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Dear Candidate

Thank you for expressing an interest in this post.

The Mercia Learning Trust is a highly successful partnership of 3 primary and 3 secondary schools located in the south and west of Sheffield. We are proud that overall effectiveness is amongst the strongest on any trust in the country. We also think the way we work as educational partners is exciting and innovative.

Our Trust is based on a deep and shared moral purpose. We believe an exceptional education can realise the potential of every pupil, whatever their background, and truly transform lives.

Working as individual schools, and in deep partnership, our singular intention is to ensure every pupil, whatever their background, will attend an exceptional school. We believe pupils 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 pupil success and well-being that we choose to think of every pupil we serve as if they were our own, and to measure our actions and impact against this.

The Trust was originally founded around King Ecgbert Secondary School. However, very quickly a multi-academy partnership formed with two feeder primary schools (Nether Edge and Totley Primary). This was followed by further growth with a local secondary (Newfield School) and primary (Valley Park Primary). In 2018 the Trust opened a brand new secondary school (Mercia School) to meet the need for local population expansion. Currently we educate approximately 3800 students from ages 2-18+, although this will increase to around 5000 as our current schools grow in the next few years. Geographically and philosophically we are very coherent.

Our Trust has a mature definition of partnership which we call aligned autonomy. We share the same mission, values and moral purpose, have an increasing amount of common best practice (often backed by research), and benefit from our combined resources and reputation. Nevertheless, we understand that schools are unique and are best led by leaders and staff who feel fully accountable and are able to individually innovate in the light of their context. This balance between difference, sharing and commonality is what drives improvement and lies at the heart of our trust.

Alongside our pupils, our staff are our greatest asset. As such we are deeply committed to recruiting, developing, retaining and caring for our exceptionally talented and committed staff teams. This commitment is enshrined in the Mercia Pledge which is designed to ensure our staff get the very best professional experience and support on offer anywhere. The Mercia Learning Alliance sits at the centre of this strategy, alongside that to recruit new teachers into the profession, and support system leadership across the sector. Progression and career development are therefore second to none in the Trust.

In a short period, our Trust has achieved a great deal. However, we are ambitious and forward-thinking, and fully committed to maintaining and improving student experience and outcomes, and further improving our trust.

Valley Park Primary School

Valley Park is a 2-11, two form entry primary school, that serves the community of Norton and Gleadless in south east Sheffield. It was sponsored by the Mercia Learning trust in 2015, and since then has improved very substantially. It was inspected in 2018 and graded as Requires improvement. At this time, leaders judge the school to be good.

The school has very strong leadership. The school is led by two Co-Headteachers and is supported by the Trust Primary Executive Headteacher who is an NLE and registered Lead Ofsted Inspector. The support and challenge for leadership and school improvement is therefore substantial.

Critically, the school has a talented and committed teaching and support staff team. All are deeply committed to the school mission and care passionately about its pupils and the community, and on-going improvement.

Like all trust schools, Valley Park is currently driving improvement through the development of an exceptional curriculum in each phase (a focus on really secure foundations in EYFS / KS1, and greater breadth in KS2). As important is the development of a coherent personal development and inclusion offer driven by strong school values; that ensures the needs of all pupils are securely met every day. We see our continued success being dependent on these key strands. Much of the latter strand forms the basis of the role of Deputy Headteacher (Inclusion).

These priorities are common across all our primary schools, as a result Valley Park is at the heart of innovation, partnership and the sharing of best practice across the Trust. This access to partnership working and the practice of others is a huge additional benefit that our staff and schools enjoy.

Mercia Learning Trust and Valley Park Primary together provide a compelling, rewarding and ambitious context to develop your career.

If you would like to visit the school prior to submitting an application or speak to someone about the role please contact Matthew Knox (Trust Primary Leader) on matthewknox@valleypark.sheffield.sch.uk or telephone 0114 239 6464

You can find out more about our trust and Valley Park at www.merctrust.co.uk and our Teaching School Alliance at www.merciala.org.uk

I look forward to your application.



Chris French
CEO