



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: January 2023 (or as soon as possible)

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

- 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 each school is different but recognise the common characteristics of great schools?
- Value genuine cross-phase partnership and believe by working with others you can help our existing schools become exceptional?
- Want to spread your expertise and influence across different schools, to more staff and more children?
- Want to be more strategic and support our plans for future partnerships and growth?
- Want to work in a 2-18+ Multi Academy Trust with a shared mission underpinned by a culture of integrity and excellence?

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 backing 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 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 to access the recruitment pack and how to complete the application process. The deadline for an application is **Friday 8 July 2022 (12.00 noon)** with interviews taking place on Thursday 14th and Friday 15th July 2022.

Welcome from the Chief Executive Officer and Trust Chair

Thank you for your interest in this key leadership role within Mercia Learning Trust.

Mercia Learning Trust is a 2-18+, successful, coherent, and growing partnership of currently six schools, serving approximately 4500 children and different 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.

Our Trust is based around a shared mission. Working as individual schools, and in partnership, our singular intention is to ensure every child, whatever their background, will attend an exceptional school. We believe children should enjoy school, feel safe and fully supported, be inspired to learn, develop character and aspiration, and realise their full potential. We are so committed to their success and well-being that we choose to think of every child we serve as if they were our own, and to measure our actions and impact against this.

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).

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.

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 are pleased that our trust has a clear identity and a reputation for educational excellence, integrity and an unrelenting commitment to children and community. This has been nationally recognised, and 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 Trustees recently agreed to embark upon a locality-based partnership and growth plan. This role is pivotal to our strategy to ensure our existing schools become exceptional and to this new and exciting phase.

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.mericiatrust.co.uk for more insight and arrange to speak to me about the role as required.



Chris French
Chief Executive Officer



Phil Smith
Trust Chair

Job Description

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

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. Reporting to the CEO, 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 of effort.
- 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.
- Works actively to identify and implement alternative income to support school improvement activities.
- Works 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 on the basis of 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 School 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: June 2022

Person Specification

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

SPECIFICATION	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications	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 or national body	
Knowledge and Skills	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,	

Knowledge and Skills	<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>Holds 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>	
Experience	<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>Successfully leading one or more schools</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>	
Personal Qualities	<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 Forms. The application form can be found under 'Careers' at www.merciatrust.co.uk
- Email your completed application to recruitment@merciatrust.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:

- Take a look at <https://www.mericiatrust.co.uk/aboutus> to understand how we operate and www.mericiatrust.co.uk/careers for more on what it's like working for the trust, what we offer you, and what we're looking for.
- 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@mericiatrust.co.uk.
- For more information about the application process, please email recruitment@mericiatrust.co.uk.

Key dates:

- **Closing Date Midday Friday 8 July 2022**
- **Interviews will take place Thursday 14th and Friday 15th July 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 on the basis of 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.