



**Mercia**  
Learning Trust

# APPLICANT PACK

PRIMARY IMPROVEMENT  
DIRECTOR



Realising Potential. Transforming Lives.

## **Advert**

**Post: Primary Improvement Director**

**Pay Scale: L27 to L31 (£79,959 – £88,188)**

**Contract: 1.0 FTE, Full-time**

**Start date: Easter 2023 (or sooner if possible)**

Are you already a successful Primary Headteacher, a Senior LA or Trust Improvement Leader or Ofsted Inspector, looking for the next career step? Do you:

- Want to work in a coherent 2-18+ Multi Academy Trust with a shared mission underpinned by a culture of integrity and excellence?
- Believe in the power of education to transform lives, particularly for the most vulnerable children?
- Understand that keeping children happy and safe is the most important thing we do?
- Accept that context matters but understand the common characteristics of great schools?
- Value partnership and believe this can help schools further improve?
- Want to spread your expertise and influence across different schools, to more staff and more children?
- Know how to secure a culture of continuous improvement across a complex and expanding organisation?
- Want to be central to our plans for future partnership and growth?

If so, then this may be the perfect opportunity for you.

Mercia Learning Trust is a 2-18+, successful, coherent, and growing partnership of currently six schools, serving approximately 4500 children and differing communities in the south and south-west of Sheffield. Our three primary schools feed into our three secondaries, and we are committed to a locality-based approach to future partnership and growth.

We have a reputation for leading very effective and sector leading schools (including transforming standards in previously under-performing schools and establishing an exceptional free school). This work is underpinned by the right balance of school autonomy, a culture of high challenge and support, sharing best practice and alignment, the support of excellent central teams and strong leadership and governance.

The Trust is about to embark on an exciting new phase. As such we wish to appoint a Primary Improvement Director to:

1. Enhance our offer of exceptional support and challenge to existing schools so that they continue to improve.
2. Work with trust and school leaders to promote our vision and realise all aspects of our strategy for growth.
3. Provide strategic and operational support to new partner primary schools as we expand, so they experience the benefits of working with or in our trust.

### **Application and interview Process**

Prior to applying, we advise candidates to read the recruitment pack in detail and explore the Trust and School websites. We also encourage candidates to speak to the CEO about the role and if possible, arrange to visit our schools and trust. Details of how to book an appointment can be found in the 'Application Process' section of this pack.

Following application, successful candidates will be invited to assessment and interview.

### **How to apply**

Visit the Mercia Learning Trust website [www.merctrust.co.uk](http://www.merctrust.co.uk) to access the recruitment pack and how to complete the application process. The deadline for an application is **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022 (12.00 noon)** with interviews (over 2 days) taking place during the week commencing Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

## Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer and Trust Chair

Thank you for your interest in this key leadership role.

Mercia Learning Trust is a 2-18+, successful and coherent partnership of currently six (three primary and three secondary) schools, serving children and different communities in the south and south-west of Sheffield. Several of our schools are sector leading, we have successfully transformed standards in those that were previously under-performing, and established an exceptional secondary free school in 2018.

Our mission is clear and unashamedly ambitious. Working as individual schools, and in partnership, our singular intention is to ensure every child, whatever their background, will attend an exceptional school. We understand the life-changing impact of great schools on children and are especially committed to our most vulnerable.

Our Trust strives to operate in a partnership 'sweet spot' which we call aligned autonomy. We share the same mission, but understand each school is different with a unique identity. However, we relentlessly focus support and challenge on the common features of exceptional schools. Use the power of partnership to further drive improvement and back our schools with excellent central functions. Together this means school leaders can always focus upon what really matters and we have a culture of continuous improvement.

Our current effectiveness is recognised by the LA and DFE, and nationally. Indeed, we are one of only nine trusts across the country who have been invited to undertake inaugural World Class multi-academy trust accreditation through the organisation World Class Schools.

After careful consideration of the recent Government White Paper. Trustees have agreed to embark upon a period of growth with schools who share our mission. It is very likely that new primary schools will join the trust during 2022-23 and in the future.

This new role is central to our strategic aims:

1. Support our existing primary schools get even better so that our mission is realised for every child.
2. Further develop our partnership culture to support and drive school improvement.
3. Support our strategy to grow with other local schools and support them secure improvement.

Alongside our children, our staff are our greatest asset. We are committed to recruiting, developing, retaining, and caring for our exceptionally talented staff teams.

We hope you will want to join our great team and make a difference to the children and communities we serve.

Please visit our website [www.merctrust.co.uk](http://www.merctrust.co.uk) for more insight and arrange to speak to us about the role as required.



Chris French



Phil Smith

**Chief Executive Officer      Trust Chair**

## **Job Description**

<b>Post Title:</b>	<b>Primary Improvement Director</b>
<b>Grade:</b>	<b>L27 to L31 (£79,959 – £88,188)</b>
<b>Hours:</b>	<b>1.0 FTE</b>
<b>Responsible to:</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Responsible for:</b>	<b>Supporting and challenging all primary schools to continuously improve and become exceptional</b>

**The post holder must always conduct his/her responsibilities within the spirit of Mercia Learning Trust and School policies and within the legislative framework applicable to academies.**

### **PURPOSE OF THE POST**

1. Delivery and coordination of school improvement support and challenge for primary schools across the trust. This includes:
  - a. Existing schools
  - b. New partner primary schools
2. In coordination with others, lead the development, implementation and impact of the Trust's school improvement strategy and strategic development plan.
3. Work with trust and school leaders to promote our vision and realise all aspects of our strategy for growth.
4. Promote and uphold the vision and culture of the trust.
5. Report to the CEO, Trust Board and LGBs (as required) on the quality of education and impact of school improvement activity.

### **MAIN DUTIES**

- Be an active member of the Trust Executive Leadership team.
- Contribute towards development and delivery of the Trust's strategic plan, individual school improvement plans, and its strategy for trust growth.
- Develop and deliver the Trust's school improvement strategy and action plan in coordination with the Trust's Director of Secondary School Improvement and the wider Improvement Team.
- Provide strategic advice and professional expertise to support the strategic growth of primary schools within the Trust including active involvement in the Trust's due diligence process of new schools.
- Lead on the development of the Trust's primary offer.
- Engage in regular meetings with school leaders to sustain good communication and intelligence, and improvement discussion.
- Deliver and coordinate targeted school improvement support for primary schools across the Trust.

- Develop and deliver quality assurance systems across the Trust's primary schools.
- Provide support and challenge to schools, focused on the agreed features of effective schools, to secure high levels of pupil and staff performance.
- Analyse school and Trust performance data and use it to inform targeted support for schools and to strategically plan and manage delivery of school improvement activity.
- Produce reports to the CEO, Executive Team, Trust Board & LGBs (as required) on the quality of education and the impact of school improvement activity and contribute to regular dashboard judgements, trust, and policy up-dates.
- Take strategic responsibility for Trust wide areas, as allocated by the CEO.
- Apply knowledge of statutory and regulatory compliance to ensure compliance across all schools.

### **Applied Knowledge and Expertise**

- Apply experience in the leadership of schools to school improvement planning, due diligence, intervention in all schools (incl. those who are under-performing) and the development of the Trust's strategy and framework for school improvement.
- Use significant experience in preparing schools for Ofsted inspections, as well as detailed knowledge of the inspection framework and practices, to improve the standards in schools.
- Use in-depth knowledge and experience of working in the educational sector to design and deliver effective quality assurance systems and processes across schools and support the design of intervention strategies to improve academic standards and outcomes.
- Apply experience in change management and leadership training to target improved performance and lead Trust wide organisational change.
- Apply knowledge of educational assessments to support the delivery of effective student assessment and intervention initiatives and programmes.
- Apply experience of encouraging collaboration between schools, across the Trust and with other external agencies to support improvement, sharing of best practice, the creation of agreed frameworks and reduce the replication.
- Apply knowledge of statutory and regulatory compliance to ensure compliance across all schools.
- Take strategic responsibility for Trust wide areas of responsibility as allocated by the CEO.

### **Decision Making and Problem Solving**

- Work with the Executive Team, Director of Secondary School Improvement, Headteachers and the Central School Improvement team to monitor and evaluate the academic performance, leadership, and management of schools.
- Support and work towards the aim that all schools maintain at least a 'strongly good rating,' with the goal of eventually becoming 'outstanding.'
- Lead transformational change both strategically and operationally in all schools.
- Delegate key responsibilities and operations across the Central School Improvement Team and across the wider organisation.

## **Resource Management**

- Identify opportunities across schools for financial gains and sharing of resources through school-to-school collaboration.
- Ensure that all resources available to schools are used in ways which are for the promotion and achievement of the school priorities, values, and objectives.
- Work with the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Secondary School Improvement to prioritise resource allocation and maximise value for money.
- Work actively to identify and implement alternative income to support school improvement activities.
- Work closely with the Trust's Chief Executive officer, Finance and Operations Director and Headteachers to oversee the staffing resource of each academy to ensure curriculum efficiency.

## **Leadership and Management and People Development**

- Drive and sustain a culture of high expectations, supporting school leadership teams to improve standards across all aspects with a particular focus on quality of education and provision for the most vulnerable.
- Ensure that the Headteachers and school leaders are supported through significant transformational change projects.
- Ensure leaders across the Trust receive the appropriate teaching and leadership training and continue to develop their practice.
- Work with Headteachers to recruit staff of the highest quality across the group.
- Promote a positive culture throughout the organisation and adopts behaviours that exemplify the Trust's values.
- Line manage and performance develop designated members of the Central School Improvement Team, setting ambitions and encouraging continuing professional development.
- Build own leadership capacity and takes responsibility for own professional development by actively engaging with and seeking out areas for improvement.

## **WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITIONS OF THE POST**

- The post will be required to travel and work within any school in Mercia Learning Trust.

## **GENERAL DUTIES**

- To ensure accurate records are securely maintained and held in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)/Data Protection Act 2018.
- Be aware of and support diversity, ensuring equal opportunities for all.
- Develop professional, constructive relationships with other agencies, schools, and professionals.
- Participate in meetings, training, and performance development, as necessary.
- Recognise own strengths and areas of expertise using these to advise and support others.
- Be willing to undertake training and professional development as required of the post.
- Any other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the grade and role.

## **PROMOTION OF TRUST VALUES**

- To contribute to the overall development of Mercia Learning Trust to ensure the Trust operates based on shared and collective responsibility.
- To contribute to the overall ethos, work and aims of Mercia Learning Trust.
- To support and contribute to the Trust's commitment to safeguarding all students. All schools in the Mercia Learning Trust are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Therefore, all employees are expected to share this commitment.
- To be aware of the school's duty of care in relation to staff, students and visitors and to always comply with all health and safety policies.
- To be aware of and comply with the codes of conduct, regulations and policies of the school and its commitment to equal opportunities.
- All the above duties and responsibilities to be conducted in accordance with policies adopted by the Trust Board, Local Governing Body and current legislation with an emphasis on Customer Care, Equal Opportunities, Data Protection and Health and Safety.

This job description is current at the date indicated below but, in consultation with the post holder, the CEO may change it to reflect or anticipate changes in the post commensurate with the grade or job title.

**Issue Date: September 2022**



## Person Specification

<b>Post Title:</b>	<b>Primary Improvement Director</b>
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SPECIFICATION	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Qualifications</b>	Degree education with QTS  Completion of relevant postgraduate qualifications  Evidence of a commitment to ongoing learning and continuous professional development  Being an experienced Headteacher, qualified Ofsted inspector or a senior school leader in a local authority, trust, or national body	
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	Secure knowledge of educational policy developments and implication for in-school practices  Exceptional knowledge of primary education  Detailed knowledge of effective school improvement practices  Extensive knowledge of effective intervention strategies to impact on school standards  Extensive knowledge of curriculum development, implementation,	

<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>	<p>impact, and effective assessment techniques</p> <p>Producing reports which strategically review and evaluate resources and performance</p> <p>Be skilled in using a range of techniques to ensure effective collaboration across schools and with external stakeholders and partnerships</p> <p>Be committed to providing a high-quality service to the schools</p> <p>Hold and articulate clear values, moral purpose and leads ethically and with integrity</p> <p>Be adaptive and responsive to change</p> <p>Possess excellent written and oral communication skills</p> <p>Have high level people skills with the ability to inspire and motivate others</p> <p>Be able to influence effectively at all levels of an organisation</p> <p>Be creative in their approach to problem solving</p>	
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Successful experience of leading a very successful school.</p> <p>Writing, implementing, and reviewing strategic improvement plans and strategies which bring about impactful change</p> <p>Proven experience of promoting inclusion, equality, and diversity</p> <p>Experience of managing and leading complex changes across a school or group of schools</p>	<p>Successfully leading more than one school, and in a different context</p> <p>Supporting or leading schools in challenging circumstances</p> <p>Sector leadership</p>

	<p>Experience of evaluating the performance of the leadership and management of a school</p> <p>Experience of working collaboratively across a group of schools with impact on outcomes for children evidenced because of this work</p> <p>Experience of coaching, mentoring, and directing staff at all levels</p> <p>Experience of overseeing and advising on budget management</p> <p>Broad experience of analysing education data to inform successful education delivery</p> <p>Developing and motivating senior leaders to achieve success</p>	
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<p>Strong morale purpose and underpinning vision for education</p> <p>Exceptional inter-personal skills and emotional intelligence</p> <p>Ability to motivate and inspire</p> <p>Be an excellent collaborator</p> <p>Ability to work accurately and with attention to detail</p> <p>Ability to identify work priorities and manage own workload and that of others</p> <p>Calm and resilient, and energetic and ambitious for all</p> <p>An understanding of and commitment to safeguarding issues and promoting the welfare of children and young people.</p> <p>Able to manage working hours flexibly to meet the demands of the role</p>	

	<p>Willingness to undertake further professional development</p> <p>Willingness and ability to travel to all work locations within the Trust and outside of the city where required</p> <p>To be committed to Mercia Learning Trust's vision and values</p>	
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## The Application Process

All candidates must complete the following application process.

- All applicants must submit a Trust application form. We do not accept CVs or Council Application Forms. The application form can be found under 'Careers'/'Apply' at [www.mercialearningtrust.co.uk](http://www.mercialearningtrust.co.uk)
- Email your completed application to [recruitment@mercialearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@mercialearningtrust.co.uk) or post it to:  
MLT Recruitment Team  
Mercia Learning Trust  
79 Glen Road  
Sheffield, S7 1RB

After your application has been submitted:

- In all cases written references will be taken up and made available to interviewers BEFORE the final selection stage.
- All applications that have been submitted via email will receive an email confirming receipt.
- An email and/or letter will be sent to shortlisted candidates with details of the interview process.
- If you have not heard from us within 2 weeks of the closing date, please assume that on this occasion, your application has been unsuccessful.

Further information:

- Carefully read the content of our website [www.mercialearningtrust.co.uk](http://www.mercialearningtrust.co.uk) to find out as much about us as possible.
- Should you require any additional information about the role or the school, or would like an informal discussion or out of hours visit, please contact us on 0114 2557331 or [recruitment@mercialearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@mercialearningtrust.co.uk).
- For more information about the application process, please email [recruitment@mercialearningtrust.co.uk](mailto:recruitment@mercialearningtrust.co.uk).

Key dates:

- Closing Date Midday Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022
- Interviews (over 2 days) will take place during the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

### The small print

Mercia Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of children and young people and expects all staff to share this commitment. If you are shortlisted, your suitability to work with children will be explored, and this will include disclosing convictions. The information you disclose may be discussed with you during the interview. The successful candidate will therefore be required to complete a DBS check in line with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 and the Police Act Regulations.

We are an Equal Opportunities employer. Our staff are recruited and promoted based on their merits and abilities and no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of racial group, origin or nationality, sex, disability, marital status, age, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs or trade union activity. Please indicate whether there are any reasonable adjustments or access requirements you would need to help you to attend an interview. If you wish to discuss your requirements prior to submitting your form, please contact the Recruitment Team on 0114 349 4230. Alternatively, please give details on a separate sheet and return with your application form.