



THE MERCIAN TRUST

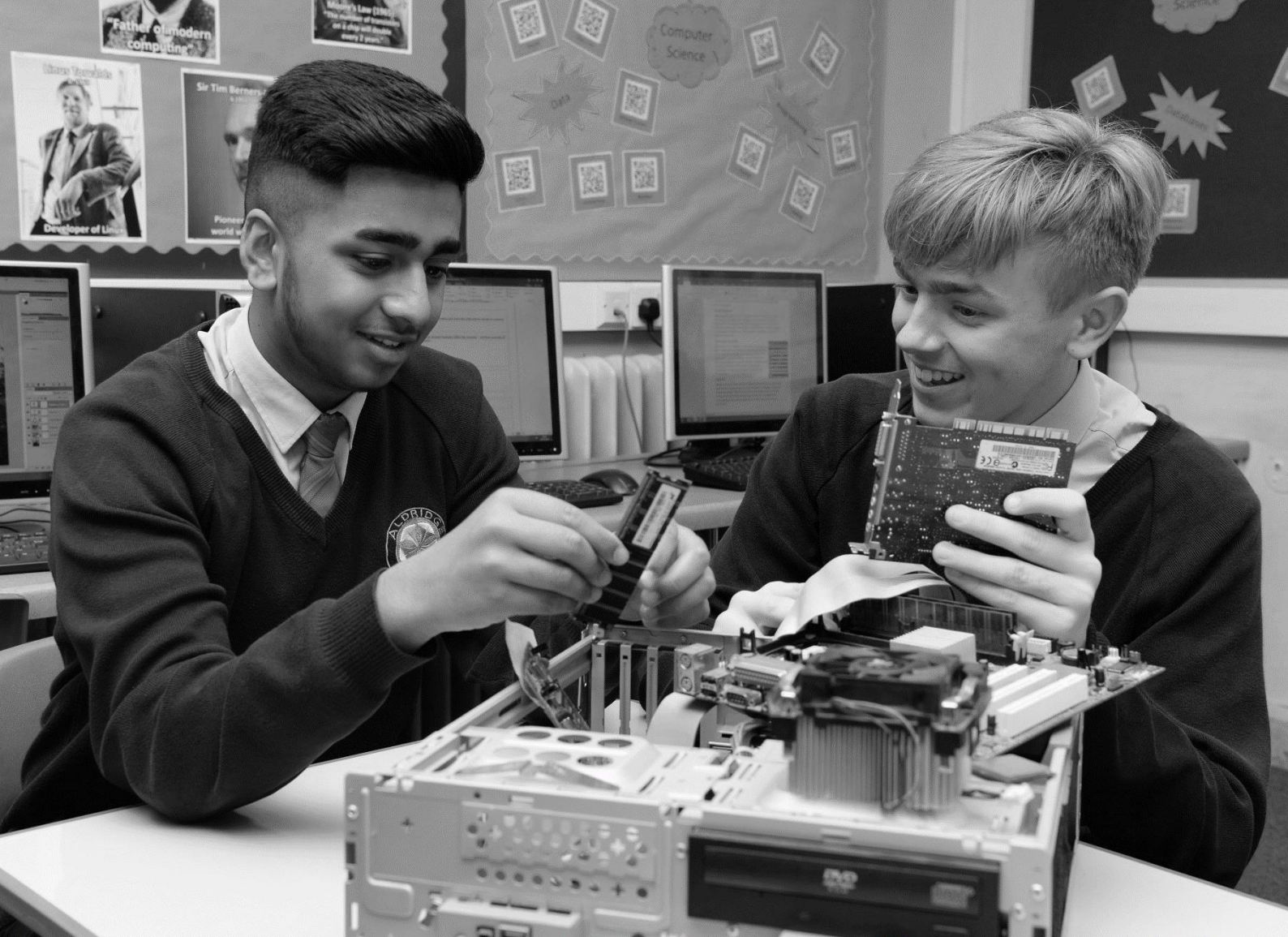
Executive Leader Application Pack

**Full Time / Part Time considered
Permanent Position**

Salary commensurate with experience and expertise

THE MERCIAN TRUST

ALD - ALDRIDGE SCHOOL
GRB - Q3 ACADEMY GREAT BARR
LAN - Q3 ACADEMY LANGLEY
NLS - NEW LEAF SCHOOL
OAK - OAKWOOD SCHOOL
QHS - QUEEN MARY'S HIGH SCHOOL
QMG - QUEEN MARY'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL
RUS - RUSHALL PRIMARY SCHOOL
SOA - SHIRE OAK ACADEMY
TLS - THE LADDER SCHOOL
TPN - Q3 ACADEMY TIPTON
WSS - WALSALL STUDIO SCHOOL





Dan Parkes
Chief Executive

Welcome Letter from the CEO

***Life to the full in pursuit of what is good,
right and true.***

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining The Mercian Trust at this exciting and pivotal moment in our journey.

Since our formation in 2018, The Mercian Trust has grown into one of the leading regional multi-academy trusts in the West Midlands, now comprising 12 schools, serving over 10,000 students and supported by more than 1,500 dedicated staff. As we enter our next chapter, we do so with confidence, clarity, and ambition—anchored in our Strategic Plan 2025–2030 and our Vivid Vision for the future.

Our Vivid Vision 2025–2030 sets out a bold and detailed picture of what we aim to become by the end of the decade. It is not just a statement of intent—it is a framework that guides our decisions, our culture, and our leadership. We are thinking in decades, not just academic years, and we are committed to building a trust that is purpose-driven, people-centred, and deeply rooted in place.

We are now seeking exceptional executive leaders to join us in shaping this future. Leaders who are not only accomplished and aspirational, but who are aligned with our Trust Blueprint for Leadership and Culture. We expect a deep commitment to our principles of social mobility, social justice, and inclusive leadership—ensuring every learner experiences “life to the full” – delivered through a unwavering focus on student outcomes. Our blueprint calls for humility, courage, and clarity; for leaders who prioritise people before strategy, who confront challenges with honesty, and who build momentum through disciplined, aligned action. We value professional behaviours that reflect our commitment to integrity, openness, and accountability. We expect our leaders to model these behaviours consistently and to inspire others to do the same.

At The Mercian Trust, we invest in our people. Our professional learning and development offer is extensive, inclusive, and evolving. From leadership programmes and coaching to digital transformation and sector engagement, we are committed to helping every colleague grow, develop, and lead with impact. If you are a leader who shares our values, who thrives in complexity, brings extensive experience from a variety of educational settings, and who is ready to help shape the future of education across Walsall, Sandwell, and the Black Country, we warmly invite you to apply.

Informal Conversations

For further details regarding this post, we strongly encourage you to contact Lin Koo, Executive PA to the CEO on 01922 211388 or email Lin.Koo@merciantrust.org.uk to arrange a phone call or video call with one of our executive team.

Yours faithfully



Dan Parkes
CEO Mercian Trust

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

The Mercian Trust's Strategic Plan for 2025–2030 marks an important transition from our pioneering chapter to a confident, maturing stage of development. Rooted in our commitment to social mobility and social justice, the strategic plan sets out a bold and innovative vision for the next five years—one that builds on our distinctive identity and shared values across a diverse family of schools.

Our strategy is anchored in three long-term priorities: purpose, people, and place. We aim to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for all students, recruit and retain exceptional staff, and deepen our engagement with communities and external partners. This is underpinned by a culture of inclusive leadership, continuous improvement, and purposeful innovation—ensuring every school flourishes and every learner experiences “life to the full.” As we move forward, we are thinking in decades, not just academic years, and we are excited for innovative and aspirational leaders to join us in shaping the future of education across Walsall, Sandwell and the Black Country.



Who we are is not changing...



Solidifying Our Identity

	Our Mantra	Life to the full in pursuit of what is good, right, and true .
	Our Mission	Our social mobility and social justice mission to increase opportunities and improve outcomes .
	Our ambition for students	Children and young people who fulfil their potential , go on to thrive in the world of work and make a positive contribution to the local, national, and international community.

All Trusts' long-term 'expectation'



Strengthening Our Foundations



Continuously Improving

Ensure continuously improving **schools, leaders, teachers, and student-facing support staff**. Ensuring continuously improving **professional services** to and for schools, **business support staff**, and **systems**.



Sustainable and resilient

Build **capacity** and **resilience** within **sustainable operating models** for all our schools, services and partnerships. Maximise **use of digital, data and AI** to **strengthen professional practice** and **reduce administrative workload**.



A Participant and Contributor

Take responsibility for **contributing** to **system and sector improvement** in our local communities.

Our long-term strategy (not just the next 5 years)



Securing Our Anchors



Equitable Education

Expertly preparing **each student** for life and work regardless of social, economic, or personal circumstances. Developing **transferable knowledge, understanding, skills, and character** in children and young people to enable each to succeed in school, outside of school, and beyond school.



Distinctive Schools

Developing and sustaining a **diverse family of schools** that meet the needs, aptitudes and aspirations of **all children and young people**. **Leveraging our distinctive nature and USPs** so that pupils, parents and communities choose our schools.



Leading Improvement & Innovation

Strengthening our **capacity** to be **flexible** and **agile** as we **pioneer with purpose** and **innovate pragmatically** for the benefit of children and young people in our region.

How we will be recognised by 2030...



Seeing Our Vivid Vision 2030



Purpose

Increasing Opportunities and
Improving Outcomes for students

We will be recognised as a trust of **exceptional schools** of all phases, key stages, and settings by providing a **home for everyone** – the right school place and provision for every child and young person so that they **succeed in school** and move into **sustained, ambitious destinations**.



People

Recruiting, retaining and developing
staff and volunteers

We will be recognised for our **purpose-driven people**; an **employer of exceptional staff** supported by dedicated volunteers. Our team **embraces change**, invests in **professional growth** and masters the use of **digital technologies and AI** for the benefit of children and young people.



Place

The communities we serve through
our work and our partnerships

We will be recognised for **leading collaboratively in our region** – deeply rooted in the towns of the Black Country. We will be known for our **reciprocal, meaningful partnerships** with parents, alumni, employers, charities and other schools and school trusts **working together** to support children and young people.





OUR TRUST BLUEPRINT FOR LEADERSHIP AND CULTURE

OUR PURPOSE

Increasing opportunities, improving outcomes.

OUR MANTRA

Life to the full in pursuit of what is good right and true

OUR PRINCIPLES

[P1]

**Social Mobility
and Social Justice**

[P2]

**Belonging and
Inclusion**

[P3]

**Innovation and
Improvement**

[P4]

**Safeguarding and
Wellbeing**

OUR VALUES (WHO WE ARE)

[V1]

We Care

We are:
Kind
Compassionate

We are uncompromising
in our pursuit of:
Excellence
Rigour

[V2]

We are Courageous

We are:
Ambitious for all our
students and staff

We are:
Agile, flexible and bold
in our decision-making
(including taking the
'difficult decisions')

[V3]

We are Candid

We are people of:
Honesty
Sincerity

We welcome:
Clarity
Feedback
Critique

[V4]

We are Accountable

We model:
Leadership
Integrity

We demonstrate:
Objectivity
Openness

OUR PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS

In our work:

We work with accuracy and precision; we are inquisitive and professional
We demonstrate positivity, resilience and determination.

In our relationships:

We uphold and embrace fairness, equitability and teamwork.
We collaborate respectfully, and demonstrate commitment to each other.

In our development:

We engage with quality educational research.
We develop ourselves and others through tailored professional learning.

In our approach:

We are outward looking with a pioneering spirit.
We navigate change with a commitment to serve our local communities.

The Mercian Trust

The Mercian Trust is one of the largest and leading regional Trusts in the West Midlands with 12 schools and over 10,000 students. We are making strategic investments of time, focus, and resources into realising our Vivid Vision for 2030, alongside the development of our strategic foundations and anchors. This is all set alongside our identity and mission to increase opportunities and improve outcomes for children and young people. Our Vivid Vision for Purpose, People and Place outlines our ambitious plans for our students, our staff and our local communities.

The Mercian Trust was incorporated in January 2018 and currently governs nine secondary schools, comprising selective grammar schools, large comprehensive schools, an alternative provision free school and a 14-19 specialist studio school. In 2021, the Regional Schools Commissioner approved the merger between The Mercian Trust and Q3 Academies Trust. The formal merger transfer was completed on 1st May 2022 when all nine academies of the two Trusts became part of the same family of schools governed by The Mercian Trust. In summer 2025, our first Primary School and our first Special School joined our Trust, along with a Pupil Referral Unit bringing our family of schools to twelve.

- Aldridge School (11-18)
- Q3 Academy Great Barr (11-18)
- Q3 Academy Langley (11-16)
- New Leaf School (Pupil Referral Unit)
- Oakwood School (Special School)
- Queen Mary's High School (11-18, selective)
- Queen Mary's Grammar School (11-18, selective)
- Rushall School (Primary School)
- Shire Oak Academy (11-18)
- The Ladder School (Alternative Provision)
- Q3 Academy Tipton (11-18)
- Walsall Studio School (14-19)

The Members of The Mercian Trust include The Vine Trust and the Queen Mary's Foundation. Both are charitable organisations focussed on improving the futures of local young people.

Trust ethos & values

Our name is rooted in history and expresses a geographical identity and ambition. The ancient kingdom of Mercia encompassed much of what we now recognise as the West Midlands – and crucially for us it included what we now call the Black Country. It was in Mercia that St Chad established an association of small monasteries which fostered unity through bonds of kinship. Now, a thousand years later, we look to demonstrate the same spirit in our approach. We are a family of schools committed to each other – diverse in nature, proud custodians of our history and success, but together, one charitable trust with a common purpose.

Our Trust exists to equip our students to:

- Realise their potential
- Thrive in the world of work
- Make a positive contribution to the local, national and international community.

Our mission is **increasing opportunities** and **improving outcomes**. Our mantra is *Life to the full* in pursuit of what is **good, right and true**.



Job Description: Executive Trust Leader

Role / domain specific responsibilities will be added in consultation with successful candidate.

Leadership and Management

- Work with the CEO and other executive leaders to design, develop and implement Trust strategy and Trust-wide development plans.
- Embed Trust ethos and our common purpose in Trust strategy and the work of your directorate / schools (to promote Trust ethos and purpose).
- Develop and embed our operating model, processes and expectations across structures, systems and schools.
- Establish and promote a culture where all staff embrace their own professional development within their career lifecycle and professional wellbeing.
- Lead by example in the development of skills and professional practice and the long term sustainability of the highest level performance while building resilient staff that protect their own wellbeing and that of colleagues.
- Always execute exemplary leadership and management skills to establish a highly effective Trust that is an employer of choice for teachers, leaders, student-facing support staff and professional services staff.
- Motivate and work with others to promote a positive culture that promotes personal excellence, equality and high expectations of all members of the Trust.
- Act always in accordance with the agreed values and ethos of the Trust.

Knowledge and Understanding

- Use your excellent understanding of current educational leadership and sector-based developments (including legislation) to ensure our Trust is kept at the forefront of national agendas.
- To constantly update your own knowledge and expertise of evidence-based research related to all areas of organisational culture, structures, systems and staff deployment.
- Utilise your knowledge of school, Trust and sector leadership to contribute to the delivery of our Trust's mission, Vivid Vision and strategic plan.

Trust-wide Staff and Leadership Development

- Develop highly effective relationships with other executive leaders and senior leaders in our schools and central teams based on respect and challenge deploying a combination of coaching, mentoring and professional training and support to ensure leaders are supported to deliver our Trust and School mission and Vivid Vision.
- Develop a holistic understanding of the needs of our schools, and provide bespoke and effective support to enable rapid, continuous improvement as a result of professional practice (particularly in your area of responsibility).

Continuously (or rapidly) developing Leadership and Management in schools – particularly when facing challenging circumstances.

- To assist in the identification of the root causes of underperformance working professionally alongside other executive leaders and headteachers.
- Co-design and deliver appropriate priorities for our 'Trust-response' strategic school improvement plan / post Ofsted inspection plan as required.

- To build Trust or school capacity to improve and sustain improvements beyond initial action plans / improvement plans.
- To provide regular support and challenge to school leaders to drive improvement in leadership, professional practice and by extension the outcomes for young people in each school.
- To promote and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people while ensuring the welfare and wellbeing of teachers, leaders, student-facing support staff and business professional services staff across our Trust.

Miscellaneous

- Work flexibly to deliver our responses to emerging challenges and developments in the sector.
- Working across Trust directorates as agreed with Executive Sponsors to deliver our Trust priorities.
- Any other duties as directed by the CEO or Executive Sponsor.



Person Specification – Executive Trust Leader

QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
QTS (including QTLS)	X		Application / Cert
Honours Degree or Equivalent	X		Application / Cert
Master's degree / Post-graduate Leadership & Management Qualification		X	Application / Cert
NPQEL		X	Application / Cert
Other Relevant and Recent Professional Development	X		Application / Interview
Registered Ofsted Inspector/HMI		X	Application

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
Demonstrate understanding of and commitment to ensuring a culture of safeguarding across the organisation.	X		Application / Interview
Use your excellent understanding of current educational issues and legislation to ensure our Trust remains at the forefront of national agendas.	X		Application / Interview
To constantly update your own knowledge and expertise of evidence-based research related to all areas of school and Trust leadership, people and organisational culture.	X		Application / Interview
Understanding of, and empathy with, our Trust operating model and work towards a Trust-led education sector.	X		Application / Interview
Ability to articulate clearly 'what excellence looks like' and provide the vision and ambition to deliver it.	X		Application / Interview

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
A commitment to our Trust blueprint for leadership culture.	X		Application / Interview
Intellectually rigorous approach to leadership with detailed understanding of what excellence looks like across all aspects of school performance.	X		Application / Interview
Able to see the 'big picture' and translate this into reality.	X		Application / Interview
Able to demonstrate successful change leadership (across the whole organisation).	X		Application / Interview
Ability to inspire, challenge, motivate and empower teams and individuals to achieve high performance.	X		Application / Interview
Ability to bring your own exciting imagination, creativity and vision to realise our Trust strategic plan.	X		Application / Interview
Ability to understand and analyse student, school and staff data / management information and insights.	X		Application / Interview
Able to think and plan strategically at scale	X		Application / Interview

Person Specification – continued

EXPERIENCE WITH IMPACT	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	EVIDENCE
Substantive Headship and/or Trust leadership experience.	X		Application / Interview
System leadership track record of sustained impact beyond one school (e.g. group of schools / Trust).	X		Application / Interview
Experience of school leadership in a range of different types of schools and/or circumstances	X		
Commitment to research and contribution to body of knowledge (e.g. through published work)		X	Application / Interview
Experience of leading CPD training, mentoring, coaching, and performance management with impact.	X		Application / Interview
Composing, implementing and evaluating strategic improvement and development plans.	X		Application / Interview
Examples of sector wide leadership and impact.		X	Application / Interview



OUR OFFER TO YOU

- A superb staff team committed to doing their absolute best for all in our school community.
- Support from our Trust central teams and other schools in our Trust to ensure you have the tools to deliver success (our schools are all located close to one another, and we work better when we are working together).
- A wealth of support for your ongoing continuing professional development, including a Trust-wide programme for leaders drawing on expertise from across the Mercian Trust and external professional coaches.
- A comprehensive employee assistance and staff benefits package including UKHealthcare (cash-back health plan and 24:7 video call and telephone access to GP and counselling) and a discounts portal (ranging from gym membership to discount cards and vouchers for online and high street retailers).
- There will never be a dull moment; we never stand still, every day offers new challenges and opportunities within an ambitious, forward-thinking team.

SAFEGUARDING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

- The Mercian Trust is committed to equal opportunities, safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of children and young adults. We expect all staff to share this commitment. As this post involves working in regulated activity unsupervised with children all post-holders are subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks including an online search check, references, Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- You are required to uphold all relevant policies in respect of child protection and safeguarding, which are based on KCSIE (2025) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).
- You are required to demonstrate and model the Nolan Principles (The Seven Principles of Public Life): Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>
- You should demonstrate your commitment to our equality policy and all our related work to promote diversity, inclusion and belonging.

KEY INFORMATION – HOW TO APPLY

Post	Executive Trust Leader
Responsible to	Chief Executive Officer and Designated Executive Sponsor
Contract and Salary	Full time or part time considered; Permanent role Competitive Salary commensurate with experience and expertise
Closing Date	Monday 23 rd February 2026, 9.00am
Interview Dates	Wednesday 25 th and Thursday 26 th February 2026
Start Date	September 2026 though earlier where possible is preferred
Informal Confidential Conversations	To speak to someone about this post, please contact Lin Koo, Executive PA to the CEO on 01922 211388 Ext. 1211 or email Lin.Koo@merciantrust.org.uk
How to apply	Please complete the Online Application Form via our Mercian website. Please ensure your supporting statement outlines the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How your recent and relevant experience has prepared you to be successful in this post.• How your vision and leadership align with our Trust’s Blueprint for leadership and culture.• How the impact you have had in your career to date is an appropriate foundation for you to undertake this role.

Please note – your ability to communicate a wide range of information with appropriate examples and evidence clearly and concisely in your supporting statement will be assessed as part of the shortlisting process.