Assistant Principal – Academic Excellence and Progression

Based at Mercia Academy, part of the Lionheart Educational Trust
L11-L15

Mercia Academy is seeking an exceptional and ambitious senior leader to join our leadership team as **Assistant Principal – Academic Excellence and Progression**.

This is a pivotal role for a highly effective leader who is passionate about securing outstanding academic outcomes and ensuring every young person is equipped with the knowledge, skills and qualifications required to access ambitious post-16 and post-18 destinations.

At Mercia, we believe academic success transforms lives. We are committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of background, achieve highly, develop a deep love of learning and leave us with the qualifications and confidence needed to progress successfully to Level 3 study, higher education, apprenticeships and future careers.

The successful candidate will lead the strategic development of academic excellence across the college, driving consistently high standards of teaching, learning and achievement. They will work closely with curriculum leaders and teachers to ensure students make exceptional progress, achieve strong outcomes across all subjects and are fully prepared for the demands of advanced study.

The Role

The Assistant Principal will:

- Lead a culture of high academic expectations across the academy
- Drive improvements in student attainment and progress at Key Stage 4, with a particular focus on increasing the number of students securing the qualifications needed to access Level 3 pathways.
- Strategically analyse performance data to identify trends, remove barriers to success and accelerate achievement for all groups of students.
- Lead quality assurance processes that secure excellence in teaching, learning, curriculum implementation and assessment.
- Work with curriculum leaders to ensure the curriculum is academically rigorous, knowledge-rich and effectively sequenced to maximise outcomes.
- Ensure students are supported to achieve strong outcomes in English and Mathematics, enabling progression to advanced study.
- Develop intervention strategies for students at risk of underachievement, ensuring gaps in attainment are rapidly addressed.
- Promote a culture of academic aspiration where students are encouraged to pursue challenging qualifications and ambitious destinations.

- Support staff development through evidence-informed professional learning and instructional coaching.
- Contribute to whole-school improvement planning, ensuring academic achievement remains at the heart of school improvement priorities.

About You

We are seeking a leader who:

- Has a proven track record of improving academic outcomes at departmental, faculty or whole-school level.
- Has substantial experience of leading teaching, learning and curriculum improvement.
- Demonstrates a deep understanding of assessment, progress measures and strategies for raising attainment.
- Is committed to ensuring all students, regardless of starting point, achieve highly and access ambitious next steps.
- Has experience of using data intelligently to drive improvement and close achievement gaps.
- Can inspire, challenge and develop colleagues to deliver consistently excellent teaching.
- Has high levels of professional credibility as an outstanding classroom practitioner.
- Is passionate about preparing young people for successful progression into Level 3 study, university, apprenticeships and employment.
- Has the resilience, strategic vision and leadership skills required to deliver sustained improvement.

Key Responsibilities for the Job Specification

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the college's strategy for raising attainment and progress.
- Ensuring academic excellence is central to all school improvement priorities.
- Develop systems that maximize student achievement and progression to Level 3 qualifications.

Students & Outcomes

- Increase the proportion of students achieving the qualifications required for Level 3 study.
- Secure improvements in Progress 8, Attainment 8 and subject outcomes.
- Close attainment gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students.
- Establish effective intervention systems to support students at key transition points.

Curriculum & Teaching

- Ensure curriculum design supports progression to advanced study.
- Lead quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Promote evidence-informed practice that improves student outcomes.
- Support curriculum leaders in implementing high-quality academic provision.

Accountability

- Analyse and report on student achievement data.
- Hold leaders accountable for improving outcomes.
- Evaluate the impact of academic improvement strategies.

Staff Development

- Develop middle and senior leaders through coaching and professional development.
- Build staff expertise in effective pedagogy, assessment and curriculum planning.
- Promote a culture of continuous professional improvement.

Suggested Success Measures

The postholder will be judged by:

- Improved Progress 8 and Attainment 8 outcomes across multiple subjects.
- Increased percentages of students achieving Grade 5+ in English and Mathematics.
- Increased numbers of students meeting entry requirements for Level 3 programmes.
- Reduction in attainment gaps for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- Improved uptake and success rates in academically demanding qualifications.
- Positive destinations and progression rates into sixth form, Level 3 pathways and higher education.