools

Focus Learning Trust are a charitable Education Trust responsible for 32 affiliated secondary schools of special religious character.

Over 1700 children aged 11 to 17 (years 7 to 12) are educated in these Schools which are situated in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

After the successful pilot schemes, plans are in hand to extend the provision to the Primary sector to a further 13 secondary school sites as from September 2007.

Career Opportunities

Whilst staff working at these secondary schools will be directly employed by the Local School Trust, they will benefit from the central resources, support and professional development offered on a continuing basis from Focus Learning Trust.

It is a unique experience working in a small school with small groups of pupils but having the backing of a large organisation with more than 500 professional staff to share experiences with.

A quote from a Focus Secondary School Teacher on the Benefits of working as a Teacher in a Focus School –

“Pupils are friendly, willing to learn and well behaved. The majority even say thank you at the end of a lesson!”

Small numbers of pupils in a class enable maximum individual attention, so pupils are involved and as a consequence make excellent progress.

Their eagerness to learn, which helps make teaching enjoyable.

The staff and pupils are like a small community, as they all know each other; this means that there is a lovely atmosphere within the school.

Staff Training and support from the Central Office. Regular Inset’s for individual subjects”.



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Working at a Focus School

Focus schools provide:

- ✓ good moral standards and Christian ethos
- ✓ the advantage of supportive parents
- ✓ professional development for staff
- ✓ high standards of teaching
- ✓ an ordered environment
- ✓ good career prospects

Focus schools value:

- ✓ staff who are dedicated to the development of every pupil's potential
- ✓ the moral, spiritual, social and cultural development of all pupils
- ✓ high standards of behaviour and discipline
- ✓ service to others and the community
- ✓ academic and practical achievement

Focus schools provide for:

- ✓ children from England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales
- ✓ nearly 2000 pupils in over 30 schools in the UK
- ✓ children aged 11 to 18 in secondary schools
- ✓ children from families at every income level
- ✓ children aged 7 to 10 in primary schools
- ✓ children with special educational needs
- ✓ children of all abilities

Focus schools are looking for:

- ✓ primary school teachers to assist in setting up and maintaining primary units
- ✓ secondary school teachers who are looking to further their experience and professionalism
- ✓ individuals who can contribute to the whole school environment
- ✓ committed and enthusiastic staff who care about children
- ✓ teachers who have leadership potential or experience
- ✓ people who are passionate about their subjects
- ✓ teachers who inspire others

Focus schools offer the following opportunities:

- ✓ teaching in an environment where dedication to excellence is valued
- ✓ teaching motivated pupils up to GCSE and A Level
- ✓ developing specialist subject expertise and progression
- ✓ working in small schools with unique community support
- ✓ teaching small classes in a structured environment
- ✓ opportunities for newly-qualified teachers

And...

- ✓ you can teach and train on the job
- ✓ you can transfer easily in and out of the independent sector
- ✓ continuing professional development is always considered a priority
- ✓ schools are inspected under a DfES approved framework with published results
- ✓ you will have access to a wide range of contacts and support at all other Focus schools



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Focus schools are run by Christians known as The Exclusive Brethren.

The Exclusive Brethren

The Brethren movement originated in the 1820s. There are over 40,000 Brethren, in 19 countries throughout the world.

They believe in the Bible as the word of God, and follow its teachings, including those of the apostle Paul.

For more information see

www.theexclusivebrethren.com

This is the only site endorsed by the Exclusive Brethren.

How they live

Brethren believe in marriage and the family: virtually all their marriages endure for a lifetime. Families, including children and old people, attend regular assemblies, with other Brethren from the same town or city. They find their life together, spend time in each others houses world wide, keep separate from the world of sport and entertainment, and do not have radio or TV. Many Brethren run their own businesses and employ those of other faiths.

Their aims for education

Parents generally place great importance on having their children educated up to University entrance level, challenging them to ensure they reach their best potential, and providing support if there are special needs.

Who runs Focus schools?

How do Brethren regard teachers?

Teachers are valued as professionals, and rewarded for their expertise. They do not need to agree with Brethren beliefs, or necessarily have any religious faith. However teachers are asked to respect Brethren beliefs and way of life - such as the sanctity of marriage - and not undermine them, and to respect the ethos and motivation of Focus schools.

How are Focus schools run?

Each school is run by a trust with Brethren trustees who liaise closely with the senior teacher and other professional staff. These trusts are affiliated to a central trust - Focus Learning - which provides financial, legal and other support, and employs professionals such as subject liaison officers. This arrangement gives the benefit of strong central support combined with local responsibility and control.



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