

# Revised National Standards for Headteachers in Wales

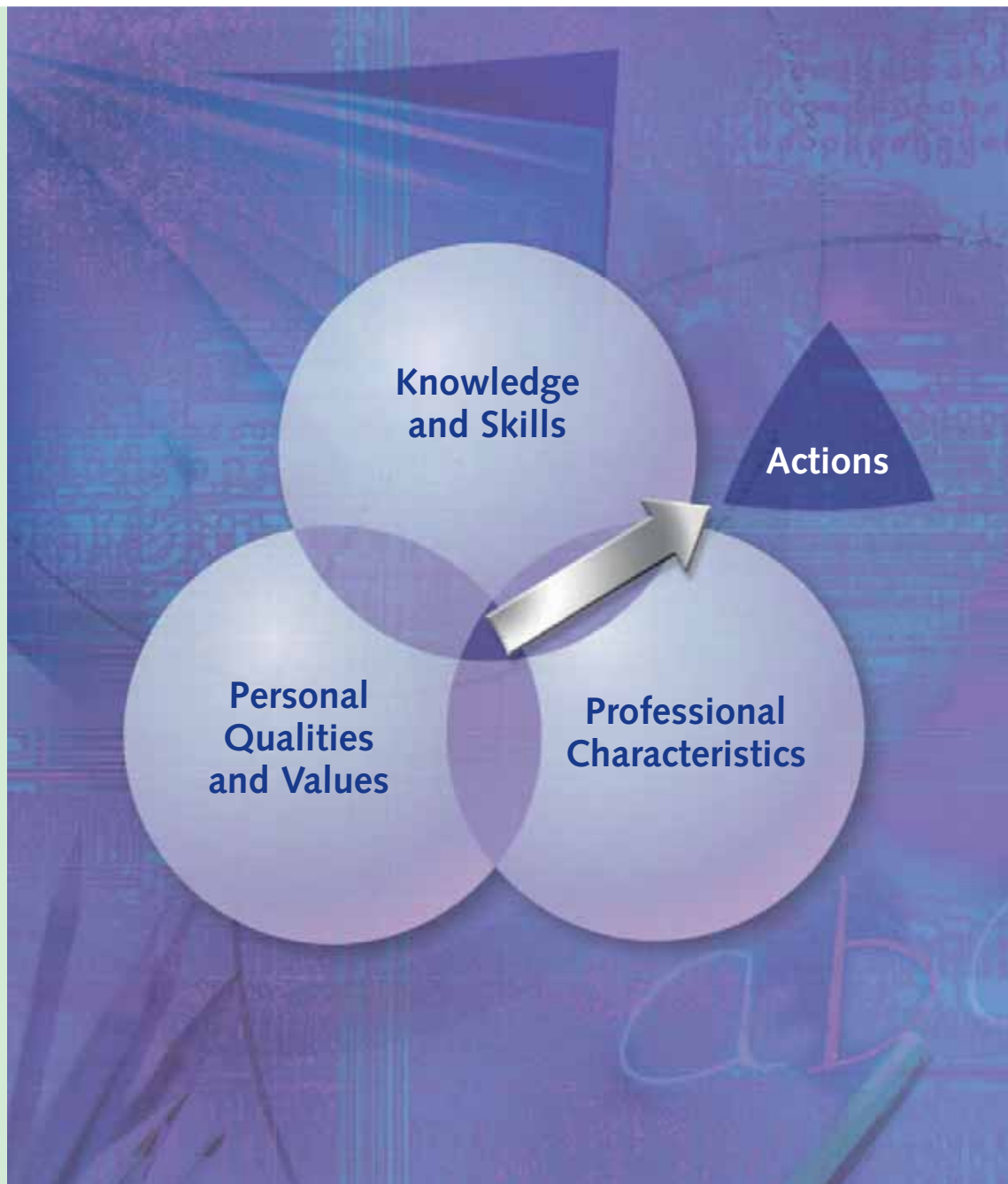
Guidance  
Circular



National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 14/2006

Date of Issue: 28 April 2006

School  
Leadership



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Adran Hyfforddiant ac Addysg  
Department for Training and Education



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

**Title of Document:** Revised National Standards for Headteachers in Wales.

**Audience:** Teachers; deputy headteachers; headteachers; governing bodies; professional associations; HEI's; FE Institutions; church diocesan organisations; LEAs; Estyn; GTCW; Wales NPQH Centre; NPQH Candidates; NPQH graduates; NPQH trainers; Elwa; Education Departments; NCSL.

**Overview:** This Circular provides guidance in relation to the revised National Standards for Headteachers in Wales.

**Action required:** For aspiring and serving headteachers and bodies involved in headship appointments to have due regard for the advice set out in this Guidance Circular.

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**Further copies may be obtained from:** As above.

**Related documents:** Consultation on the National Standards for Headteachers in Wales  
Welsh Assembly Government  
September 2004  
ISBN 0 7504 2987 9  
Response to a Consultation on Revised National Standards for Headteachers in Wales  
Welsh Assembly Government  
June 2005  
Information Document: 037-05

Copies of these documents are available via the Assembly Government website at [www.learning.wales.gov.uk](http://www.learning.wales.gov.uk)

The Assembly Government acknowledges the use of artwork produced by Serco Learning for the National Standards logo.

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## Foreword

Dear Colleague,

As Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, I recognise that school leaders are pivotal to the Assembly Government's Learning Country aspirations to establish Wales as an outstanding place in which to learn and teach.

There has been substantial investment in leadership development over the last five years, both by the Assembly Government and by school leaders across Wales. Recent Estyn research has reinforced the significant return on our investment in the National Headship Development Programme - 'leadership is now good or very good in 80% of primary and secondary schools in Wales.'

In recognition of the evolving leadership agenda in Wales, we launched a national consultation to revise the National Standards for Headteachers. This exercise provided an opportunity to ensure that the standards continued to reflect the challenging role of school leaders in Wales.

This Guidance Circular presents the revised professional standards for headteachers in Wales. The standards embody three underlying principles, in recognition that the work of headteachers should be:

- learning centred;
- focused on leadership; and
- professionally orientated.

The standards also outline the interrelated key areas of headship which will become the focus of future leadership developments from the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) for aspiring headteachers to continuing professional development for newly appointed and existing headteachers.

To complement the new headship standards, we have worked in partnership with school leaders across Wales to develop a series of case studies to exemplify the six key areas of headship identified in the standards. The case studies are designed not only to identify some of the good practice which already exists in our schools, but also to encourage aspiring and serving headteachers to use the standards to reflect on their own practice in the context of review or development.

To fully support headteachers in working towards the new headship standards, the Assembly Government has also conducted a Quinquennial Review of the National Headship Development Programme (NHDP). The Review has provided an invaluable opportunity to work in partnership with the profession to set the strategic direction for future leadership development in Wales.

To further enhance professional development for school leaders, a new NPQH for aspiring headteachers was launched in 2006. In addition, we are currently reviewing support for newly appointed and serving school leaders. We are also considering higher order professional development for experienced headteachers, which in turn, will impact upon future policy development in Wales. Our plans to launch a new leadership development programme in 2007 will pave the way for even more successful school leaders in the 21st Century.

My goal is to establish a career long relationship with existing and aspiring leaders to ensure that future school leaders are equipped with the skills and ambition to ensure that the education system in Wales is one of the best in the world - our learners and our practitioners deserve no less.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J'.

**Jane Davidson, AM**  
Minister for Education & Lifelong Learning

## Introduction

The National Standards for Headteachers reflect the current educational and school leadership contexts in Wales but also take account of similar revisions to the National Standards for Headteachers in England and Scotland. Designed to provide a framework for professional development and action, they should inform, challenge and enthuse new, aspiring and serving headteachers. The Standards constitute guidance which underpins the National Headship Development Programme in Wales (NHDP) including the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH). They will also assist in the processes of selection, recruitment and performance management of headteachers and clearly define what should be expected from the role of a headteacher.

The Standards are set out in three sections, as shown in the diagram on page 5:

- 1. The Core Purpose of the Headteacher**
- 2. The Core Attributes of Headship**
- 3. The Six Key Areas of Headship**

**The Core Purpose of the Headteacher** encapsulates the central role of the headteacher which is expanded upon in later sections of the Standards.

**The Core Attributes of Headship** summarise the knowledge and skills; the personal qualities and values; and the professional characteristics which headteachers need in order to carry out their core purpose.

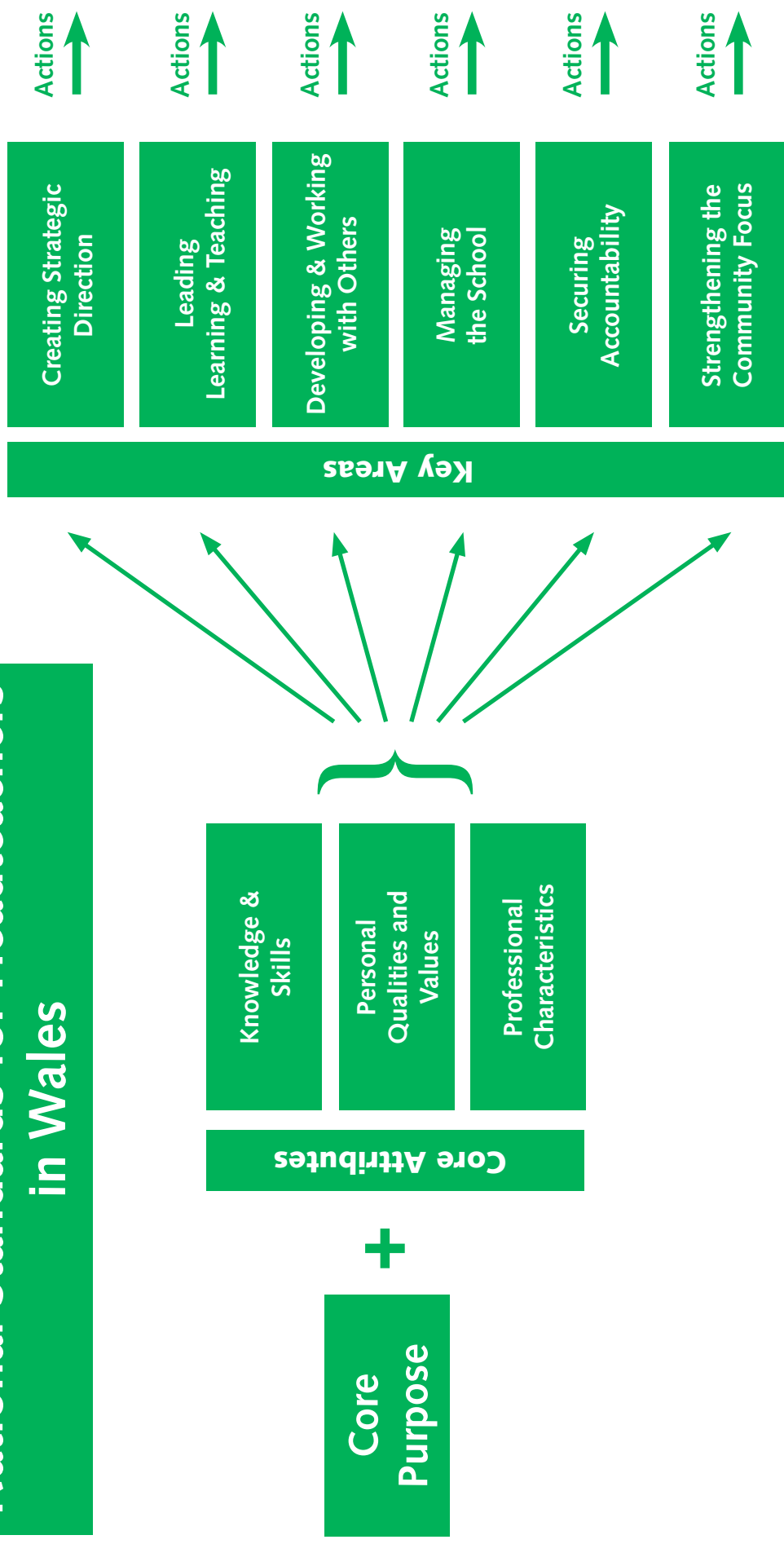
These core attributes are then applied to each of **The Six Key Areas of Headship** which combine to form the wider role of the headteacher :

- 1. Creating Strategic Direction**
- 2. Leading Learning and Teaching**
- 3. Developing and Working with Others**
- 4. Managing the School**
- 5. Securing Accountability**
- 6. Strengthening the Community Focus**

Each of the six key areas also identifies a range of actions which are appropriate to the role of the headteacher.

Whilst particular knowledge and skills, personal qualities and values and professional characteristics are assigned to each of the key areas, it is important to emphasise that these can, and should transfer readily across the six areas. They are interdependent and build on the core attributes set out in the second part of the Standards. The Standards in their entirety reflect the wide-ranging, complex and demanding role of headship. They constitute both a challenge and an expectation which all aspiring and existing headteachers will aim to meet.

# National Standards for Headteachers in Wales



## 1. The Core Purpose of the Headteacher.

**HEADTEACHERS PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN SHAPING THE FUTURE OF LEARNING IN WALES. BY DEVELOPING THEIR LEADERSHIP, THEIR SCHOOL, AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION, AND BY PROMOTING THE DIVERSE LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OF WALES, THEY MAKE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR COMMUNITIES.**

The core purpose of the headteacher is to provide professional leadership and management for their school. The headteacher will aim to secure improvement and success for the school by ensuring high quality teaching and learning opportunities for all its pupils and high standards of achievement in all areas of the school's work.

The headteacher is responsible for creating an exciting, stimulating, productive learning environment for pupils and staff. The headteacher is the lead professional and lead learner in the school and, together with the governing body and whole school community, is responsible for:

- securing the mission, creating vision and establishing the strategic direction of the school;
- managing change and shaping the future of the school;
- securing success and improvement for the school through school self evaluation;
- ensuring high quality teaching, high quality individual learning opportunities for all pupils and high standards of achievement;
- providing equality of opportunity for all;
- developing, implementing, monitoring and continually improving policies and practices;
- operating within a regulatory framework and interpreting and applying relevant legislation;
- managing and organising the school from day to day to ensure that resources, including the school environment and human resources, are efficiently, effectively and safely used to achieve the school's aims and objectives;
- securing the commitment of the wider community to the school by developing and maintaining effective networks;
- ensuring his/her own professional development and the professional development of all staff in the school.



## 2. The Core Attributes of Headship

The following attributes identify the core knowledge and skills, the personal qualities and values and the professional characteristics, attributable to the six key areas of the headship standards. The core attributes are not exhaustive and should not be used as a checklist. Additional attributes relating to each of the six key areas are also set out in section three of the Standards.



### 2.1 Knowledge & Skills

This element identifies the essential knowledge and skills headteachers require to lead and manage a school effectively. Headteachers should actively engage in reflective learning to gain a greater understanding of the core headship functions including: -

- The Professional Role of the Headteacher
- Leadership and Management Principles
- School Self Evaluation and Improvement

## 2.2 Personal Qualities and Values

This element focuses upon the personal characteristics which individuals bring to the headship role. They may be innate qualities and values and/or traits developed through personal experience.

- Commitment
- Confidence
- Consistency
- Courage
- Creativity
- Empathy
- Flexibility
- Honesty
- Humour
- Impartiality
- Inspiration
- Integrity
- Motivation
- Perseverance
- Problem Solving
- Reliability
- Resilience
- Respect
- Self Awareness
- Value for Others

## 2.3 Professional Characteristics

This element clarifies the diverse professional capabilities headteachers draw upon to undertake the core headship functions effectively. Through their professional interactions, headteachers should:

- apply and understand frameworks of accountability;
- celebrate diversity and promote social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- challenge and support;
- communicate clear purpose and direction;
- deal with ambiguity and change;
- develop self and others; and
- value teams & work collaboratively.

## 3. The Six Key Areas of Headship

### 3.1 Key Area 1 – Creating Strategic Direction

Engaging in constructive thinking about the future is essential to effective headship. Headteachers should create a shared and corporate strategic vision which inspires and motivates all members of the school community. This vision should encapsulate the educational values and the moral purpose of the headteacher and governing body to secure the improvement and development of the school.

**Within this Key Area, the specific attributes and actions are:**

#### *Knowledge and Skills:*

- schools of the future;
- models of leadership;
- ways to establish, implement and sustain a shared vision;
- distributed leadership;
- strategic planning, monitoring and reporting processes;
- new technologies, their use and impact;
- contemporary developments in education at local, national and global levels;
- The Welsh Assembly Government's Learning Country agenda.

#### *Personal Qualities and Values:*

- thinks analytically and strategically, building and sustaining a coherent vision in a range of compelling ways;
- promotes the schools vision of excellence and equality of opportunity which set high standards for every child;
- inspires, challenges, motivates and empowers others to carry the vision forward;
- commits to the social inclusion agenda and the ability and right of all to be the best they can be;
- develops self-belief in all pupils and adults involved in the school.

### *Professional Characteristics*

- manages change by working with and through other people;
- sets and achieves ambitious, challenging goals and targets (for pupils and staff);
- effectively uses appropriate technologies;
- addresses barriers to learning;
- understands and responds to the national education policy context in Wales;
- forges effective links between and understands the inter-dependency of the six key areas of the National Standards for Headteachers in Wales.

### *Actions*

- ensures the vision for the school is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted upon effectively by all;
- works within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans which will achieve sustained school improvement;
- embodies the vision and values through daily practice and continual advocacy;
- motivates and works with others to create an effective school climate and shared culture;
- employs creativity, innovation and new technologies to achieve excellence;
- ensures that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values, experience and context of the school and the community at large;
- develops the school based on a commitment to continuous improvement and sustainable development.

### 3.2 Key Area 2 - Leading Learning and Teaching

Securing effective learning and teaching is at the heart of the school. The headteacher, working with the staff and governors, creates the conditions and structures to support effective learning and teaching for all.

Headteachers have a direct responsibility for the quality of learning and teaching and for pupils' achievement. This implies setting high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes. The climate and learning culture created in the school should enable pupils to become effective, enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to and equipped for life-long learning.

**Within this Key Area, the specific attributes and actions are:**

#### *Knowledge and Skills*

- effective transition and a continuum of learning;
- strategies for raising achievement and achieving excellence;
- models of learning and pupil development;
- strategies for creating a learning culture within the school;
- the effective use of new technologies to support learning and teaching;
- principles of quality learning, teaching and assessment;
- models of behaviour management;
- strategies for ensuring social inclusion, diversity and access;
- curriculum design and management.

#### *Personal Qualities and Values*

- exhibits determination to raise standards for all pupils;
- establishes a learning community which supports effective learning and teaching based on the needs of individual pupils;
- demonstrates personal enthusiasm and commitment to the learning process;
- models principles of effective learning in their own practice as headteacher;
- engenders self-esteem and confidence;
- promotes and sustains positive relationships and behaviour;

- commits to high achievement and high expectations;
- recognises and celebrates pupil attainment outside academic and vocational areas.

### *Professional Characteristics*

- ensures entitlement to effective learning and teaching for all pupils;
- takes account of changes/reviews to the curriculum, assessment, examinations and qualifications;
- identifies and addresses pastoral needs;
- demonstrates and shares professional knowledge of the principles and practice of effective learning and teaching;
- engages in professional conversation and debate about curriculum, learning, teaching and assessment issues;
- initiates and supports action-based research and debate about effective learning and teaching and develops relevant strategies for managing performance;
- conducts an honest self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses in learning and teaching;
- acknowledges excellence and challenges poor performance;
- recognises the contribution which activities outside the classroom can make to social inclusion and lifelong learning.

### *Actions*

- ensures a consistent and continual school-wide focus on pupils' achievement;
- ensures that both school and classroom climates promote effective learning and teaching for all;
- ensures the equity of academic, vocational and experiential learning routes;
- places learning at the centre of strategic planning and resource management;
- actively engages in the securing of social inclusion for all pupils with a view to meeting their individual learning needs;
- enables pupils to develop independence and to acquire thinking and learning skills;

- establishes creative, responsive and effective approaches to learning and teaching in every subject to meet and support the aims of the school;
- uses data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every child's learning and to focus teaching;
- ensures an ethos of challenge and support where all pupils can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning;
- demonstrates and articulates consistently high expectations and sets stretching targets for the whole school community;
- implements strategies which secure high standards of behaviour and attendance;
- determines, organises and implements the curriculum;
- ensures that the curriculum promotes Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig and satisfies the requirements of the National Curriculum in Wales;
- ensures effective assessment procedures, including assessment for learning;
- takes a strategic role in the development of new technologies to enhance and extend the learning experiences of pupils and the teaching capabilities of teachers;
- monitors and evaluates the curriculum and its assessment and identifies and acts on areas for improvement;
- maintains a high visibility around the school and devotes considerable time to interaction with pupils, staff and parents.

### 3.3 Key Area 3 – Developing & Working with Others

Effective relationships are particularly important in headship as headteachers work with the whole school community. Headship involves building a professional learning community which enables all to achieve. Through performance management and effective continuing professional development, the headteacher enables all staff to achieve high standards. Headteachers should be committed to their own continuing professional development in order to equip themselves with the capacity to deal with the complexity of their role and the range of leadership skills and actions required of them.

**Within this Key Area, the specific attributes and actions are:**

#### *Knowledge and Skills*

- significance of interpersonal relationships, adult learning and models of continuing professional development (CPD);
- strategies to promote self and team development;
- the professional and pastoral needs and aspirations of all members of staff;
- the relationship between CPD and sustained school improvement.

#### *Personal Qualities and Values*

- promotes collegiality;
- develops the trust and support of staff;
- inspires, motivates and challenges others;
- manages emotions and performance well under pressure;
- reflects upon their own leadership and the leadership and professional practice of others in the school.

#### *Professional Characteristics*

- recognises and celebrates good practice;
- adopts different leadership styles as appropriate;
- distributes leadership responsibilities;
- undertakes the role of mentor and coach when appropriate;
- fosters an open, fair and equitable culture in the school;
- develops, empowers and sustains effective teams;



- collaborates and networks with others, within and beyond the school;
- gives and receives effective feedback to improve personal performance;
- works effectively with the governing body to fulfil the school's mission;
- makes timely and confident decisions within a collegial culture.

### Actions

- treats people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school climate;
- shares and distributes leadership, builds teams and works co-operatively within and outside the school to achieve school goals and objectives;
- creates an environment in which others can grow professionally;
- develops and nurtures leadership potential in others to build the leadership capacity of the school;
- builds a collaborative learning culture within the school and actively engages with other educational establishments to build effective learning communities;
- ensures that the school contributes, where appropriate, to the training of future teachers and other adults who work with pupils;
- develops and maintains effective strategies and procedures for staff induction, early and continuous professional development and performance review;
- ensures effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by teams and individuals, providing clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities;
- acknowledges and celebrates the responsibilities and achievements of individuals and teams;
- develops and maintains a climate of high expectations for self and others and takes appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory;
- regularly reviews and reflects on his or her own practice, sets personal targets and takes responsibility for personal development;
- has regard for own workload and that of others to ensure a work/life balance.

### 3.4 Key Area 4 - Managing the School

Headteachers need to provide effective organisation and management within the school they lead. Headteachers should ensure that the school and the people and resources within it are organised and managed to provide an efficient, effective and safe learning environment. The headteacher should implement effective processes to develop and review policies and plans and ensure the effective and efficient use of available resources and finance.

Within this Key Area, the specific attributes and actions are:

#### *Knowledge and Skills*

- legal issues relating to managing a school including Child Protection; Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Race Relations, Disability and Human Rights legislation, Employment Law;
- models of organisations and principles of organisational development;
- principles of school improvement;
- project management techniques;
- strategic financial planning, budgetary management and principles of best value;
- human resource management, governance, security and access issues relating to the diverse use of school facilities to create a safe, secure environment for all;
- use of new technologies to enhance organisational effectiveness;
- future development of school buildings and facilities.

#### *Personal Qualities and Values*

- thinks creatively to anticipate and solve problems;
- maintains an awareness of the school's overall situation and direction;
- creates a safe and attractive school environment;
- analyses risks effectively;
- demonstrates principles of best value.

### *Professional Characteristics*

- develops and sustains a healthy school environment;
- establishes and sustains appropriate management structures and systems;
- manages the school efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis;
- prioritises, plans and organises themselves and others;
- uses informed professional judgement to make management and organisational decisions.

### *Actions*

- ensures that the professional duties and conditions of employment as set out in the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and other statutory requirements, including those for the headteacher, are fulfilled;
- produces and implements clear, evidence-based improvement plans and polices for the development of the school and its facilities;
- ensures that policies and practices take account of national and local circumstances, policies and initiatives;
- builds, remodels and maintains organisational structures and systems which distribute leadership and enable the school to run efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis;
- monitors, evaluates and reviews the effects of school policies, priorities and targets in practice;
- acts upon the outcomes of school self-evaluation and external inspection by Estyn to target school improvement efforts;
- uses information and data from within and outside the school to inform decision making;
- makes effective use of the support and challenge provided by the LEA and other relevant bodies;
- manages the school's financial and human resources effectively and efficiently to achieve the school's education priorities and goals;
- recruits, retains and deploys staff appropriately and manages their workload to achieve the vision and goals of the school;
- manages and organises the school environment efficiently and effectively to ensure that it meets the needs of the curriculum and health and safety regulations;

- develops and enhances the school fabric and environment to better meet the needs of learners;
- ensures that the range, quality and use of all available resources is monitored, evaluated and reviewed to improve the quality of education for all pupils and to secure value for money.

### 3.5 Key Area 5 - Securing Accountability

Headteachers are accountable to the governing body for the management of the school, its environment and all its work. The headteacher is accountable to the governing body, pupils, parents, governors and the LEA for the quality of education achieved by the school and has a professional responsibility to the whole community. Additionally, headteachers are responsible for ensuring collective responsibility in order that all members of the school community accept they are accountable for the contribution they make to the school's outcomes.

**Within this Key Area, the specific attributes and actions are:**

#### *Knowledge and Skills*

- statutory educational frameworks, including school governance;
- public service policy and accountability frameworks including School/LEA relations and multi-agency working;
- the use of a range of evidence, including performance data, to support, monitor, evaluate and improve aspects of school life, including challenging poor performance;
- the principles and practices of quality assurance systems including school review, self-evaluation, external inspection by Estyn, performance management and LEA initiatives;
- stakeholder and community engagement in, and accountability for, the success and celebration of the school's performance, including the role of the governors and the school council.

#### *Personal Qualities and Values*

- ensures individual, team and whole-school accountability for pupil learning outcomes;
- secures the trust of stakeholders, particularly governors, parents and pupils;
- supports the role of the school council.

#### *Professional Characteristics*

- works with the Governing Body to manage the school's finances and resources;
- demonstrates awareness of national and local developments;
- engages the school community in the systematic and rigorous self-evaluation of the work of the school;

- encourages a reflective climate to promote school improvement;
- collects and acts upon a rich set of data to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school;
- combines the outcomes of regular school self-review and self-evaluation with external evaluations in order to develop the school.

### *Actions*

- ensures individual staff accountability is clearly defined, understood and agreed and is subject to rigorous internal and external review and self evaluation;
- works with the governing body so that it is able to meet its responsibilities for securing effective learning and teaching and improved standards of achievement;
- develops and presents a coherent, understandable and accurate account of the school's performance to a range of audiences including parents and governors.

### 3.6 Key Area 6 - Strengthening the Community Focus

Headteachers should be aware that improvements in the school and in the community are interdependent and rely upon effective collaboration between all interested parties. Headteachers should encourage and engage in collaboration with other schools and organisations to bring positive benefits to the school and share its expertise. In this area of headship, headteachers will need to secure the involvement and support of those outside the school.

**Within this Key Area, the specific attributes and actions are:**

#### *Knowledge and Skills*

- rich and diverse resources within the local community – both human and physical;
- the wider curriculum beyond school and the opportunities it provides for pupils and the school community;
- models of school, home, community and business partnerships;
- importance of creating internal and external networks through collaboration;
- cross phase working and transition issues;
- strategies which encourage parents and/or carers to support their children's learning;
- micro and macro political influences in school, community, local and national contexts.

#### *Personal Qualities and Values*

- works with other agencies for the wellbeing of pupils and their families;
- involves parents and the community in supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision;
- recognises and takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's communities;
- maintains good external relations.

#### *Professional Characteristics*

- ensures that the school plays its full part in community life and contributes to lifelong learning;

- builds and maintains effective relationships with parents, partners and the community to enhance the education for all pupils;
- ensures networking and collaboration between schools, other learning providers and other services.

### *Actions*

- establishes and builds partnerships with other schools on issues such as transition, staff development and school improvement and shares best practice with other schools;
- builds a school climate and learning culture which takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's community;
- ensures that the school plays a productive role as a member of its local, national and global communities;
- creates and promotes positive strategies for developing good race relations and dealing with racial harassment;
- promotes appropriate attitudes towards disability;
- ensures that the school plays a central role in the community;
- develops citizenship in pupils so that they make a positive contribution to local and wider communities;
- collaborates with other agencies, including the LEA, in providing for the intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, physical and cultural wellbeing of pupils and their families;
- creates and maintains an effective partnership with parents, guardians and carers to support and improve pupils' achievement and personal development.