

National Standards for Headteachers in focus

Extended schools

Contributors:

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Introduction

A group of headteachers from extended 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 an extended 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)

A secondary school with a falling roll had been placed in special measures. The new headteacher knew that the way to improve standards, attitudes and opportunities was to develop extended services and activities; to work closely with support agencies and to work more closely with the local community. He was supported in this by the local authority, which had a small sum of money available for this. The headteacher appointed an assistant headteacher for 'extended services and activities'.

The person appointed was an experienced manager and very enthusiastic. He quickly made contact with people within the school whom he would need to work with closely: heads of department, pastoral managers and the community development officer.

A new post had recently been created, the 'alternative learning instructor'. This person was also brought into the planning team. Together, they looked at the school improvement plan and discussed the immediate areas for improvement, which were standards, attendance and behaviour and the falling roll.

The coordinator took the school improvement plan and looked carefully at the priorities. With the community manager, they began to consider how the community activities already being run could support some of the necessary school improvements. The use of extended services and activities to address the key issues would form the basis of the new school improvement plan.

Next, the coordinator made contact with local groups and agencies within the community. These included the police, health services, playgroups and religious groups. He discussed what the school wanted to do and what their needs and issues were. Immediately, some members of these groups were keen to become involved and support the project.

The coordinator devised a set of surveys for students, staff and parents and the local community. He knew that it was essential that their views were considered very carefully in anything that was planned. The surveys were analysed by a member of the office team who was given additional hours for this work from the small budget given to the coordinator. The information from these surveys was used to plan activities and support.

Over a term, a detailed action plan was drafted as part of the school improvement plan. It became a 'living document', displayed on the office wall and annotated by all involved personnel. Further staff were appointed to support the programme including a full-time parent partnership worker who was readily available to support families and liaise closely with other agencies. The impact of this appointment was that punctuality and attendance improved and students who were troubled had someone to talk to instead of disrupting a class. The alternative learning instructor organised a range of out-of-school activities including sport and visits and targeted them at particular groups, prioritised by need, for example low self-esteem.

Other changes included:

- tutor groups were changed from vertical to horizontal grouping to improve the quality and focus of tutor time at the beginning of the day (requested by students)
- the role of the school council was revised to include more responsibility and status (requested by students)
- 'dads and lads robot workshops' (run by community manager) targeted specifically at Year 7 pupils
- taekwondo introduced
- parents invited to 'supporting parents of difficult teenagers' activities.

Future projects include:

- the purchase of laptops for lease to families where there is no access to a computer at home
- a directory for parents of support agencies locally
- working with vulnerable pupils in primary schools before they transfer to secondary school
- working with primary schools to improve attendance and punctuality
- an education welfare officer to be based on site
- review of Year 7 curriculum to include a cross-curricula approach
- discussion with heads of faculty where students are underachieving to consider how extended services and activities can help
- targeting pupils in Year 7 with attainment at 4C and below and identifying extended services and activities to address this.

The plan is very specific. Most activities have a purpose and a measurable outcome in terms of attainment, attendance, behaviour or punctuality. Staff know their role in monitoring and evaluating progress against the plan. They meet regularly to share successes and failures and to plan new activities. A steering group has been established and its first meeting was very well attended.

In just six months, the outcomes can be measured:

- attendance and punctuality statistics improved (including lesson attendance)
- reduced number of poor behaviour incidents recorded
- reduced exclusions
- increased number of parents involved in their children's education
- increased number of families accessing services in the local community
- positive Ofsted report.

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:

- local, national and global trends
- ways to build, communicate and implement a shared vision
- strategic planning processes
- strategies for communication, both within and beyond the school
- new technologies, their use and impact
- 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
- the use of appropriate new technologies
- 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, motivate and empower others to carry forward the vision
- 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 which 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 creativity, innovation and the use of appropriate technologies to achieve excellence
- ensures that strategic planning takes account of the diversity, values and experience of the community at large.

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/0083/2004: 7)

Example 1: Achievement of black African and Caribbean boys

A school had identified that their black African and Caribbean boys were underachieving. As a result, the school reviewed its approach including curriculum delivery; ensuring the correct role models; involving parents and the role of personal, social and health education (PSHE). In addition, the deputy headteacher approached a recognised and very successful supplementary school. This school had a track

record and commitment to challenging stereotypes and negative images of young black boys.

Following discussion, it was decided to develop an additional programme targeted at these boys through the supplementary school. All Year 10 and Year 11 boys of black Caribbean and African heritage were invited to take part. They were identified as 'boys who can achieve' and parents and students were invited to a meeting with the school and the supplementary school. The presentation engaged parents with its message of 'boys who can achieve'.

The programme was devised by the school and the supplementary school. There was a focus on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and the content consisted of a number of topical areas covered over the term. These included:

- effective communication
- self-esteem
- self-identity
- goal setting
- curriculum support in English, Mathematics and Science.

The curriculum support aspect of the programme was conducted by subject teachers of the respective area of study. This was in addition to the school-based curriculum support.

Eighteen boys began the programme and this number at one time increased to 25 students. Fifteen students attended consistently. The boys engaged in various activities to support learning including:

- role-play
- feedback
- practical exercises
- reflection
- group discussions.

During the second week, students were assessed and given the opportunity to identify key targets and produce a personal development plan. Key targets were generally split into three key areas:

- work output (class work, homework and coursework)
- behaviour
- social interaction.

The focus was on these targets being achieved within the term. They were monitored and evaluated at regular intervals and assessed at the end of each term.

In the following term, there were some changes to the programme, based on feedback, including the opportunity to meet and engage with tutors during the school week, for a set period of time. Mock exams were approaching and so revision was a key feature of the work for this term. Students received advice and support including workable examples and encouragement. The key elements of the programme included:

- skills audit and career development
- writing essays at GCSE level
- self-support and motivation

- study, learn and revise
- debating the issue
- conflict resolution.

At the beginning of the term, students had the opportunity to reflect on the previous term and their personal targets, in order to set new ones.

The school noticed that one of the biggest challenges was influencing the students to use the skills and abilities learned in these sessions in their everyday lives. Their behaviour and attitudes were excellent, but was this the same in the every day classroom setting? The boys were keen to share their reports with the staff at the supplementary school and it was clear that a difference had been made. Students who attended on a regular basis had better organisational skills and were better able to function in group-orientated tasks. They took a prominent role in recruiting younger boys to the project.

The third term focused on three main areas:

- reflection on mock exams
- preparing for exams
- preparing for future careers.

The main topics for the term were:

- revision techniques and creating a revision timetable
- personal statements
- CVs and application forms
- interview techniques
- presentation skills
- teamwork skills
- money management.

The targets set for the third term were mainly focused on revision and exam techniques. The end of the programme was celebrated with a paint-balling trip for those who attended for 80% of the time or more. Students were keen to talk about what the programme had done for them and how it could be improved and the school has taken this on board in future planning.

The programme, coupled with the school's approach to teaching and learning, has made a significant difference. It is one of the country's most improved schools. The percentage of A-C results rose from 15% in 2001 to 39% in 2004. The average points score for boys of Black African and Caribbean heritage rose from 19 in 2003 to 40 in 2004 and continues to rise.

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
- the use of new and emerging technologies to support learning and teaching
- principles of effective teaching and assessment for learning

- models of behaviour and attendance management
- strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access
- curriculum design and management
- tools for data collection and analysis
- using research evidence to inform teaching and learning
- monitoring and evaluating performance
- school self-evaluation
- strategies for developing effective leaders.

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 learning and teaching
- choice and flexibility in learning to meet the personalised learning needs of every child.

Is able to:

- demonstrate personal enthusiasm for and commitment to the learning process
- demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning
- access, analyse and interpret information
- initiate and support research and debate about effective teaching and learning and develop relevant strategies for performance improvement
- acknowledge excellence and challenge poor performance across the school.

Actions:

- ensures a consistent and continuous school-wide focus on pupils' achievement, using data and benchmarks to monitor progress in every child's learning
- ensures that learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management
- 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 strategies that secure high standards of behaviour and attendance
- determines, organises and implements a diverse, flexible curriculum and implements an effective assessment framework
- monitors, evaluates and reviews classroom practice and promotes improvement strategies
- challenges underperformance at all levels and ensures effective corrective action and follow-up.

Example 2: Careers education in the primary school

The headteacher of a small inner-city primary school was passionate about raising aspirations and opportunities for children and their families. Many of the families of this school were out of work and their children had no idea of a work ethos. The curriculum was already enhanced by a range of visits, speakers, cross-curricula

opportunities and award-winning out-of-school activities. There was a developing careers programme that included Year 6 pupils talking about what they would like to be. The school then approached local representatives to visit and give talks, for example, a bank manager, a chef and a hairdresser. Children were able to visit the local careers office, so that when the time came, they would know where it was and what it could offer them.

At the suggestion of the chair of governors, the headteacher approached a range of large hotel chains, with a request to visit the hotel. Three responded positively. The headteacher and class teachers discussed the project and what was needed with the hotels and visits were arranged. As a result, the children learned from first-hand experience about how a hotel operates and the wide range of skills needed and career opportunities available within a hotel. Children could talk with confidence about what they would like to do and what they needed to achieve this. Anecdotally, they could describe the hotel they would stay in if they won the lottery!

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
- strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access
- curriculum design and management
- school self-evaluation
- strategies for developing effective leaders.

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 learning and teaching
- choice and flexibility in learning to meet the personalised learning needs of every child.

Is able to:

- demonstrate personal enthusiasm for and commitment to the learning process
- demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning
- acknowledge excellence and challenge poor performance across the school.

Actions:

- ensures that learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management
- 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

- determines, organises and implements a diverse, flexible curriculum and implements an effective assessment framework
- monitors, evaluates and reviews classroom practice and promotes improvement strategies
- challenges underperformance at all levels and ensures effective corrective action and follow-up.

Example 3: Using out-of-school hours learning to raise standards

A primary school had a well-established range of out-of-school activities, mostly centred around sport and games. It also used data very strategically to support school improvement. At a senior management team meeting, the headteacher challenged curriculum coordinators to consider how extra curricula activities could support raising standards in the core subjects.

Following discussion a range of ideas arose including:

- targeted early morning computer club for pupils with poor punctuality
- family learning activities
- targeted Maths and Literacy projects for gifted and talented pupils
- training Year 5 and 6 pupils as ICT mentors for younger children to support a lunchtime club
- targeted catch-up clubs for Maths and Literacy using computer programmes (targeted groups included boys and writing; girls and ICT; underachieving pupils in reading, etc)
- a range of clubs including Reading, Library, Maths, homework and Science.

Discussion followed on how to make these activities exciting and different from the main curriculum. The school focused on the use of practical experiences and ICT. The school considered how to staff these activities. This included trained volunteers and parents, adult education, classroom assistants and some teachers. (Classroom assistants could choose to be paid or have time off in lieu. Teachers received a day off for running an activity for one hour a week for 10 weeks.) The clubs were organised into time schedules or what was practical and could be achieved.

All focus clubs were by special invitation and parents and their children were invited to a meeting to discuss the purpose, content and commitment expected. The activities were embedded in the school improvement plan and pupils' attendance and achievement were tracked from the baseline measurement. The school celebrates the success of activities with certificates at the end of each term. Most pupils made good progress, attended regularly and enjoyed their club. Parents and carers, children and staff are keen for these activities to continue, because they have seen the benefits.

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
- strategies for ensuring inclusion, diversity and access
- curriculum design and management
- school self-evaluation
- Strategies for developing effective leaders.

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 learning and teaching
- choice and flexibility in learning to meet the personalised learning needs of every child.

Is able to:

- demonstrate personal enthusiasm for and commitment to the learning process
- demonstrate the principles and practice of effective teaching and learning
- acknowledge excellence and challenge poor performance across the school.

Actions:

- ensures that learning is at the centre of strategic planning and resource management
- 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
- determines, organises and implements a diverse, flexible curriculum and implements an effective assessment framework
- monitors, evaluates and reviews classroom practice and promotes improvement strategies
- challenges underperformance at all levels and ensures effective 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 high 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/0083/2004: 8)

A headteacher of a large inner-city primary school had realised that creativity in the curriculum had been marginalised. She realised that the way to improve standards further was not more Literacy and Numeracy, but a more creative approach to the whole curriculum. Teachers said they did not feel confident to teach the Arts and there was not enough time to fit everything in. The idea of 'Friday Arts' was born.

Teachers selected an area of the Arts they would like to teach and this could be as broad as they liked. Their responses included Drama, Pottery, Painting and Choir. They also extended to particular interests of teachers including Maori Culture, Keep Fit, Web Design, Cookery and Irish Dancing.

The local arts network was approached. Teachers who did not feel confident were partnered with a local artist. The artist would lead the initial sessions and then the teacher would take over. Sessions with artists included screen painting, batik, mural painting and life-size model making from cartons and boxes.

The children were surveyed on what they would like to do and organised into groups. Key Stages 1 and 2 remained separate, but were split vertically. The project would last 10 weeks. The reception and nursery pupils remained in class units and worked on special projects with local artists for shorter periods of time.

After the block of 10 weeks a review was held. Teachers who had worked with artists felt confident to tackle the work on their own. Other teachers asked for the opportunity for this support to extend their skills. Key Stage 1 requested that children were divided across a year group rather than a key stage. Some support staff offered to run their own art activities, so the choice for children became even greater.

One local artist spotted a room that had been cleared ready for some building work and asked to use it as a temporary base. In return, he would give the school half a day a week of his time at no cost. Some parents and grandparents offered to help. The premises manager and some of the office staff joined in with their skills. A classroom assistant volunteered to take on the job of surveying pupils and allocating them to groups.

A second review led to Key Stage 1 moving their Arts session to first thing on Monday morning. Immediately, punctuality improved! Parents, grandparents and members of the community became involved with leading activities for themselves. The school organised an induction programme for them and partnered them with a member of staff as a mentor. Additional adults meant that children had more choice and could be organised in even smaller teaching groups.

The impact was:

- improvements to the learning environment
- the 'buzz' on a Friday afternoon across the school
- very strong relationships between the school and local artists
- the confidence of teachers and other staff to teach Art in a variety of forms was increased
- relationships and friendships developed across year groups and carried over into the playground
- staff expertise greatly improved
- improved teamwork
- national curriculum standards in Art and Design very high
- attendance improved on Fridays and punctuality on Monday morning
- interest of other schools and organisations
- greater community and parental involvement.

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 relationships between managing performance, CPD and sustained school improvement
- the impact of change on organisations and individuals.

Is able to:

- foster an open, fair, equitable culture and manage conflict
- develop, empower and sustain individuals
- challenge, influence and motivate others to attain high goals
- give and receive effective feedback and act to improve personal performance
- think creatively to anticipate and solve problems.

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 and actively engages with other schools to build effective learning communities
- develops and maintains effective strategies for staff induction, 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 others and takes appropriate action when performance is unsatisfactory
- regularly reviews own practice, sets personal targets and takes responsibility for own personal development
- 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 the 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/0083/2004: 9)

A large primary school had an embedded culture of offering a range of extended services and activities. The headteacher delegated leadership successfully across the school and staff responded well to this opportunity and challenge. The very successful extended school coordinator was leaving for promotion. The headteacher realised that the careful selection of a successor was key in maintaining and developing the range of services available for the school and its community.

The school bursar, a member of the senior management team, had already discussed a desire to develop and change her role during performance management

interviews. She approached the headteacher to express an interest in the extended school position in addition to her existing duties. She believed that her role meant that she was in a key position to build new links and partnerships to extend provision and opportunities.

A few days later, the bursar received a telephone call from a local organisation that was training classroom assistants. They wanted to advertise to the parents at the school and would give them free training, if the school would provide the placements and mentoring. The bursar discussed this with the senior management team and meetings were arranged with the organisation. Following on from this, 22 classroom assistants were trained at the school over three years (from the parent population), 16 were employed as classroom assistants locally and two went on to train as teachers. The scheme was successfully extended to other schools in the local authority.

Once a school establishes a reputation for trying out new ideas and a willingness to work with other organisations, the word spreads. Shortly afterwards, an organisation rang that was training volunteer readers. They wanted to know if they could use the school for placements.

After initial discussions about supervision and police checks, the question of how many volunteers arose. The school was told 60 and the bursar immediately agreed to take them all. The organisation was overwhelmed. Most schools had been very cautious in their response.

However, having attended senior management team meetings, the bursar knew that the Literacy coordinator was looking for reading partners and this project would give three to each class. The bursar did all the background organisation including timetabling and supervision arrangements and liaised with classroom teachers and the Literacy coordinator throughout the project. The teachers and children were thrilled to have the extra help. The word spread to other schools about the project and when the programme began again the following year, the trainees were welcomed in a number of schools.

The school continued to develop its extended activities and services led by the bursar who led the school to Quality in Study Support recognition.

These two projects alone, facilitated by the bursar, supported learning in the classroom through the involvement of additional personnel at no additional cost to the school.

This example illustrates the following 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
- performance management.

Is committed to:

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

- collaborating with others in order to strengthen the school's organisational capacity and contribute to the development of capacity in other schools.

Is able to:

- establish and sustain appropriate systems and structures
- manage the school efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis
- delegate management tasks and monitor their implementation
- 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:

- 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 requirement
- produces and implements clear, evidence-based improvement plans and policies for the development of the school and its facilities
- 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 their responsibility, headteachers are accountable to a wide range of groups, particularly pupils, parents, carers, governors and the local education authority (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/0083/2004: 10)

A headteacher of a highly successful school was keen to shift the plateau of achievement from 75% A*-Cs at GCSE. The school already had a well-used community base and community nursery. These facilities were run separately to the school, even though the deputy headteacher was the community manager.

The headteacher realised that the way to improve standards further was to work through extended services and activities and by integrating the existing community resources. She realised the need to support pupils earlier in the primary schools.

Having appointed an assistant headteacher with responsibility for extended services and activities, she arranged a meeting with the primary schools in the cluster to discuss a way forward together.

For the first time in their existence, the schools shared their school improvement priorities and found that they were very similar including raising pupil self-esteem and involving parents in their children's learning. A key curriculum area for all schools was raising standards in Math. Following on from this, a joint meeting was held with headteachers and governors of all the schools. They listened with enthusiasm and were keen to offer their ideas and help.

It was agreed that the extended services and activities coordinator would work across the schools to form a joint plan to form the basis of a bid to the local authority for further funding for the project. The coordinator would be accountable to a steering group established between the schools. The secondary school would be the 'hub' school.

Following on from this, the coordinator:

- agreed a logo with the primary schools so that everything about extended provision across the schools had a distinct 'brand' and was not seen as something being organised by the secondary school for the primaries
- trained Year 10 students to support interviews in the primary schools. These students interviewed parents and pupils about what they needed
- surveyed staff and governors and the local community. The local Indian restaurant provided a free meal with wine as part of a prize draw to encourage participation
- met with community leaders, providers and personnel to discuss needs and issues within the community
- discussed existing provision and future possibilities with the community manager
- began to draw up a revised school improvement plan based on the needs of the cluster and its community. This was completed in consultation with headteachers, governors and the local authority. The plan used information from the surveys as the basis. The plan had very specific success criteria for each action, clear monitoring and evaluation timescales and was very carefully costed
- contacted the local authority for information on what was available locally
- established a steering group with representatives from the primary school governing bodies and the local community
- established a website for pupils, parents, staff, governors and the community to be able to access.

It was decided that another key worker was needed to enable the project to work. This would be the appointment of a parent partnership worker who could work in the primary schools as a 'first point of contact' for parents. The post was advertised and a person appointed with a timetable of visits across the week in each school. This person was already part of the local community with knowledge of what was available. She quickly made links with agencies and groups so that she could 'signpost' parents to the help they needed. Following discussions with parents she was able to work with the coordinator to develop and plan further activities and support networks for children and families within this community. This included using the nursery as a crèche for parents while they were attending courses they had requested.

The extended schools' coordinator met with the Maths department to discuss their role in raising standards in Maths in the primary schools.

Maths coordinators from the primary schools met with members of the Maths department of the secondary school, which led to a number of joint activities:

- parent workshops to explain teaching methods and expectations at each age
- training for classroom assistants
- gifted and talented mathematicians attending activities at the secondary school

- teachers from the secondary school working in primary schools after GCSEs
- student mentors from Year 10 working with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in Maths
- a raised focus, interest and enjoyment in Maths at all levels.

The community manager reviewed the activities provided. Some activities were specifically targeted at needs within the cluster of schools – for example, ‘dads and lads’ was designed as a special invitation, to targeted parents, rather than part of a general leaflet. The primary schools had previously distributed the community leaflet, now they read it carefully and informed parents specifically about activities that may be of interest to them.

The headteacher of this school recognised the importance of:

- building, communicating and sharing a vision
- selecting the right staff and empowering them to take action
- working in partnership
- involving all stakeholders.

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

Knows about:

- statutory educational frameworks, including governance
- the contribution that education makes to developing, promoting and sustaining a fair and equitable society
- 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 practice of quality assurance systems, including school review, self-evaluation and performance management.

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 pupils
- individual, team and whole school accountability for pupil learning outcomes.

Is able to:

- demonstrate political insight and anticipate trends
- 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
- combine the outcomes of regular school self-review with external evaluations in order to develop 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
- develops and presents a coherent, understandable and accurate account of the school's performance to a range of audiences including governors, parents and carers
- reflects on personal contribution to school achievements and takes account of feedback from others.

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/0083/2004: 11)

Example 1: Bringing local history alive

A local vicar had heard that the nearby primary school had a new headteacher and called to introduce himself. He informed her that he was part of the local History Society and invited her to a meeting, which the headteacher accepted. New to the area herself, at this meeting she met local people and heard about local history.

Over the next term, the school was reviewing its curriculum. It wanted to include cross-curricula links and make it more meaningful to the children, who came from all over the world. The headteacher suggested they include more local history. Visits would be easy to arrange and there was a lot of local expertise to support the project. Staff agreed and a working party took on the task of planning the new curriculum. Once the new history plan had been devised and agreed, the headteacher approached the society. They offered speakers, artefacts, access to the local history museum and information on walks and places of local interest.

The children were excited about the project. They enjoyed the visits and visitors who brought it alive and the opportunity to handle real artefacts. Parents described how their children talked about local history as they walked home; passing places they had learned about! They talked and asked questions about why and how they had come to live in that area. Parents and grandparents spoke about their migration stories. The school was approached by a local drama group who helped the children to tell their stories through drama. This was performed at local venues across the borough.

The work was displayed at the teachers' centre and at the local history museum. After the first year, the school had amassed a wealth of photographs and resources. These were put on a disc and circulated to local schools for their use. The school, a local secondary school and the History Society created a website as a further resource. Local history was embedded in the curriculum!

The History Society approached the headteacher with another project. The shipbuilding industry was part of the local history and they would like to support some children by offering sailing lessons in the summer holidays, to keep the sailing tradition alive. The children must be able to swim 50m. The headteacher explained that swimming was an issue, for a range of reasons and that few pupils managed to achieve the required 25m by the time they left. As a result, the History Society paid for additional swimming lessons after school as part of the school's range of extra-curricula activities. The sailing lessons would be there for when children achieved their 50 metres.

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 wider community
- models of school, home, community and business partnerships
- the work of other agencies and opportunities for collaboration
- strategies that encourage parents and carers to support their children's learning
- the strengths, capabilities and objectives of other schools.

Is committed to:

- effective teamwork within the school and with external partners
- work with other agencies for the well-being of all pupils and their families
- involvement of parents and the community in supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision
- collaboration and networking with other schools to improve outcomes.

Is able to:

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

Actions:

- builds a school culture 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
- contributes to the development of the education system by, for example, sharing effective practice, working in partnership with other schools and promoting innovative initiatives.

Example 2: Creation of a peace garden

A pupil survey had identified that children wanted somewhere quiet and peaceful at playtime. The headteacher approached a local training agency for support. The agency worked with unskilled young people giving them work skills for example, carpentry. The agency provided six young men, supervised by a key worker, to plan and design this area with the children.

The headteacher approached a local business to fund the cost of wood and plants. The local DIY shop gave a reduction on the purchases. Raised beds, seating areas and paved areas were created. The children helped with the planting. The project developed over six months.

The completed peace garden had a decorative fence around it, with individual carved creatures designed by each class to enhance the fence posts. This is now an area where children enjoy playing quietly and parents can chat while waiting to collect their children. The garden is maintained through a gardening club organised by a lunchtime supervisor. An enthusiastic grandparent helps with the more difficult pruning and digging!

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 wider community
- models of school, home, community and business partnerships
- the work of other agencies and opportunities for collaboration
- strategies that encourage parents and carers to support their children's learning.

Is committed to:

- effective teamwork within the school and with external partners
- work with other agencies for the well-being of all pupils and their families
- involvement of parents and the community in supporting the learning of children and in defining and realising the school vision.

Is able to:

- engage in a dialogue that builds partnerships and community consensus on values, beliefs and shared responsibilities
- listen to, reflect and act on community feedback
- 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
- 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
- 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*, 0083, DfES, London, DfES