

## **National Standards for Headteachers in focus**

### **Small schools**

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## Introduction

Five primary headteachers from small schools met to create this focus piece on the National Standards for Headteachers. What follows is a composite of their experiences and of how they perceive their role in relation to the opportunities and challenges of working in a small primary school.

## Shaping the future

Critical to the role of headship is working with the governing body and others to create a shared vision and strategic plan which inspires and motivates pupils, staff and all other members of the school community. This vision should express core educational values and moral purpose and be inclusive of stakeholders' values and beliefs. The strategic planning process is critical to sustaining school improvement and ensuring that the school moves forward for the benefit of its pupils. (National Standards for Headteachers, DfES 2004: 6)

### Example 1: School assemblies

In a small school it is easier to involve all pupils in the kinds of debates, discussions and activities that might take place, through a more formal democratic process, in a school council in a larger school. Assembly provides one forum for this.

In one school the headteacher consciously plans the programme of assemblies to address whole school issues, with a view to engaging the children in the process of development and improvement. All the children are involved and, although not all members of staff will attend all assemblies, their part in the process of transformation is ensured through staff meetings. Parents, governors and others are kept informed about the issues through meetings and newsletters and they too are engaged in discussions through other means.

Assemblies provide the headteacher with the opportunity for direct and frequent engagement with all the children in the school. Key messages are not compromised and the impact of decision making is rapid.

In this example, the headteacher was keen to establish the principle that everyone is involved in and shares the responsibility for bringing about improvements within the school. Consultation is a means of achieving this, enabling everyone to feel that they have had a part to play in the decision-making process and a role in bringing about agreed changes to practice. Through assemblies, every child has a voice.

In this example, over recent months, lunchtime and playtime rules have been agreed, etiquette has been established for bringing water bottles to school and consideration has been given to ways in which the health and safety of all pupils can be ensured. The result is not merely that small agreements on particular aspects of school life are reached and implemented. More importantly, the process of consultation itself has helped to create an ethos within the school wherein all members of the school know that their opinions are valued and where everyone shares a sense of ownership for the school and its practices.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- ways to build, communicate and implement a shared vision
- strategic planning processes

- strategies for communication both within and beyond the school
- leading change, creativity and innovation.

Is committed to:

- a collaborative school vision of excellence and equity that sets high standards for every pupil
- the setting and achieving of ambitious, challenging goals and targets
- inclusion and the ability and right of all to be the best they can be.

Is able to:

- think strategically, build and communicate a coherent vision in a range of compelling ways
- inspire, challenge and motivate others to carry the vision forward
- model the values and vision of the school.

Actions:

- ensures the vision for the school is clearly articulated, shared, understood and acted on effectively by all
- works within the school community to translate the vision into agreed objectives and operational plans that will promote and sustain school improvement
- demonstrates the vision and values in everyday work and practice
- motivates and works with others to create a shared culture and positive climate
- ensures that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the school.

## **Example 2: School improvement planning**

On appointment one headteacher found that the children were perceived by many within the school and wider community as “running the school”, with behaviour characterised by deeply engrained, historical patterns of low-level disruption. Staff, it seemed, felt as though they were at “the bottom of the pecking order”.

Faced with the challenge of re-establishing their authority, this headteacher decided to involve the members of the school community, staff, governors, parents and pupils in a process of consultation about behaviour and discipline, with a view to agreeing a school-wide policy and improving the behavioural context for learning.

This process focused around two questions, asked of staff and children:

- What bothers you?
- What improvements would you like to see?

A code of conduct was drawn up with accompanying rewards and sanctions. The children enjoyed coming up with a long list of sanctions, some of which were clearly inadmissible, although the staff might have enjoyed having them in place! Their work was displayed on parents’ evening and comments invited. It was also discussed at a governors’ meeting. Amendments were made and the final result was distributed to all members of the school community. The result of establishing clear expectations of behaviour and an agreed whole school approach to dealing with poor behaviour has been a gradual improvement over time.

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- ensures that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the school.

### **Example 3: Designing a new school logo**

Involving all members of the school community in the life of the school is easier when the school is small. In addition, the headteacher is involved in almost everything that goes on. Consequently, she is able to use a variety of different events and projects to help to create a shared vision for the school and shared values on which its work can be based.

One example arose from the desire of governors to have a logo for the school. The chair of governors wanted a shield. The headteacher did not! Everyone within the school and its wider community was invited to take part in the search for and design of a logo that would represent the school and what it stood for. Community members, children, parents, grandparents, staff and others quickly engaged with the project. There was a high level of involvement and discussions focused around the symbolic representation of the school's identity. Designs were submitted and the children evaluated them. A final decision was reached through a vote by children and parents.

Children, parents, grandparents, staff and others had taken part in a process that helped to establish a sense of shared ownership of and responsibility for the school.

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- strategies for communication both within and beyond the school
- leading change, creativity and innovation.

Is committed to:

- a collaborative school vision of excellence and equity that sets high standards for every pupil
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- motivates and works with others to create a shared culture and positive climate
- ensures that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the school.

## Leading learning and teaching

Headteachers have a central responsibility for raising the quality of teaching and learning and for pupils' achievement. This implies setting high expectations and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning outcomes. A successful learning culture will enable pupils to become effective, enthusiastic, independent learners, committed to life-long learning. (National Standards for Headteachers, DfES 2004: 7)

### Example 1: Personalised data recording

While larger schools might use commercial systems to record pupil progress, smaller schools, because of the small size of their cohorts, have the option of designing their own recording systems. Small numbers and variations in cohort size means that they cannot easily identify trends relating, for example, to improvements over time or issues to do with gender or ethnicity. However, they are able to gain a detailed knowledge of individual pupils.

In one school, the headteacher began the process of reviewing record-keeping systems with teaching staff by asking:

- What has been happening?

- Are you happy with it?
- Where do we need to go with it?

Through discussion they have developed an approach to recording pupil progress that includes all the pupils on a single spreadsheet. This will produce graphs and charts showing what they want to know at an individual and a school-wide level. The data is used for staff discussion and is also shared, anonymously, with governors. It has enabled the development of a personalised target-setting process. The data is used to help to set and review targets in termly discussions with children and parents.

The result has been a more vigorous process of assessment and target setting. It has also allowed the natural development of personalised learning because staff, children and parents have a more intimate knowledge of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses and therefore of their learning needs.

Pupils have their own personalised target-setting book and like to know what the next step on their learning journey will be. They are asked to reflect on what they have learned in any lesson (which may or may not be related to the lesson objectives) and to consider how they learn best. They are supported in identifying their own preferred learning styles and encouraged to take these into account when approaching their work. Their comments are taken into account too, so that when one child wrote in her personal learning profile, 'I would like some time every day when I could choose what to learn', steps were taken to provide this opportunity.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- strategies for raising achievement and achieving excellence
- the development of a personalised learning culture within the school
- models of learning and teaching
- principles of effective teaching and assessment for learning
- strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access
- tools for data collection and analysis
- monitoring and evaluating performance.

Is committed to:

- raising standards for all in the pursuit of excellence
- the continuing learning of all members of the school community
- choice and flexibility in learning to meet the personalised learning needs of every child.

Is able to:

- access, analyse and interpret information
- initiate and support research and debate about effective learning and teaching and develop relevant strategies for performance improvement.

Actions:

- ensures a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on pupils' achievement, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every child's learning
- establishes creative, responsive and effective approaches to learning and teaching
- ensures a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all pupils can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning
- demonstrates and articulates high expectations and sets stretching targets for the whole school community
- implements an effective assessment framework.

### **Example 2: Whole school monitoring**

In a small school, where everybody knows everybody, it is possible to overlook the need for systematic monitoring of performance and standards. One headteacher has introduced a regular monitoring activity to overcome the tendency among teaching staff to assume that knowing a child means having an accurate opinion of his or her level of achievement.

On a routine basis staff members bring together examples of work from all ages and abilities in a particular curriculum area and work together to reach decisions about the standard reached. This moderating process helps to alert them to individual and school-wide needs. It is supported by the headteacher's commitment to working with colleagues in the classroom, for example, to monitor the progress of gifted children.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- strategies for raising achievement and achieving excellence
- the development of a personalised learning culture within the school
- models of learning and teaching
- principles of effective teaching and assessment for learning
- monitoring and evaluating performance
- school self-evaluation
- strategies for developing effective teachers.

Is committed to:

- raising standards for all in the pursuit of excellence
- the continuing learning of all members of the school community
- the entitlement of all pupils to effective teaching and learning.

Is able to:

- demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning
- access, analyse and interpret information
- acknowledge excellence and challenge poor performance across the school.

Actions:

- establishes creative, responsive and effective approaches to learning and teaching
- ensures a culture and ethos of challenge and support where all pupils can achieve success and become engaged in their own learning
- demonstrates and articulates high expectations and sets stretching targets for the whole school community
- monitors, evaluates and reviews classroom practice and promotes improvement strategies
- challenges underperformance at all levels and ensures corrective action and follow-up.

## **Developing self and working with others**

Effective relationships and communication are important in headship as headteachers work with and through others. Effective headteachers manage themselves and their relationships well. Headship is about building a professional learning community which enables others to achieve. Through performance management and effective continuing professional development practice, the headteacher supports all staff to achieve standards. To equip themselves with the capacity to deal with the complexity of the role and the range of leadership skills and actions required of them, headteachers should be committed to their own continuing professional development. (National Standards for Headteachers, DfES 2004: 8)

### **Example 1: Whole school performance management targets**

In a small school it is possible for everyone to have the same teaching and learning targets. In one school this has enabled a whole school focus on, for example, Information Communication Technology (ICT), the Physical Arts and on making classrooms more active and democratic.

In-service training at a whole school level supports staff in achieving the desired improvements in performance and they are enabled to learn with and from each other. The headteacher buys additional in-service training days, using supply cover for all classes, to enhance this process. The impact of learning is thus maximised.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- the significance of interpersonal relationships, adult learning and models of continuing professional development (CPD)
- strategies to promote individual and team development
- building and sustaining a learning community
- the relationship between managing performance, CPD and sustained school improvement.

Is committed to:

- effective working relationships
- effective teamworking
- CPD for self and all others within the school.



Is able to:

- develop, empower and sustain individuals and teams
- collaborate and network with others within the school
- challenge, influence and motivate others to attain high goals
- give and receive effective feedback and act to improve personal performance.

Actions:

- builds a collaborative learning culture within the school
- develops and maintains effective strategies and procedures for professional development and performance review
- develops and maintains a culture of high expectations for self and for others and takes appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory.

### **Example 2: Classroom observation**

Observing classroom practice as a means of monitoring and of learning is increasingly common in all schools. In a small school, however, it is likely to be less hierarchical in nature since all staff hold a medley of different responsibilities and therefore have to both give and receive feedback. They develop an intimate knowledge of one another's practice yet may find it difficult, in such a small group, to challenge one another.

Headteachers are often part of the teaching team, a class teacher alongside their colleagues. Their role in modelling a willingness to learn from others and in finding positive, supportive ways of challenging colleagues is critical to the success of this activity in bringing about sustained improvement.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- the significance of interpersonal relationships, adult learning and models of CPD
- strategies to promote individual and team development
- building and sustaining a learning community.

Is committed to:

- effective working relationships
- shared leadership
- effective teamworking
- CPD for self and others within the school.

Is able to:

- develop, empower and sustain individuals and teams
- challenge, influence and motivate others to attain high goals
- give and receive effective feedback and act to improve personal performance
- accept support from others including colleagues.

Actions:

- treats people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- builds a collaborative learning culture within the school
- develops and maintains effective strategies and procedures for professional development and performance review
- ensures effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by teams and individuals, ensuring clear delegation of tasks and devolution of responsibilities
- acknowledges the responsibilities and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams
- develops and maintains a culture of high expectations for self and for others and takes appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory
- regularly reviews own practice, sets personal targets and takes responsibility for own personal development.

### **Example 3: Joint planning meetings**

In a small school, the headteacher is likely to have a class teaching commitment and is therefore part of the teaching team in a way that is not typical of headteachers elsewhere.

One headteacher has established joint planning meetings with different members of staff taking the lead in foundation subjects. She, for example, leads on Personal, Social and Health Education and Geography. This enables staff members to develop common approaches to the curriculum and to teaching and learning. It draws on examples of good practice and on individual strengths, while also helping to compensate for any weaknesses. It provides opportunities for peer mentoring and for the induction of new staff. It ensures that all staff members are familiar with the curriculum throughout the school, enabling continuity.

At the same time it allows for flexibility in the deployment of staff. This is particularly important when numbers fluctuate, making changes in the organisation of classes and groups necessary at what is sometimes short notice. In addition, ways of differentiating the curriculum for children of different abilities and interests can be explored.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- strategies to promote individual and team development
- building and sustaining a learning community
- the impact of change on organisations and individuals.

Is committed to:

- effective working relationships
- shared leadership
- effective teamworking
- CPD for self and all others within the school.

Is able to:

- foster an open, fair, equitable culture
- develop, empower and sustain individuals and teams
- collaborate and network with others within the school
- challenge, influence and motivate others to attain high goals
- accept support from others including colleagues.

Actions:

- treats people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- builds a collaborative learning culture within the school
- develops and maintains effective strategies and procedures for staff induction
- ensures effective planning, allocation, support and evaluation of work undertaken by teams and individuals
- acknowledges the responsibilities and celebrates the achievements of individuals and teams
- develops and maintains a culture of high expectations for self and for others.

#### **Example 4: Dealing with conflict**

The management of conflict in a small school can make disproportionate demands on the headteacher. Dissension can have a big impact on relationships within the school as a whole and across the wider community. Whereas in a larger school, the headteacher may delegate responsibility for managing a difficult situation to others, or may have other senior leaders within the school with whom they can discuss the issues, in a small school the headteacher can be, and feel, very isolated. If they choose to involve another member of staff it can lead to a sense of some people 'being in the know' while others are excluded.

In handling conflict the headteacher is 'playing for higher stakes' in a small school where lack of sensitivity in dealing with the issues may upset the balance of working relationships within the school.

One headteacher, faced with such a situation, maintained confidentiality within the school community. Instead she turned, in the first instance, to a colleague headteacher for emotional support, understanding and advice. Later, when she felt it necessary to do so, she discussed the matter with the chair of governors.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- the significance of interpersonal relationships.

Is committed to:

- effective working relationships
- effective teamworking.

Is able to:

- foster an open, fair, equitable culture and manage conflict
- collaborate and network with others beyond the school
- accept support from others including colleagues, governors and the local education authority (LEA).

Actions:

- treats people fairly, equitably and with dignity and respect to create and maintain a positive school culture
- develops and maintains a culture of high expectations for self and for others and takes appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory.

### **Example 5: Brain gym**

While small staff groups can make it easier to reach decisions about new initiatives, it is also harder to delegate responsibility for seeing them through. There is a danger then that things get started but are not sustained.

One example was when teachers agreed, enthusiastically, to introduce brain gym to their classrooms. To support this initiative it was decided that, each week, an idea would be written on the board in the staff room. In practice, if the headteacher does not do this, it does not get done. "I beat myself up mentally," she said, "because it isn't being carried through". Even so she believes that it is necessary to take risks sometimes and to learn from them.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- strategies to promote individual and team development
- building and sustaining a learning community.

Is committed to:

- effective teamworking
- CPD for self and all others within the school.

Is able to:

- collaborate and network with others within the school.

Actions:

- builds a collaborative learning culture within the school
- regularly reviews own practice
- manages own workload and that of others to allow an appropriate work/life balance.

## **Managing the organisation**

Headteachers need to provide effective organisation and management of the school and seek ways of improving organisational structures and functions based on rigorous self-evaluation. 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. These management responsibilities imply the re-examination of the roles and responsibilities of those adults working in the school to build capacity across the workforce and ensure resources are deployed to achieve value for money. Headteachers should also seek to build successful organisations through effective collaborations with others. (National Standards for Headteachers, DfES 2004: 9)

### **Example 1: Shared leadership**

In large schools the process of self-evaluation and identification of development priorities is managed by the senior leadership team. In a small school members of the teaching staff in particular 'are effectively members of the senior leadership team', although most would not welcome that formal level of responsibility.

In the examples below, headteachers described this as shared leadership, "doing things together with the head as key prompter", rather than distributed leadership with its implicit notion of delegation and responsibility.

In one school, members of the teaching staff mind map ideas, the headteacher writes a draft school improvement plan and this is then discussed with other groups within the school. In another, teaching staff identify 'every possible issue', then work together to prioritise them, designing the school improvement plan as they go along. The headteacher is responsible for leading this process and monitoring progress, with the rest of the staff involved in regular review. A newly qualified teacher is as involved in the process as the deputy headteacher would be in a larger school.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- models of organisations and principles of organisational development
- principles and models of self-evaluation
- principles and strategies of school improvement
- project management for planning and implementing change
- policy creation, through consultation and review
- informed decision making
- strategic financial planning, budgetary management and principles of best value.

Is committed to:

- distributed leadership and management
- the sustaining of personal motivation and that of all staff
- collaborating with others in order to strengthen the school's organisational capacity.

Is able to:

- establish and sustain appropriate structures and systems
- delegate management tasks and monitor their implementation
- prioritise, plan and organise themselves and others
- make professional, managerial and organisational decisions based on informed judgements.

Actions:

- creates an organisational structure that reflects the school's values, and enables the management systems, structures and processes to work effectively in line with legal requirements
- produces and implements clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities.

### **Example 2: Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL)**

One headteacher learned an important lesson about project management as a result of the school's involvement in the SEAL project. Staff members had worked together to plan the implementation of the project, discussing ideas with enthusiasm. The headteacher assumed that they would carry out the agreed changes and trusted them to do so to a high standard.

In a larger school she might have delegated the responsibility for monitoring what was happening to a senior member of staff. In the event, "four weeks were wasted" before she realised that, while some members of staff had seen things through with commitment, others had not. She was challenged by events to be proactive in sustaining the motivation of staff and monitoring the implementation of change.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- principles and practice of earned autonomy
- principles and strategies of school improvement
- project management for planning and implementing change
- performance management.

Is committed to:

- the equitable management of staff and resources
- the sustaining of personal motivation and that of all staff.

Is able to:

- establish and sustain appropriate structures and systems
- prioritise, plan and organise themselves and others
- make professional, managerial and organisational decisions based on informed judgements
- think creatively to anticipate and solve problems.

Actions:

- recruits, retains and deploys staff appropriately and manages their workload to achieve the vision and goals of the school.

## **Securing accountability**

With values at the heart of their leadership, headteachers have a responsibility to the whole school community. In carrying out this responsibility, headteachers are accountable to a wide range of groups, particularly pupils, parents, carers, governors and the LEA. They are accountable for ensuring that pupils enjoy and benefit from a

high quality education, for promoting collective responsibility within the whole school community and for contributing to the education service more widely. Headteachers are legally and contractually accountable to the governing body for the school, its environment and all its work. (National Standards for Headteachers, DfES 2004: 10)

### **Example 1: Meeting special needs**

One headteacher recognises the responsibility for coordinating the work of a number of agencies in meeting the needs of a child with a physical disability and related learning difficulties. Termly meetings about his individual education plan and his annual review meeting are attended by herself, the special educational needs coordinator, the class teacher, the teacher assistant and representatives from health and social services.

An occupational therapist and a physiotherapist visit the school on a regular basis to work with the child and to advise members of the school staff on programmes that will enable his development. Challenges include finding activities that will promote his learning while he spends 45 minutes a day in a standing frame.

The school's accountabilities include:

- coordinating the multi-agency approach to meeting the child's needs
- ensuring access for visiting personnel, for example, occupational therapist, physiotherapist
- ensuring that programmes set up to meet the child's physical needs are carried through within the school day
- designing and implementing a programme that will meet his learning needs
- communicating with his parents.

In addition, the headteacher is responsible for assessing the impact of meeting this child's needs on the school's organisation, its finances and personnel. Arranging supply cover for four members of staff to attend multi-agency meetings has significant implications in a small school.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- public services policy and accountability frameworks, including self-evaluation and multi-agency working
- the contribution that education makes to developing, promoting and sustaining a fair and equitable society
- stakeholder and community engagement in, and accountability for, the success and celebration of the school's performance.

Is committed to:

- the school working effectively and efficiently towards the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development of all its pupils
- individual, team and whole school accountability for pupil learning outcomes.

Actions:

- develops a school ethos that enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes
- ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to rigorous review and evaluation.

### **Example 2: Personal accountability**

Headteachers in small schools carry a significant level of personal accountability in relation to everything that goes on within the school, from a child's lost shoes to the systems in place to meet a child's special needs.

In addition, those within the school community and, indeed, the wider community, very often expect to see and speak to the headteacher about any issues they wish to raise with the school.

In one example, parents of a child with Asperger's syndrome, considering that the school was not meeting his needs and that this was the reason for him self-harming at home, expected the headteacher to resolve the problem.

In another, the headteacher was criticised for not telling parents that a new enclosure was being built in the summer holidays for the foundation stage children.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- stakeholder and community engagement in, and accountability for, the success and celebration of the school's performance.

Is committed to:

- principles and practice of school self-evaluation
- the school working effectively and efficiently towards the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development of all its pupils
- individual, team and whole school accountability for pupil learning outcomes.

Is able to:

- engage the school community in the systematic and rigorous self-evaluation of the work of the school
- collect and use a rich set of data to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

Actions:

- develops a school ethos that enables everyone to work collaboratively, share knowledge and understanding, celebrate success and accept responsibility for outcomes
- ensures individual staff accountabilities are clearly defined, understood and agreed and are subject to rigorous review and evaluation.



## Strengthening community

Schools exist in a distinctive social context, which has a direct impact on what happens inside the school. School leadership should commit to engaging with the internal and external school community to secure equity and entitlement. Headteachers should collaborate with other schools in order to share expertise and bring positive benefits to their own and other schools. They should work collaboratively at both strategic and operational levels with parents and carers and across multiple agencies for the well-being of all children. Headteachers share responsibility for leadership of the wider educational system and should be aware that school improvement and community development are interdependent. (National Standards for Headteachers, DfES 2004: 11)

### Example 1: Involving people in the life of the school

Engaging people from the immediate community in special events is often easier in a small school, because people within the community know one another well and have what is often a personal interest in the school.

At one school, parents and others are invited, at the start of each academic year, to complete a 'skills ladder', sharing what they feel they can offer to the school and how often. Can they, for example, make a weekly commitment or are they willing to be involved in special projects? As a result, people as diverse as a local potter and a fencing instructor are regularly involved in the life of the school.

In another example, people from the community are involved in week-long special events such as Arts Week or Physical Activities Week. Visitors included a local resident who demonstrated lace making and involved the children in learning simple lace-making techniques, a paralympic athlete and a yoga teacher who now runs a club each Thursday evening.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- the rich and diverse resources within local communities – 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
- the work of other agencies and opportunities for collaboration
- strategies which encourage parents and carers to support their children's learning.

Is committed to:

- effective teamwork within the school and with external partners
- involvement of parents and the community in supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision.

Is able to:

- recognise and take account of the richness and diversity of the school's communities
- build and maintain effective relationships with partners and the community, that enhance the education of all pupils.

Actions:

- builds a school culture and curriculum that takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's communities
- ensures learning experiences for pupils are linked into and integrated with the wider community
- ensures a range of community-based learning experiences
- collaborates with other agencies in providing for the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural well-being of pupils and their families
- creates and maintains an effective partnership with parents and carers to support and improve pupils' achievement and personal development
- seeks opportunities to invite parents and carers, community figures, businesses or other organisations into the school to enhance and enrich the school and its value to the wider community.

### **Example 2: Sharing assembly**

Once a week, parents, grandparents and others are invited to an assembly when children share the work they have done in the previous week or take part in shared activities. Children might, for example, join parents and others in groups to read a book. In addition, certificates are given out rewarding behaviours that reflect core values within the school – cooperation, concern, caring, communication, consideration and commitment.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- the rich and diverse resources within local communities – both human and physical
- models of school, home, community and business partnerships
- the work of other agencies and opportunities for collaboration
- strategies which encourage parents and carers to support their children's learning.

Is committed to:

- effective teamwork within the school and with external partners
- involvement of parents and the community in supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision.

Is able to:

- recognise and take account of the richness and diversity of the school's communities
- engage in dialogue that builds partnerships and community consensus on values, beliefs and shared responsibilities
- build and maintain effective relationships with parents, carers, partners and the community, that enhance the education of all pupils.

Actions:

- builds a school culture and curriculum that takes account of the richness and diversity of the school's communities

- ensures learning experiences for pupils are linked into and integrated with the wider community
- creates and maintains an effective partnership with parents and carers to support and improve pupils' achievement and personal development
- seeks opportunities to invite community figures, businesses or other organisations into the school to enhance and enrich the school and its value to the wider community.

### **Example 3: Sharing the coach**

Educational visits can prove expensive for small schools. One school has overcome this difficulty by advertising their visits to members of the community. On a recent visit to York, 10 places on the coach were taken by some elderly local residents, who contributed £40 towards the cost. They benefited from the opportunity and relationships between different members of the local community were fostered.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- models of school, home, community and business partnerships.

Is committed to:

- involvement of parents and the community in supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision.

Is able to:

- build and maintain effective relationships with parents, carers, partners and the community, that enhance the education of all pupils.

Actions:

- ensures learning experiences for pupils are linked into and integrated with the wider community.

### **Example 4: Cluster activities**

When schools are small children have fewer opportunities to form wide friendship networks. Headteachers are often active in promoting opportunities for them to meet children from other schools. In a group of five small schools each headteacher takes responsibility for arranging a joint activity for one year group each academic year. These have included a farm visit, or an activity such as silk-screen printing. Sporting fixtures are common and another cluster of schools has formed a music partnership.

Such activities provide the children with opportunities to meet others and may also make the transfer to secondary schools a little easier by ensuring that pupils will meet up with familiar faces.

This example illustrates the following knowledge requirements, professional qualities and actions needed by the headteacher to achieve the core purpose identified within this standard.

Knows about:

- the rich and diverse resources within local communities – both human and physical
- the wider curriculum beyond school and the opportunities it provides for pupils and the school community
- the strengths, capabilities and objectives of other schools.

Is committed to:

- effective teamwork within the school and with external partners
- collaborating and networking with other schools to improve outcomes.

Is able to:

- engage in a dialogue that builds partnerships and community consensus on values, beliefs and shared responsibilities.

Actions:

- ensures learning experiences for pupils are linked into and integrated with the wider community
- ensures a range of community-based learning experiences
- collaborates with other agencies in providing for the academic, spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural well-being of pupils and their families
- contributes to the development of the education system by, for example, sharing effective practice, working in partnership with other schools and promoting innovative initiatives.

## **References**

DfES, 2004, *National Standards for Headteachers*, London, DfES