

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Schools – Version control 28.02.24

This document has been prepared by Folio Education Trust and Greenshaw Learning Trust to help inform stakeholders with regards to the decision that Folio Education Trust schools should join Greenshaw Learning Trust. Its purpose is to answer a series of questions which we believe will arise and therefore satisfy stakeholders with what to expect.

The following questions were published to stakeholders through Folio Education Trust's website on Thursday 29th February 2024.

What are the direct benefits to curriculum-facing teachers and support staff of Folio Schools joining GLT?

Many Folio staff who are directly involved in curriculum implementation are already involved in local clusters and networks which help them evaluate and improve standards. These will continue when Folio Schools join GLT. A direct benefit of Folio Schools joining GLT will be even wider networks which will return more resources and more valuable conversations about the best way to deliver teaching and learning. This is an opportunity to learn even more from other colleagues and this will have a direct benefit for the children in our care. GLT already has a huge bank of resources for all subject areas and videos which demonstrate different ways to teach children of all abilities. Folio Schools will be able to contribute to this bank of resources and take ideas, strengthening the way they teach children in their specific context. GLT does not have a one size fits all curriculum or a set of compulsory teaching resources. There is a position of trust between all GLT schools to take the right decisions in the best interests of children. Professional network meetings of staff across GLT are attended face to face within regions and online across the wider network. Attended and run by practising teachers, staff currently employed in Folio Schools will have the opportunity to attend and be appointed as network leads on a cycle of annual change. This professional development opportunity will strengthen the way in which Folio Staff meet professional standards and meet the needs of all children.

How will staff continue to have access to comparable or improved development opportunities within GLT?

Joining an established and successful larger group of schools will help attract, develop and retain good staff. GLT offers high quality Continuing Professional Development for staff, alongside opportunities for internal promotion, and is a Trust that cares deeply about staff wellbeing. They have good rates of staff retention. They have a comprehensive GLT leadership programme, Early Career Teacher (ECT) programmes and Middle Leader Programmes as well as Subject Networks, among other offerings, and provide additional mentoring for relevant school staff. A larger Trust which is continually growing and developing, brings more opportunities for learning from each other, and for staff who may be looking for career progression.

Can you clarify what staff might expect should there be duplication of roles and responsibilities when joining GLT?

GLT will complete a process of due diligence and will also conduct a consultation exercise with staff prior to the transfer of employment to Greenshaw Learning Trust. The purpose of this exercise is to understand existing structures within Folio Education Trust including specific roles within the Trust, and how these roles may transfer into the GLT Shared Service.

As part of the due diligence process, GLT will review the existing staffing structure within Folio Education Trust which includes the Trust Central Shared Services team, in order to understand individual skills and experience, and how specific roles will fit within the GLT Shared Service. Where a Folio colleague has the same job title as an existing GLT colleague, this does not necessarily mean that both members of staff are undertaking the same role.

If any changes are anticipated to specific roles, then this would be subject to thorough consultation as part of the TUPE process. GLT will seek to redeploy colleagues into roles that represent suitable alternative employment to avoid loss of employment/redundancy wherever possible.

Where it is envisaged that changes to individual roles can enable their assimilation into the GLT structure, such as changes to job titles or specific posts, these would be declared as a "measure" as part of the TUPE consultation process. 'Measures' are changes to existing work practices and can include job descriptions and line manager changes. Any such proposed changes would be subject to formal consultation with individual colleagues and Trade Unions.

The priority will be to minimise any period of uncertainty, deploy colleagues into suitable roles and avoid any unnecessary loss of employment / redundancy. In the event of redundancy, any effective date of termination of employment would depend upon length of service and contractual notice entitlements and the actual date of transfer which is not yet confirmed.

How will the appraisal of staff be conducted when joining GLT?

With regards to curriculum focused teaching staff, the Headteacher will continue to create an effective accountability model within each school which utilises the leadership competencies of Senior and Middle Leaders. The Headteacher will determine who is best placed to support colleagues within specific curriculum subject focused areas, year groups or phases. Similarly, to the existing model within Folio Education Trust, Headteachers will be line managed by members of the Executive leadership team, and be challenged and supported by members of the Local Governing Body.

Support Staff who are solely focused in a specific school setting will be line managed in teams and potentially by senior staff within each school, for example; school office administration staff are line managed by the Headteacher or a Deputy Headteacher. This will continue to be the case when Folio Schools join GLT. Through an approved Scheme of Delegation, support and challenge will be provided by the Shared (Central) Services team for those who lead service areas such as Catering and Estate Management.

Appraisal within GLT is developmental and supportive. Pay progression within staff pay ranges is assumed, subject to continued good performance and in the absence of capability related concerns. Appraisal has an increasing focus on development opportunities. The vast majority of eligible Teachers within GLT (over 99% of those eligible) received pay progression from September 2023. Teachers submit applications for consideration of progression to the Upper Pay Scale ranges in the normal way.

Will any systems change in the event of Folio Schools joining GLT?

A good example of where systems will change will be the Management Information System (MIS). Folio Schools currently use SIMS and this will change to BROMCOM. This change will not take place overnight. A project management team will design and enable a change process which will include training and support for all staff who are not familiar with the new system. GLT have experience of moving to BROMCOM having adopted the system in the last 12 months

across all of their schools. A new MIS would support staff with the latest professional thinking around handling personal data, recording and analysing assessment data to aid target intervention.

Other smaller, but no less important systems and bolt-ons, may well remain in place. There will be a value for money review conducted with Headteachers and Shared Service Directors to review which systems help support the organisation and which can be changed. All decisions are made in the best interests of children and so the priority is efficiency and value for money. Whenever a new system is implemented, staff will receive training to support the way it is used.

It is likely that there will be system variation across GLT. For example, not all schools use CPOMS to help monitor safeguarding and child protection. This system is used where it is most effective. Because GLT works across different Local Authorities, some schools will use 'My Concern' rather than CPOMS. The important thing is that whichever system is used, children are safe.

The following questions were published to stakeholders through Folio Education Trust's website on Tuesday 20th February 2024.

Can the stakeholder engagement period be extended?

Folio Trustees originally planned a four-week stakeholder engagement period. Following feedback from stakeholders, Folio Board of Trustees have extended the engagement by one week, and so it will now end on Wednesday 13th March 2024 at 5.00pm. The Folio Board of Trustees will now meet on Wednesday 20th March 2024, where all feedback will be considered.

Folio Trustees used a range of sources of advice and guidance when designing the process to consider strategic growth options. This included documents such as 'Guidance on Mergers' from the National Governance Association (NGA) which recommended a period of stakeholder engagement.

The stakeholder engagement is separate from the TUPE consultation that would take place if the Board's original decision for Folio schools to join GLT is confirmed on 20th March.

What process was followed by Folio Trustees when considering strategic growth?

Trustees wish to safeguard the performance of Folio schools and meet the success descriptors set out by the Department for Education (DfE), for strong Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). At a series of Trust Board meetings, the Folio Board of Trustees recognised that to stay as we are is not an option.

- Trustees set out a series of principles that needed to be addressed, including ensuring that all Folio schools benefit from the strategic growth option(s).
- Financial stability so that schools may receive additional targeted investment in underfunded areas such as for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Autonomy for school leaders in curriculum, pedagogy and culture.
- Capacity and expertise in SEND provision.
- Curriculum and School Improvement Resources.
- Support in the further development of Sixth Form provision.
- HR Resources, Talent Management Framework and an effective Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme to support, recruit and retain staff.

- Resources to support pupil welfare and wellbeing.

Why have Folio Trustees decided that staying as we are or gradual organic growth are not suitable growth options?

Folio Trustees remain committed to a strategic growth option that continues to deliver excellent educational experience for all children in Folio schools. They expect Folio schools to continue to work with partners and schools outside of any new Trust in their existing local clusters and collaborative groups. Recent funding challenges have demonstrated the difficulties in resourcing Folio schools to deliver ongoing improvements in all the key development areas. Trustees therefore agreed that staying as we are, and using organic growth as a means of development would not deliver the necessary level of support for Folio schools. The Board of Trustees concluded that the best way for Folio schools to continue to improve and benefit in the key development areas is to join with a high-performing, established MAT.

What criteria did Folio Trustees use to choose Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT)?

Following a desktop analysis of over fifteen MATs a shortlist of four organisations was drawn up. Senior leaders from these four Trusts were interviewed by Folio Trustees to create a shortlist of two. Further discussions including additional interviews assessed how they would meet the predetermined criteria and allow Folio schools to continue to improve. The criteria used to assess the competency of potential MATs was as follows:

- A. Financial Stability.
- B. Autonomy for School Leaders.
- C. Future Strategy – to include investment strategy.
- D. Capacity and expertise in specialist SEND provision.
- E. Curriculum and school improvement resources.
- F. Support in the development of Sixth Form.
- G. HR resources, talent management and effective CPD programme to support recruitment & retention.
- H. Resources to support pupil welfare and wellbeing.
- I. Use of digital technology.
- J. How the allocation of resources is prioritised when there are pressing needs from different schools.

Following the final interview, the Board of Trustees was unanimous in its view that the Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT) was best placed as the preferred candidate. GLT demonstrated the ability to meet each of the criteria identified by the Folio Board of Trustees, and a commitment to ensure Folio schools continue going from strength to strength.

What consideration was made of Folio school admissions arrangements remaining?

The GLT Board of Trustees will have overall responsibility for determining the admission arrangements for all of its schools as the statutory Admissions Authority. Admissions officers in the GLT Shared Services work closely with school based admissions colleagues to ensure the determined admissions arrangements for each school are applied.

The GLT Board of Trustees are committed to supporting and celebrating the success of all Folio schools, and they were explicit in their commitment to protect and celebrate the selective nature of the admissions process at Wallington County Grammar School (WCGS). GLT is committed to WCGS continuing to be one of the best selective schools in the UK. Schools and pupils across GLT have much to benefit from the success of selective schools such as WCGS and the DfE have also indicated their strong support for this partnership, in part because there are grammar schools in other areas (specifically Gloucester and Plymouth) that would benefit from the combination of the GLT outreach culture and the Folio expertise in selective education.

The GLT Board of Trustees is also committed to maintaining the existing admissions arrangements between SPPS, PHJS and CWS. This localised 'feeder school' arrangement supports the progress of children from one educational setting to the next and is therefore in the best interests of children in these schools.

What direct benefits will there be for the children currently in Folio schools when joining GLT?

Folio schools joining GLT means that the high performance of Folio schools will be safeguarded and further improved by a high performing Multi Academy Trust with existing knowledge and experience of the local context. Strong financial resilience and a more developed central Shared Service means a greater level of support for all schools and therefore all staff and all children. The main benefits will be targeted investment in school improvement strategies which would otherwise be unaffordable. GLT Shared Services will provide expert support to Headteachers through, for example, a strategic People Strategy which will help recruit and retain the very best staff. GLT also has a series of professional networks that provide high quality networking and continuing professional development for all staff. A larger organisation of diverse schools and more staff will naturally generate greater opportunities and capacity in a range of school improvement strategies.

Folio Trustees have always prioritised that this growth strategy benefits both staff and children. More developed shared services, staff recruitment and school improvement strategies will have a direct impact on pupil outcomes which include preparation for their journey to the next stage of education, employment or training.

The following questions were published to stakeholders through Folio Education Trust's website on Wednesday 7th February 2024.

Why can't Folio just stay as it is?

Despite Folio Education Trust becoming an established high performing Multi Academy Trust, the current size of the organisation is limiting its future opportunities for developments in a number of strategic areas. The Trust Board has explored opportunities for ongoing organic growth but opportunities in the London area are very limited. The Trust Board has also explored, in detail, the opportunity to join or merge with other Multi Academy Trusts of various sizes and shapes. Following this detailed exploration of these opportunities over a significant period of time, and discussions with, and presentations from a number of local and regional Multi Academy Trusts, the Trust Board have concluded that it would be in the best interests of its schools, and their pupils, to join a larger trust.

Has Folio Education Trust been compelled by the DfE Regional Director to "re-broker" its schools due to performance concerns?

No. Folio Education Trust has decided voluntarily to transfer its four academies to Greenshaw Learning Trust. It has not been asked or compelled to do so by the DfE Regional Director. The legal process is therefore one of "academy transfer" rather than a "re-brokerage".

The Greenshaw Learning Trust – introduction

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is building a 'family' of like-minded schools that collaborate to provide mutual support, share their good practice and learn from each other, whilst retaining and developing their own distinctive character.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust was established as a Multi-Academy Trust in 2014. In the changing world of education, we were keen to broaden our influence, but were also aware that we did not have all the answers and welcomed more formal partnerships with other schools to help us to continue to improve. The Greenshaw Learning Trust is an established and successful Multi-Academy Trust with seventeen primary and thirteen secondary schools in South London, Surrey, Berkshire, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire and Plymouth. The Trust has acquired schools of varying standards and all have shown significant improvement since they joined the Trust.

At the Greenshaw Learning Trust, we do not believe there is one definitive road to success. We cherish the differences between each of our schools and want all of them to continue their improvement journey. It is not just about results; it is about helping people, and schools, to flourish and be remarkable. And within our community and our culture of always learning together, we go beyond what is achievable alone.

The definition of our 'Trust' is everyone in the organisation: our pupils, teachers, support staff, governors and the shared services. The Trust is not a separate entity that rules hierarchically from the peripheries.

All our schools and shared services are part of the fabric that makes the Trust what it is.

How does the Greenshaw Learning Trust collaborate?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust (GLT) thrives from collaboration at every level and encourages a culture of sharing ideas and learning from one another. The Directors of Education meet Headteachers regularly and identify needs and put support in place, and the shared services work closely with schools to support them.

GLT schools work collaboratively and have subject networks where teaching staff share good practice. Staff share their knowledge by visiting other schools, meeting virtually and having access to shared resources. The Trust provides a wide network where people can connect and share best practice.

Does the Greenshaw Learning Trust recognise and promote the individuality of schools?

Whilst GLT schools have a broad geographical spread, the Trust considers itself a local trust. All the GLT schools have a governing body with local representatives. The GLT Board of Trustees believes that the Headteachers and governing bodies are the best people to run its schools and delegates responsibilities for budgets and decisions on uniform, curriculum etc. There are certain functions that are common across the Trust including the finance and HR systems.

How has the Greenshaw Learning Trust made improvements to schools?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust values the power of individuals and organisations working together in collaboration whilst retaining their individuality, and recognises that we can always improve. The Trust drives outcomes by providing expert support and looking at the best practices available. Alongside school leadership, the Shared Services team reviews the school's strengths and weaknesses and develops a plan to ensure that every child works in an inclusive and supportive environment, with high-quality teaching.

To drive school improvement, the shared services works alongside the school to:

- Improve behaviour and create disruption free classrooms
- Coach and develop teachers and classroom support staff through our teaching principles and Developmental Drop Ins (DDIs) to improve teaching and learning

- Focus on assessment outcomes
- Ensure character education is as strong as the curriculum provision
- Prioritising Literacy and reading,
- Prioritising togetherness and fun
- Take on views/ideas from joining schools
- Prioritising teacher workload

Will the curriculum change?

GLT's policy states schools must offer a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of the students, and the details of an individual school's curriculum are the decision of the governing body and school leadership team.

Will the behaviour policy change?

GLT has a high level behaviour policy which covers the legal frameworks related to behaviour such as the Equalities Act 2010, suspensions and exclusions. The Trust's behaviour strategy is to ensure each school has a behaviour curriculum along with procedures to promote a positive learning culture. Beyond that, the Trust does not have a 'behaviour strategy' - choices around behaviour strategies, or how the behaviour policy and expectations are implemented, are delegated to the Headteacher in each of our schools. Headteachers have the autonomy to decide what their behaviour approach is in order to meet the needs of their children and their community.

Will the uniform change?

The uniform policy is delegated to the Headteacher and local governing body. However, staff will be expected to ensure the uniform policy is adhered to by students.

What are the changes for staff?

Staff transferring to Greenshaw Learning Trust will be protected under TUPE Regulations (Transfer of Undertaking, Protection of Employment). This means that current pay scales will be protected for all transferring staff following transfer of employment.

Teachers will remain in the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and support staff will remain in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as they are now; the employers' contributions will be maintained by the Greenshaw Learning Trust. The employment status of staff remains continuous. If the school joins the Greenshaw Learning Trust, a TUPE consultation will be held, where staff can ask further questions.

Joining an established and successful group of schools will help attract, develop and retain good staff. Staff will not be required to relocate to other schools within the Trust. However, opportunities are shared to enable individuals to progress if they wish to.

Staff development is a key priority and this is offered through CPD and ensuring staff are able to focus on refining teaching practices, rather than spending significant time on marking and collecting data.

The Greenshaw Learning Trust holds national Trade Union recognition agreements and meets regularly with national union representatives and is a proud member of the union's Valued Worker Scheme.

What is the Governance structure?

The Greenshaw Learning Trust Board of Trustees is the responsible body for all the Greenshaw Learning Trust's schools. The Board of Trustees delegates many responsibilities to school governing bodies and Headteachers. The governing bodies are composed of community, trust, staff and parent governors and are supported by the Trust's clerking service. The governing bodies have responsibility for monitoring outcomes, safeguarding, budget monitoring, and for agreeing significant changes. The Trust provides training to support and develop governors. All existing governors will be invited to apply to be part of the governing body within the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

The Trust Senior Leadership Team provides line management for Headteachers.

What types of support and services does GLT provide for schools?

The shared services provide support to all schools and the Board of Trustees. The functions include school improvement, safeguarding, HR, legal, finance, IT, catering, estates, admissions, pupil data, attendance and communications.

Will Folio's name still be used?

Schools will be part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust family and the name Folio will no longer be used.

What will happen to the current Folio Trustees? Will they still perform their roles or will Greenshaw Trustees be responsible for all schools?

The Board of Trustees for the Greenshaw Learning Trust will be responsible for all schools within the Trust. Folio Trustees have a wealth of experience and knowledge of Folio schools, and there would be discussions about the most effective way that this experience can continue to have a positive impact on all schools across the Greenshaw Learning Trust in the future.

Will Local Governors still continue in their appointed roles?

It is hoped and anticipated that all local governors will continue in their roles supporting individual schools and working as committees of the Board of Trustees of the Greenshaw Learning Trust, in the same way they do now for the Folio Board of Trustees.

What is TUPE and how long will the consultation period be for?

TUPE stands for Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment and is a statutory consultation for any employees transferring from one employer to another. We are proposing a three week period to conduct meaningful consultation with staff.

What's the process for the TUPE consultation and when will it commence?

The TUPE process is carried out by the existing employer (ie; Folio) and involves both full, open staff meetings and individual meetings with all impacted staff before the transfer. Trade Unions are also consulted and can represent their members at every stage.

Have you notified Trade Unions and any other educational bodies?

Trade Unions (Teaching and Support Staff) will be notified as part of a communication plan during the period of stakeholder engagement and as part of the TUPE process. Trade Union representatives will be invited to attend the

relevant meetings, ask questions and represent their members throughout the TUPE process. Following the stakeholder engagement Trade Union representatives will be provided with the fact that the transfer is to take place, the date or proposed date of the transfer, the reasons why it is to take place, the legal, economic and social implications of the transfer, any measures proposed in connection with the transfer.

Will admission arrangements change for Folio schools?

The admissions authority moves from being the Board of Trustees of Folio Education Trust, to the Board of Trustees of the Greenshaw Learning Trust; there are no plans to make any changes to the admissions arrangements for any of Folio's schools.

Will children of staff have priority to access any schools in GLT?

In some GLT schools there is a priority admission criteria based on staff being employed at the school. This is considered on a school by school basis.

Will staff be able to transfer to other schools in the trust?

There is no obligation for staff to move between schools within GLT, although there are opportunities, with priority for vacancies given to existing staff.

What is the GLT Central Staff organisation structure and what support is available for schools?

GLT calls its central team, 'Shared Services'. There are a number of expert and specialist staff working in the GLT Shared Services led by a small team of Directors. These teams support schools with: Finance, Estates, Health and Safety, HR, Catering, IT, Governance, Procurement, Admissions, Attendance, SEND, Safeguarding, Data, and School Improvement.

The GLT School Improvement Team consists of the Directors for Education (Primary and Secondary) who are supported by a team of Assistant Directors and School Improvement Leads who specialise in areas such as Raising Standards, Behaviour, Teaching and Learning, Curriculum, Early Years, Assessment, SEND etc. There are also networks across all primary and secondary subject areas.

What is the legal process from here?

There will be a formal application made to the DfE Regional Director (London), due diligence, TUPE, funding agreements, land transfers and leases to be novated as well as contractual warranties and the legal agreement. Folio and Greenshaw are drawing up the best possible team to undertake this work - lawyers will be appointed for the transaction, accountants and executives of both Trusts. Trustees of both Trusts will provide scrutiny, challenge, advice and direction.

What will happen to the roles currently held by Folio's central team?

This team will transfer to Greenshaw Learning Trust and continue to provide educational and operational support.

Other FAQs will be added during the stakeholder engagement period and this document will be re-published as appropriate.