

Standard for Headship in Scotland



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Making it work together

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Introduction

Headteachers play a vital role in achieving the Executive's aim to have, in Scotland, a modern, world-class education system, where achievement is valued and every pupil has the opportunity to attain excellence. The post of headteacher, no matter the size of school, carries great responsibility and challenge, but brings the reward of leading and shaping the work of pupils, teachers and other staff. It also requires a commitment and an ability to interact with parents and the community. Headteachers need a clear view of the economic and social context in which their schools operate and the direction their school should take. They must also have the knowledge, understanding and skills to lead schools effectively. It is essential that those aspiring to be headteachers are prepared for their task. This Standard is the basis for a professional programme of training for headship, which will provide that preparation and should help to make the initial years in post more productive and fulfilling.

The Standard

The Standard for Headship sets out the key aspects of professionalism and expertise which the Scottish education system requires of those who are entrusted with the leadership and management of its schools. It defines the

level of competence required of effective headteachers in the early years of their headship. It serves, therefore, as the template against which those aspiring to be headteachers may be assessed in order to determine their strengths and development needs. On the basis of this assessment, aspirant headteachers can plan individual development programmes which will enable them to achieve the Standard.

Competence in School Leadership and Management

The Standard defines the Key Purpose of Headship and the three elements which underpin the professional practice of school leadership and management:

- ★ professional values;
- ★ management functions; and
- ★ professional abilities.

The three elements of practice for headship relate to three fundamental questions:

- ★ WHY a headteacher takes certain courses of action.

This element is concerned with the individual's professional values, commitment to learning and development, and knowledge and understanding of schools and Scottish education.

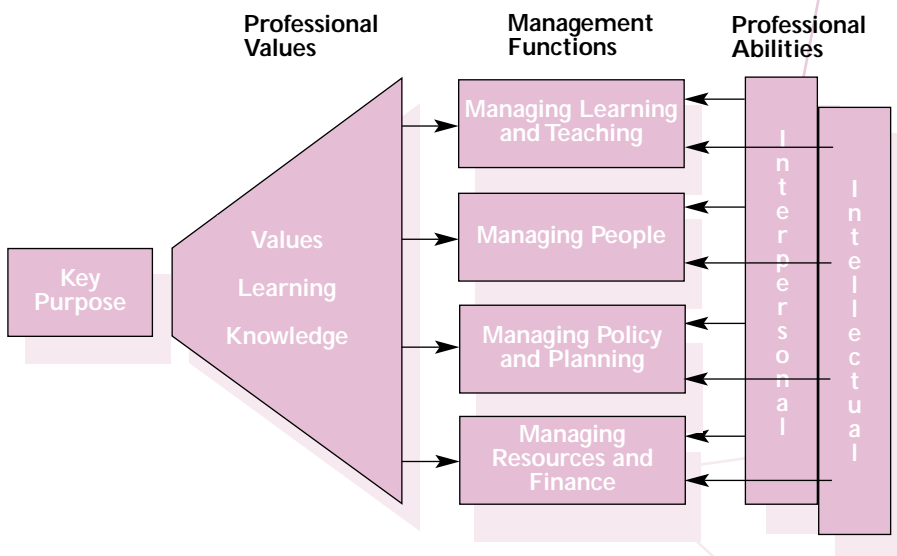
★ WHAT the main functions of a headteacher are.

This element comprises the key functions in leading and managing schools; managing learning and teaching; managing people; managing policy and planning; and managing resources and finance.

★ HOW a headteacher carries out these functions successfully.

This element comprises the intellectual and interpersonal abilities on which school leaders draw to carry out the key functions effectively.

Competence in relation to the Standard for Headship is defined as the ability to combine these three elements appropriately in practice. The relationship of the elements is illustrated in the diagram below. Thus, in order to be judged competent, an aspiring headteacher must show that she or he is capable of achieving the key purpose by carrying out the key functions of headship, drawing on appropriate professional values and abilities.



The detailed requirements of the Standard are set in the pages which follow.

THE KEY PURPOSE OF HEADSHIP

To provide the leadership and management which enables a school to give every pupil high quality education and which promotes the highest possible standards of achievement.

The success of any school is critically linked to the leadership of the headteacher. Working in partnership with staff, parents, pupils and the wider community, the headteacher must articulate a vision and give direction to the school, which will lead to effective learning and teaching. She or he needs to be able to create a climate in which the expertise and enthusiasm of staff, pupils and others in the wider school community can be developed to help the school achieve this vision and respond positively to change. In consultation with all those with an interest in the school, she or he must be able to create, develop and review the aims, plans, policies and procedures that will translate that vision into everyday reality.

The headteacher is accountable overall, for the quality of education achieved by the school.

Within the context of national and local authority frameworks and available resources, she or he must ensure the school is managed in such a way as to support continuous improvement and raise the standards achieved by its pupils.

THE ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE FOR HEADSHIP

1. Professional Values

This is the element which answers the question 'Why take this course of action?' It serves to give the rationale for the professional behaviour of headteachers.

This element describes the requirement for headteachers:

- ★ to hold, articulate and argue for professionally defensible educational values;
- ★ to act as a model of a leading professional within the school, committed to their own learning and developing their practice; and
- ★ to have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of educational development and management issues relevant to that.

It is based on the professional obligations (Eraut, 1994) of headteachers to serve the interests of children and young people in schools.

1.1 Headteachers should demonstrate commitment to educational values through:

- ★ being able to devise and communicate an overall vision for an effective school, taking account of its context and culture;
- ★ having an understanding of the ethical and evaluative issues involved in education;

- ★ being able to articulate and exemplify a moral and ethical perspective in relation to their own and the school's practice and organisation;
- ★ exemplifying consistent educational values in their behaviour and translating these into practical aims and policies, which engage the whole school community in relating their practice to educational aims and values.

1.2 Headteachers should demonstrate their commitment to their own learning and continuing professional development through:

- ★ being able to provide a rationale for the way in which they operate, which takes account of a variety of perspectives;
- ★ demonstrating that they regularly review their own practice, set targets for themselves and take responsibility for their own professional development; and
- ★ actively demonstrating critical reflection on their practice and supporting it in others.

1.3 Headteachers should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- ★ school improvement and effectiveness and strategies for improving performance, including the processes involved in school self-evaluation;
- ★ quality in education, processes and systems for quality assurance;

- ★ raising standards of pupil achievement;
- ★ principles and practice in relation to managing learning and teaching, people, policy and planning and resources and finance;
- ★ principles and practice of leadership and the management of change;
- ★ the roles and functions of the Scottish Executive, other national bodies and local authorities;
- ★ the legislative and policy frameworks which govern education at national, local and school level;
- ★ the range of external influences which have an impact on strategic and operational planning; and
- ★ the application of information and communications technology (ICT) to learning, teaching and management.

2. Management Functions

This element outlines the Key Functions performed by headteachers in order to achieve the Key Purpose of Headship. There are four of these Key Functions:

Managing Learning and Teaching

Managing People

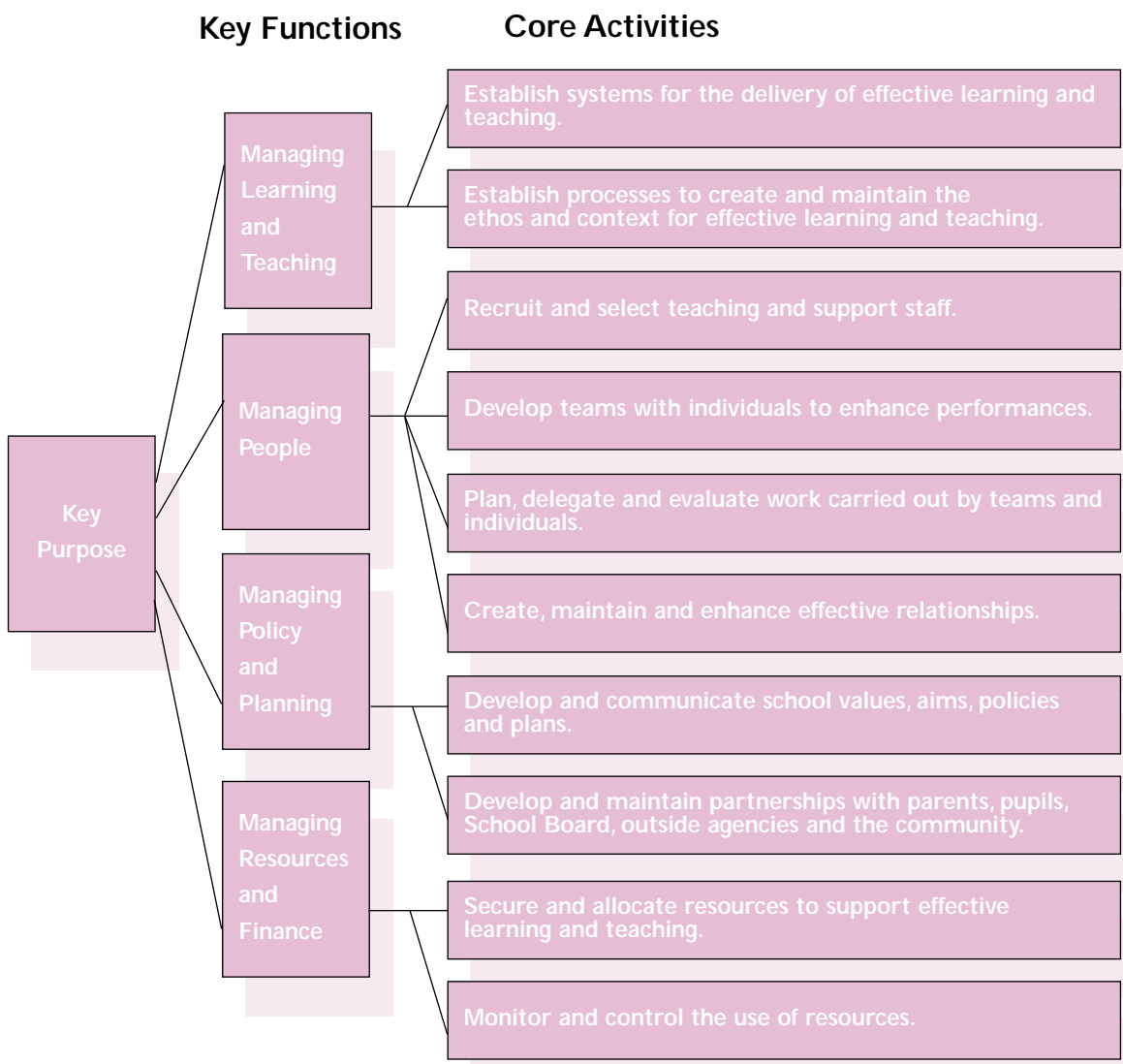
Managing Policy and Planning

Managing Resources and Finance

The order of the Key Functions is significant. To achieve the highest standards for pupils and teachers, the headteacher must create the conditions and structures to support and develop effective learning and teaching. She or he achieves this primarily through the

leadership and management of others within the school and its community. This requires having effective processes to develop and review policies and plans and

ensure efficient use of the resources and finance available. The diagram below illustrates the core activities related to the Key Functions.



2.1 Key Function: Managing Learning and Teaching

2.1.1 Develop systems for the management and evaluation of effective learning and teaching.

- ★ Develop and implement effective systems for curriculum planning to ensure breadth, balance, progression and coherence in the school's curriculum which meet the needs of learners and achieve targets.
- ★ Plan and maintain systems to ensure effective implementation of programmes of study and assessment procedures ensuring that the learning needs of all are met.
- ★ Agree, develop and implement systems to monitor, evaluate and improve learning and teaching programmes, including planning and managing projects.

2.1.2 Establish processes to create and maintain the conditions for effective learning and teaching.

- ★ Develop arrangements which promote positive relationships and celebrate success.
- ★ Promote high expectations for achievement amongst all learners and staff.
- ★ Ensure systems are in place to identify and address the pastoral needs of individuals and groups of learners.

- ★ Monitor, evaluate and improve support for pupils (including pastoral care/guidance systems).

2.2 Key Function: Managing People

2.2.1 Recruit and select teaching and support staff.

- ★ Define future personnel requirements.
- ★ Implement appropriate recruitment and selection procedures.

2.2.2 Develop teams and individuals to enhance their performance and that of the school.

- ★ Develop participative management structures.
- ★ Negotiate, agree and support professional development targets for individuals and groups, and provide feedback on performance.
- ★ Ensure that systems are in place to monitor, evaluate and improve the continuing professional development of individuals and working groups.

2.2.3 Plan, delegate and evaluate the work carried out by teams and individuals.

- ★ Negotiate and agree targets and appropriate support for teams and individuals.
- ★ Plan, agree and support the delegation of tasks and responsibilities to individuals and teams to achieve targets.

- ★ Agree success criteria for ongoing monitoring and evaluation and provide constructive feedback to teams and individuals on their performance.

2.2.4 Create, maintain and enhance effective working relationships with staff.

- ★ Develop the trust and support of staff in the school.
- ★ Develop effective relationships with colleagues and managers.
- ★ Demonstrate understanding of, and be able to implement, contractual and other personnel management policies, including those of staff welfare.
- ★ Identify and deal effectively with interpersonal conflict.

2.3 Key Function: Managing Policy and Planning

2.3.1 Develop and communicate school values, aims, policies and plans.

- ★ Develop relevant information-gathering systems within and outwith the school to inform decision-making.
- ★ Review, develop and maintain structures which support a consultative approach to decision-making.
- ★ Promote, communicate and implement school aims, policies and plans which further the stated values of the school.
- ★ Monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of school values, aims, policies and plans.

2.3.2 Develop and maintain partnerships with parents, pupils, School Board, outside agencies and the community.

- ★ Develop and maintain positive and professional relationships with all those associated with the school.
- ★ Develop and maintain structures for effective liaison and consultation.
- ★ Encourage discussion of and gain agreement for school values, aims, policies and plans.
- ★ Evaluate, review and improve relationships.

2.4 Key Function: Managing Resources and Finance

2.4.1 Manage available resources and allocate them to support effective learning and teaching.

- ★ Identify resources needed to support the implementation of school policies.
- ★ Negotiate and secure agreement for budgets with school staff.
- ★ Be able to integrate the budget plan with the school and staff development plans.
- ★ Maximise the use of available resources to create, maintain and monitor an appropriate physical environment for effective learning and teaching, taking due account of health and safety requirements.

2.4.2 Monitor and control the use of resources.

- ★ Monitor and evaluate the use of resources to support the implementation of school policies and secure value for money.
- ★ Monitor and control spending within agreed budgets.

- ★ Maintain and monitor budgeting systems.

3. Professional Abilities

The professional abilities of a headteacher are crucial in determining how effectively she or he can perform the key functions of headship. These abilities can be described in two broad categories: interpersonal and intellectual. Headteachers will have to draw on items from both of the following sets of abilities in carrying out each core activity.

3.1 Interpersonal Abilities

3.1.1 Demonstrates confidence and courage

is self aware, manages self-effectively, confident, is able to cope with ambiguity, able to confront difficult issues, deals positively with criticism, assertive, calm in a crisis.

3.1.2 Creates and maintains a positive atmosphere

is consistent, accentuates the positive, gives praise and encouragement, is optimistic, has good presentation skills, defuses potential problems, negotiates and handles conflict.

3.1.3 Inspires and motivates others

is supportive, encouraging, interested, committed, enthusiastic, well-informed, responsive to others' needs, has a sense of humour, encourages creativity and participation, actively builds the confidence and capacity of pupils and staff.

3.1.4 Communicates effectively

is a good listener, is open to, and invites, feedback, gives clear expression to ideas and feelings, provides good and timely information in an appropriate format.

3.1.5 Empathises with others

understands issues from the point of view of others including children and young people, values the views and feelings of others and takes them into account, is sensitive to the needs of others.

3.1.6 Values and works through teams

consults, delegates, empowers and trusts others, is a team builder, is able to work effectively in a group, is able to recognise and appreciate a variety of talents and approaches to problem-solving and task completion.

3.2 Intellectual Abilities

3.2.1 Seeks and uses information

is curious and attentive, uses networks, written sources, observation, sounds-out opinion, puts together information from a variety of sources, sees connections and patterns, uses information to guide judgement and decision-making, appreciates negative as well as positive information.

3.2.2 Thinks strategically

thinks in the long term, has clarity of vision, actively generates different ways of achieving aims, able to see and use opportunities and avoid threats, has ability to see the whole as well as the parts, is flexible and open to new ideas.

3.2.3 Judges wisely and decides appropriately

identifies and evaluates factors, analyses risks effectively, draws on a variety of information sources, takes account of others' views as well as own experience, knows how and when to make decisions and understands the implications of implementing them, uses effective decision-making processes with others.

3.2.4 Identifies and solves problems

uses effective problem-solving techniques (personally and with others), can analyse problems, uses convergent and divergent thinking.

3.2.5 Shows political insight

understands and can analyse issues relating to power and influence, is aware of own use of power, is aware of personal biases and those of others, understands the political implications of actions, is aware of political influences in school, community, local and national contexts, and understands how to maintain good public relations.

(Please note that the descriptions in italics are simply explanatory and are not part of the Standard.)

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