

# ambitious, excellent schools

standard for headship – november 2005

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CHOICE



ACCOUNTABILITY

OPPORTUNITY

LEADERSHIP

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## 1. The role of the headteacher:

1.1 The headteacher acts as the leading professional in a school and as an officer of the local authority. He/she provides appropriate vision, leadership and direction to ensure high standards of education for all the children and young people in their care so that they can become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. To achieve this, the headteacher works with and is accountable to others to ensure that the school is organised and managed to meet its aims and targets, and is a creative, disciplined learning environment. In so doing, the headteacher works with a range of others - staff, children and young people, parents, local community members, voluntary organisations, local authority officers and other agencies involved in services for children and young people and their families. Each school will present different challenges reflecting the school's circumstances and the communities they serve.

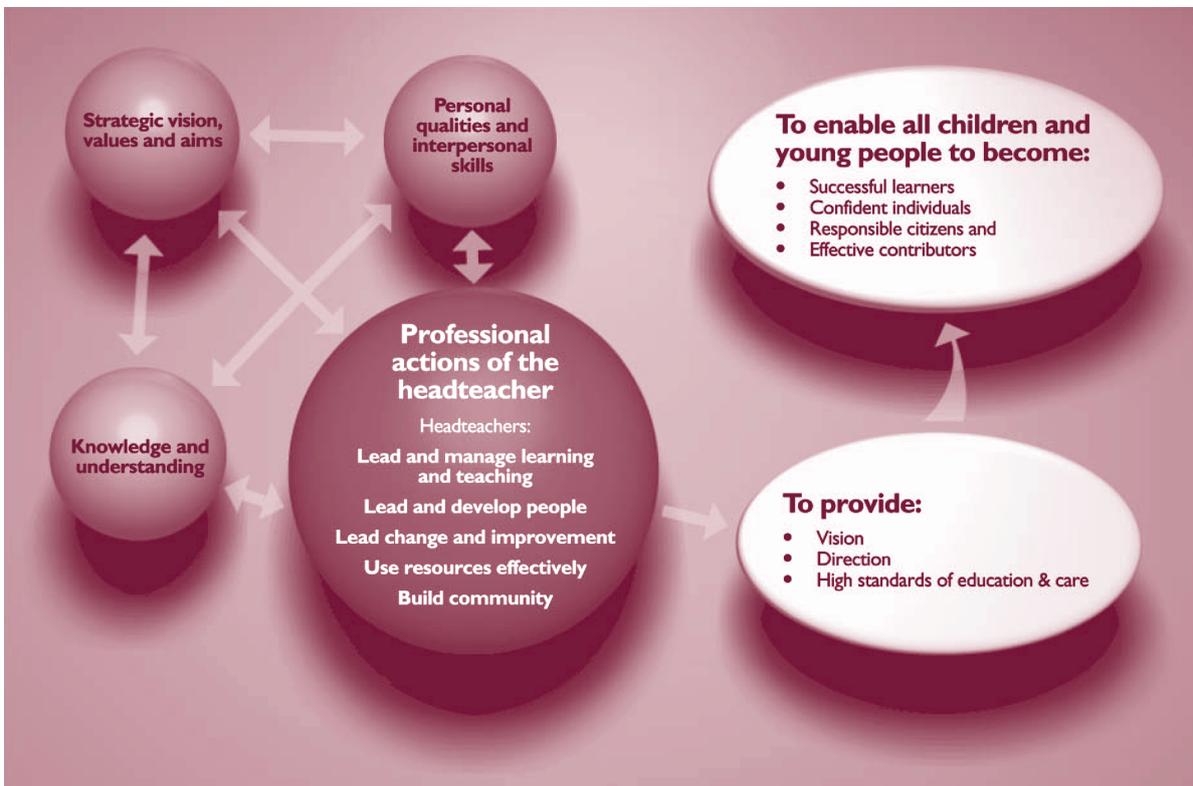
## 2. The Standard for Headship:

2.1 The purpose of this Standard is to define the leadership and management capabilities of headteachers. It defines the professional actions required of effective headteachers, acknowledges the changing context in which they operate and takes account of the many challenges which they face. It serves to inform, challenge and enthuse headteachers, and those aspiring to headship, and to offer a template against which they can match their experiences and skills in order to determine their strengths and areas for development.

2.2 The Standard analyses the role of the headteacher into **Professional actions**, and three essential elements which are:

- Strategic vision, values and aims,
- Knowledge and understanding, and
- Personal qualities and interpersonal skills.

2.3 Although the professional actions and the essential elements are listed and detailed separately, it is important to emphasise that in professional practice, they are always fully interdependent. How they interdepend in practice will reflect the individual contexts in which different headteachers work. The diagram below outlines the relationship between the elements of the Standard and the central responsibilities of the headteacher.



### 3. Professional actions of the headteacher:

3.1 This element outlines the main areas of professional action for headteachers. If headteachers are to be effective, they require **both to lead and to manage**. Leadership develops shared vision, inspires and creates commitment and embraces risk and innovation. Management develops systems which limit uncertainty, even out differences, and improve consistency and predictability in delivering the service.

3.2 Five main areas of professional action are identified below by the Standard. However in practice most actions and decisions taken by headteachers involve several areas at the same time. It would be difficult, for example, to lead learning and teaching without also leading people; difficult to lead change and improvement without also using resources effectively. The outline of each of the five areas included here in the Standard is further described through the examples in the Illustrations section. The order in which they are described does not imply any particular hierarchy or priority.

3.3 The effective practice of headship involves using the three essential elements – strategic vision, values and aims; knowledge and understanding; and personal qualities and interpersonal skills – in making appropriate decisions and taking the appropriate action in specific school situations to enable children and young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

3.4 Headteachers require to work within a broad range of accountabilities to achieve school goals in order to serve the best interests of children and young people. Headteachers:

#### 3.4.1 Lead and manage learning and teaching

Ensuring that effective learning and teaching takes place is a central responsibility of headship. Headteachers develop a culture of respect and good behaviour, create an appropriate ethos, set high expectations, support and encourage good practice and regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of learning in the school. They embrace the principles of inclusion, have an understanding of the impact of discrimination and poverty, develop strategies to counter these and provide pastoral care to children and young people. They offer effective leadership and management of the overall curriculum, to ensure that school based decisions are in accordance with the general principles of good curriculum design outlined in “A Curriculum for Excellence”.

### **3.4.2 Lead and develop people**

Headteachers promote ambition; demonstrate a clear commitment to collegiality and to developing, empowering and supporting effective teams and individuals. This includes building school capacity by developing leadership in others. By engaging with those in the school community and beyond, they build a learning community which supports achievement and attainment. In taking these actions, headteachers work within the structure of employment legislation, national and local agreements, and policies governing employment.

### **3.4.3 Lead change and improvement**

Headteachers support and maintain existing good practice and encourage and promote constant improvement in the development of children and young people. They demonstrate personal commitment to continuous improvement through self evaluation, together with skills in problem solving, creative thinking, strategic planning, in implementing change, in the use of quality assurance strategies to judge the need for and effectiveness of change, and in providing support for staff, children and young people and parents.

### **3.4.4 Use resources effectively**

Headteachers make best strategic and operational use of available resources to create, maintain and monitor an appropriate learning environment for effective learning and teaching, and to support continuous improvement. This should include appropriate delegation of tasks to members of the senior management team and other staff. In taking these actions, headteachers take due account of audit, child safety, health and safety requirements, human resource management and other legislative and policy requirements in relation to public service and public spending.

### **3.4.5 Build community**

Headteachers develop and maintain partnerships with parents, children and young people, other services and agencies and in doing so extend the educational vision to embrace an agenda of lifelong learning. They create a culture of respect and inclusion and a common commitment to the broader community and to the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral, social and cultural wellbeing of children and young people and their families.



## 4. Essential elements:

*The next three elements in the Standard are expressed through effective professional action. Different headteachers in different situations call on different 'blends' of these elements.*

### 4.1 Strategic vision, values and aims

This element is concerned with the headteacher's professional values and commitment to children and young people, to equality of opportunity, to ethical practice, democratic values and to lifelong learning. Headteachers exemplify in their personal and professional life, and in the way they lead the learning community, the vision and ethos they seek to develop throughout the school.

#### 4.1.1 Vision and standards:

Headteachers lead in the creation of a shared strategic vision and aim for the school, which inspire and motivate children and young people, staff and all members of the school community and its partners and sets high standards for every learner.

#### 4.1.2. Integrity and ethical practice:

Headteachers behave with integrity and articulate and exemplify an ethical perspective in relation to their own and the school's practice and organisation.

#### 4.1.3 Democratic values:

Headteachers work with children and young people, staff, parents and others to promote participative citizenship, inclusion, enterprise, democratic values and a culture of respect within the school community and beyond.

#### 4.1.4 Learning for life:

Headteachers model their commitment to learning for life as the school's 'leading learner'.

### 4.2 Knowledge and understanding

This element identifies the knowledge and understanding of contemporary developments in teaching and learning, education, schools, schooling and society which are required by successful headteachers.

#### 4.2.1 Learning and teaching:

Headteachers apply an up to date knowledge and understanding of research in learning and teaching and its implications for improving practice, and need to be aware of quality assurance strategies.

#### 4.2.2 Education policy, schools and schooling:

Headteachers apply a knowledge and critical understanding of contemporary developments in education policy, schools and schooling, including the vision of what integrated children and young people's services should offer.

**4.2.3. Social and environmental trends and developments:**

Headteachers apply a knowledge and understanding of contemporary developments in society (including trends and changes in family patterns, work patterns, the media, leisure and politics), in the environment and in the wider global community.

**4.2.4 Leadership and management:**

Headteachers apply a knowledge and understanding of leadership concepts and practice, and of strategic and operational management.

**4.3 Personal qualities and interpersonal skills**

This element describes a range of personal qualities and interpersonal skills on which headteachers draw in leading effectively. For maximum impact, successful headteachers will exercise these skills in combinations appropriate to the context in which they are leading.

**4.3.1 Demonstrating self-awareness and inspiring and motivating others:**

Headteachers regularly review their practice and implement change in their leadership and management approaches. They self manage effectively. They build and sustain personal credibility by teaching effectively. They display confidence and courage in the way they deal with criticism and conflict, and work to create a positive atmosphere within the educational community.

**4.3.2 Judging wisely and deciding appropriately:**

Headteachers define problems clearly and take a positive solution-focussed approach to their resolution. They know how and when to make decisions and use evidence and information to support and inform their judgements.

**4.3.3 Communicating effectively:**

Headteachers relate well to children and young people. They are effective communicators within the school and the wider community and build effective relationships. They listen well, give clear expression to their ideas and feelings in person, give feedback well and can shape effective organisational communication. They are comfortable using a variety of modern media.

**4.3.4 Showing political insight:**

Headteachers have a good understanding of the relationship between schools and society. They understand and take account of the political and social context of educational policy.



## 5. Illustrations:

**5.1 Illustrative examples in italicised text below serve to indicate actions and areas of knowledge appropriate to the role of headteacher. They are not exhaustive, nor are they appropriate to all headteachers in all situations, and so they should not be used as a checklist.**

### 5.2 Professional actions

#### 5.2.1 Leading and managing learning and teaching:

*For example, headteachers ensure a consistent school-wide focus on children and young people's attainment and achievement, and that learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management. They promote an ethos of care, achievement, respect and inclusion, a safe, efficient and effective learning environment, high standards of behaviour and attendance and a culture of challenge and support to enable children and young people and staff to achieve success and become engaged with their own learning. They demonstrate and articulate consistently high expectations and set stretching targets for the whole school community, develop effective systems for managing learning and teaching and monitor, evaluate and review classroom practice and experience.*

#### 5.2.2 Leading and developing people:

*For example, headteachers share leadership, build teams and work co-operatively to achieve school goals. They build alliances within and beyond the school, treat people fairly and with respect to create and maintain a positive culture. They develop the trust and support of staff, and develop and maintain effective strategies for staff induction, professional review and development, staff welfare and career development. This includes the development of staff by coaching and mentoring. They ensure individual and team accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed, and are subject to review and evaluation, support staff to achieve high standards, and take appropriate actions when performance is unsatisfactory. They consult, delegate, empower and trust others, recognise and appreciate a variety of talents and approaches to problem-solving and task completion, build a participatory ethos and involve children and young people in decision-making processes. They manage own workload and support others to ensure an appropriate work-life balance.*

**5.2.3 Leading change and improvement:**

*For example, headteachers are self critical, seek continuous improvement, work collaboratively with other services and agencies involved with children and young people and their families. They establish creative, innovative approaches to develop curricula which enable all children and young people to realise their individual potential and take a strategic role in the use of new technologies to enhance and extend learning.*

**5.2.4 Using resources effectively:**

*For example, headteachers manage available resources to support effective learning and teaching, negotiate and secure agreement for budgets with school staff, integrate the budget plan with school and staff development plans. They monitor and evaluate the use of resources, including staff, to support implementation of school policies and secure value for money, and monitor and control spending within agreed budgets.*

**5.2.5 Building community:**

*For example, headteachers develop and maintain positive and professional relationships with all those associated with the school community, build effective partnerships with all those working with children and young people and their families in the local community, and develop and maintain structures for effective liaison and consultation. This will include creating a culture of respect which is inclusive of all in the community.*

**5.3 Strategic vision, values and aims****5.3.1 Vision and standards:**

*For example, headteachers ensure the school vision is clearly articulated, shared, understood and implemented, taking account of the school's context and culture. They create a shared culture to motivate others and develop a positive climate for success, show commitment to raising standards of educational attainment and achievement for all in school, and use evidence to evaluate the practice of themselves and others.*

**5.3.2 Integrity and ethical practice:**

*For example, headteachers promote equality, social justice and inclusion, exemplify consistent educational values in their behaviour and translate these into practical aims which engage the whole school community in relating their practice to educational aims and values. They understand the ethical and evaluative issues in education, hold, articulate and argue for professionally defensible educational values and act as a model of a leading professional within the school.*



**5.3.3 Democratic values:**

*For example, headteachers set expectations of high levels of respect for self and others, ensure a focus on the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democratic society, and promote collegiality at all levels within the school.*

**5.3.4 Learning for life:**

For example, headteachers promote creativity and ambition, and seek to equip children and young people with the skills attitudes and expectations necessary to prosper in a changing society. They provide a rationale for the way in which they operate, taking account of a variety of perspectives, regularly review their own practice, and identify development needs and set targets.

## 5.4 Knowledge and understanding

**5.4.1 Learning and teaching:**

*For example, headteachers have knowledge and understanding of relevant educational research. They evaluate new methodologies and strategies to improve learning, including the use of new technologies.*

**5.4.2 Education policy, schools and schooling:**

*For example, headteachers have good knowledge and understanding of local, national and global priorities, the roles, functions and structures of the local authorities, the Scottish Executive and other national bodies, the legislative and policy frameworks which govern education at national, local and school levels. They know and understand quality in education processes and quality assurance systems, strategies for raising achievement and achieving excellence, principles and practice in relation to leadership and leading change, and issues relating to inclusion.*

**5.4.3 Social and environmental trends and developments:**

*For example, headteachers remain aware of social trends and changes as they impact on education. They take account of such issues in planning and implementing change.*

**5.4.4 Leadership and management:**

*For example, headteachers have good knowledge and understanding of school self-evaluation and improvement strategies, tools for data collection and analysis and the use of evidence to support sound judgement. They know and understand the range of external influences which have an impact on strategic and operational planning.*

## 5.5 Personal qualities and interpersonal skills

### **5.5.1 Demonstrating self-awareness and inspiring and motivating others**

*For example, headteachers display self-awareness, confront difficult issues and deal positively with criticism, are assertive and calm in a crisis and defuse potential problems. They understand issues from the point of view of others including children and young people and value the views and feelings of others and take them into account. They demonstrate consistency and optimism, remain interested, committed, enthusiastic and well-informed, have a sense of humour and encourage creativity and participation.*

### **5.5.2 Judging wisely and deciding appropriately**

*For example, headteachers use effective decision-making processes and problem-solving techniques (personally and with others), analyse risks and problems effectively, think strategically, remain flexible and open to new ideas. They take account of others' views as well as own experience, use convergent and divergent thinking, generate different ways of achieving aims, see and use opportunities and avoid threat.*

### **5.5.3 Communicating effectively**

*For example, headteachers listen well and invite feedback, provide good and timely information in an appropriate format to children and young people, staff, parents, local communities, other professionals, local authorities, etc. They understand how to maintain good public relations and deal with PR issues, the media and the press.*

### **5.5.4 Showing political insight**

*For example, headteachers understand issues relating to power and influence, are aware of their own use of power and personal biases and those of others, and understand the political implications of their actions.*



# appendix

The publication of the original “Standard for Headship” in 1998 and the related development of the Scottish Qualification for Headship, have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of leadership in Scottish schools. Since then, a number of other publications have developed our understanding of the leadership role of headteachers. These include:

Ambitious, Excellent Schools <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/aesaa-00.asp>

Improving Leadership in Scottish Schools

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/deleted/library3/education/ilss-00.asp>

A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/tp21a-00.asp>

Standards in Scotland’s Schools Act 2000

<http://www.scotland-legislation.hmso.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2000/20000006.htm>

The two other professional Standards for the teaching profession in Scotland (Standard for Full Registration and Standard for Chartered Teacher)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/sfct-00.asp>

<http://www.gtcs.org.uk/probation.aspx?MenuItemID=456&ID=&selection=3>

CPD for Educational Leaders <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/cpdel-00.asp>

School Leadership and Collegiality

<http://www.scottishcouncils.org/tact/TAC%20Team%20briefing%20papers/Forms/AllItems.htm>

How Good Is Our School (second edition)

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/documents/publication/cd/frames.htm>

Curriculum for Excellence <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/cerv-00.asp>

Guidance for Integrated Children’s Services Plans 2005-2008 (SEED November 2004)



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