

# Cambridge School Leader Standards



Cambridge is committed to supporting the continuing improvement of the quality of educational outcomes for all learners following Cambridge programmes in schools around the world.

We recognise that classroom teaching has the largest impact on the quality of educational outcomes. What teachers know and do makes the difference in improving student learning outcomes – their knowledge, pedagogical practices and relationships with students.

We also recognise that teachers cannot achieve and sustain high-quality outcomes for all students without effective leadership. In support of this, we have developed the Cambridge School Leader Standards to define key characteristics and practices of effective leaders.

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### What we mean by school leaders

These Standards presume that in each Cambridge school there is one individual who has overall responsibility for implementing the school's vision. This person is ultimately accountable for the learning outcomes of all students. We see this as a unique and vital position and role within the school. Cambridge schools use a variety of titles for this leadership position. In many cases, this person is also the chief executive, accountable directly to the governing body of the school. In other cases, the school's senior educational leader may be accountable to a chief executive or director who does not have an educational leadership role. In the context of the Cambridge School Leader Standards, we define the principal school leader as the individual who has the responsibility as well as the professional training, knowledge, skills and experience to be the senior educational leader.

Of course, leadership is not only a function of one particular senior and experienced individual in a school. It is also a collective process that includes a wider group of people. We are committed to the principle of distributed leadership. This is where both the responsibility and delegated authority for leading specific aspects of the school's work are distributed among the staff. From individual teachers to the senior leadership team, it includes all those with leadership responsibilities. Pastoral heads, heads of subject departments, curriculum coordinators and others will find that both the Cambridge Teacher Standards and some of the Cambridge School Leader Standards are relevant to their work. Teachers who aspire to positions of leadership will also want to use the Standards to reflect on their professional characteristics and skills, and to shape their own professional development.

In contemporary educational research, leadership is typically seen as focussing on bringing about change and improvement to achieve the school's vision and mission. Management, however, is seen as making sure the school is stable, coherent and sustainable. Typically, effective school leaders will also have specific management responsibilities requiring particular knowledge, skills and practices. These Standards include school leaders' responsibilities for effective management systems. However, there are senior management responsibilities that do not come within the scope of the Standards. These include managing school facilities, human resources, fund-raising and development, and others. Where appropriate, these management responsibilities are addressed within the Cambridge Standards for Schools.



### Purposes and audiences for the Cambridge School Leader Standards

The first purpose of the Cambridge School Leader Standards is to define the range of characteristics and practices of school leaders needed to effectively provide Cambridge programmes. They derive from and are consistent with contemporary international research into effective school leadership. School leaders who use the Standards to evaluate their own leadership practice and guide their continuing professional development will be in a strong position to achieve the desired student outcomes from Cambridge programmes, and to be leaders in their profession.

Secondly, the Standards are intended for school leaders themselves to use, to confirm successful leadership practice and help determine areas and priorities for their own professional development. This might include taking Cambridge advanced qualifications in educational leadership. Those who aspire to become school leaders will find the Standards a helpful guide to the scope of the role and the need for further development. If you are head of a school, you may also use the Standards to review the strengths of your senior team, to inform decisions about skill gaps and needs for team development.

Thirdly, the Standards will be of value to school boards and governing bodies in respect of their responsibilities and duties for overseeing school leadership. The definition of effective leadership represented by the Standards will support recruitment and retention processes, and will inform the governance responsibility for holding school leaders accountable for their work. The Standards will also help boards to understand and support the professional development needs and priorities of both the serving and the aspiring leaders they are responsible for.

Fourthly, the Standards will inform the understanding of leadership within the school. School leaders are accountable to their employers and to the community of parents and others that the school serves. They are also accountable to their staff and students for the quality and style of leadership that they provide and how it shapes and directs the school community. This also includes the outcomes of the school's collective work. The Standards provide a common language and a framework of expectations that will help the school community reflect on how effective its leadership is.

### The Cambridge School Leader Standards in context

We have developed the Cambridge School Leader Standards alongside the Cambridge Teacher Standards, and with the Cambridge Standards for Schools, which are intended to support schools with their self-evaluation processes. Our series of statements about the attributes of Cambridge learners, teachers and leaders have also informed these Standards.

The three sets of Standards are designed to help schools provide high-quality Cambridge programmes, and are complementary to and consistent with each other. In particular, the Cambridge Teacher and School Leader Standards recognise that the career path of most school leaders has included teaching and middle leadership positions. These two sets of Standards have been designed and structured with this progression in mind.



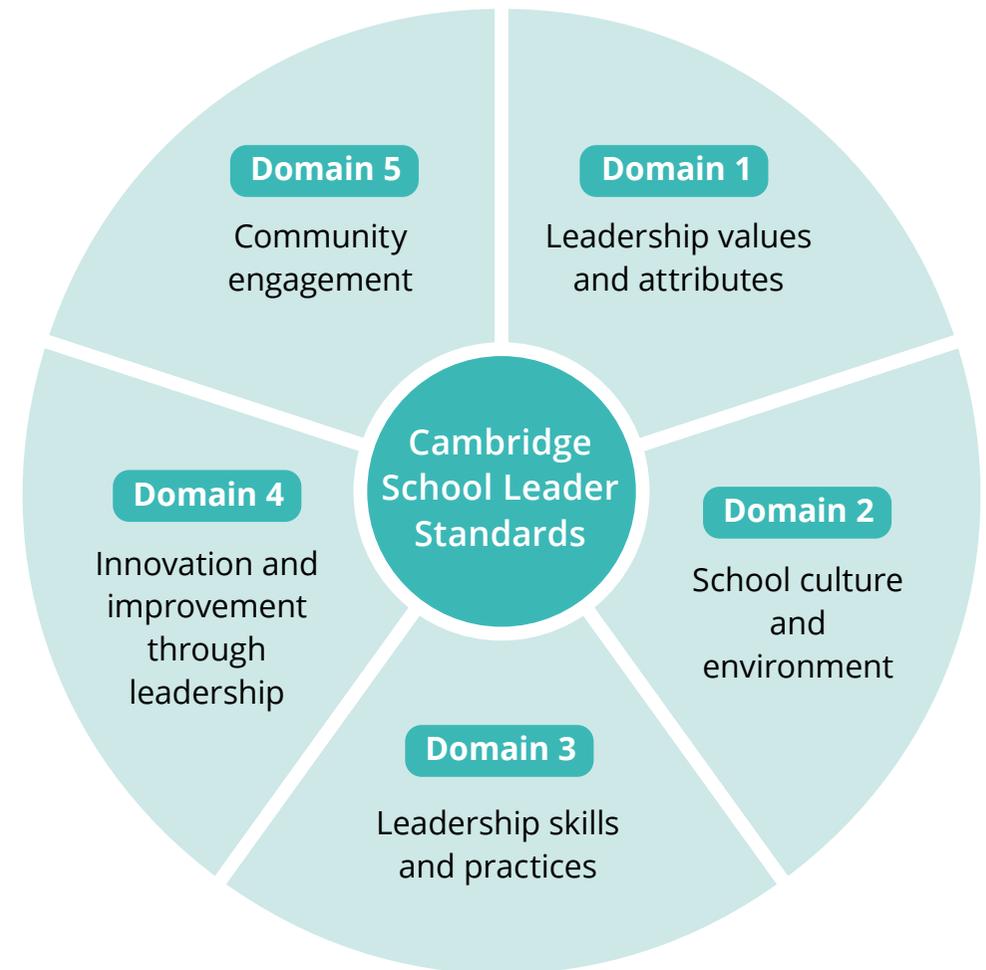
### The structure and organisation of the Cambridge School Leader Standards

There are 25 Standard statements, organised under five domains. The individual Standard statements are detailed and concrete. This should allow heads of schools and other users to clearly understand how to show they have met individual Standards.

Together, these five domains of Standards make up our definition of the range of characteristics and practices that are needed to lead a Cambridge school, founded on contemporary international educational research.

We also recognise that school leadership is contextual. Cambridge schools are found in 160 countries, in a range of different political, social, cultural, economic and educational-historical settings. This variety means that detailed recommendations will not be relevant or helpful. Effective school leaders will take lessons from educational research and their own experience, adapt them intelligently and apply them reflectively to their current context.

We have designed the Standards to be as open as possible so school leaders can apply them to their own contexts. They are based on the principle that effective school leadership has many common practices, so they are relevant to all leaders in Cambridge schools. What will vary is the way that the leadership practices are applied, depending on each school's context and the capabilities of the individual, the senior team and the school staff.



### 1 Leadership values and attributes

Cambridge school leaders:

- Standard 1** provide a strong sense of direction and a clear vision for the school
- Standard 2** prioritise the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of students and staff, ensuring a safe and healthy environment
- Standard 3** model the highest standards of ethical conduct in their interactions with the school community
- Standard 4** empower staff by distributing professional responsibilities and establishing shared accountability
- Standard 5** model a commitment to reflective practice and lifelong learning.

### 2 School culture and environment

Cambridge school leaders:

- Standard 1** establish a culture of high expectations for all, in regard to learning outcomes, behaviours and attitudes
- Standard 2** demonstrate emotional intelligence and empathy in leadership to foster a fair and inclusive environment
- Standard 3** establish professional relationships with all members of the school community
- Standard 4** motivate and encourage teachers to take responsibility for the development of effective learning and teaching
- Standard 5** enrich the learning culture of their school by establishing partnerships with other institutions, professional bodies and educational organisations.



### 3 Leadership skills and practices

Cambridge school leaders:

- Standard 1** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current research into educational leadership and the practices of effective leaders, and use it to support the reflective evaluation of their own practice
- Standard 2** keep up to date with the latest research and evidence into effective curriculum, pedagogy and assessment
- Standard 3** make sure that the school has appropriate policies and procedures in place, as well as written roles and responsibilities, which are reflected in operational practice
- Standard 4** demonstrate a consistent commitment to the professional learning and development of all staff, including the development of their leadership potential
- Standard 5** plan and budget for the annual cycle informed by evidence, data and curriculum requirements
- Standard 6** develop a leadership team that meets the school's operational and developmental needs.

### 4 Innovation and improvement through leadership

Cambridge school leaders:

- Standard 1** understand the principles and practices of school improvement, leadership and management of change to enable the school to grow and flourish
- Standard 2** create a professional culture in which innovation and collaboration for the improvement of learning and teaching practice are encouraged
- Standard 3** allocate time and resources for the evaluation and improvement planning process that is based on data and stakeholder input
- Standard 4** establish and review documented procedures that evaluate staff performance and inform professional development needs
- Standard 5** promote and model collaboration among all staff to evaluate and share effective practice and to develop content knowledge and pedagogy
- Standard 6** establish whole-school responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the improvement plan.



### 5 Community engagement

Cambridge school leaders:

- Standard 1** actively engage with the wider community to build strong partnerships and collaborative relationships that support and reflect the purpose and values of the school
- Standard 2** promote and facilitate the involvement of parents and carers in the life of the school
- Standard 3** inspire student participation in the wider community, contributing to their development as responsible, active citizens.