



Cambridge International 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.

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.

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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

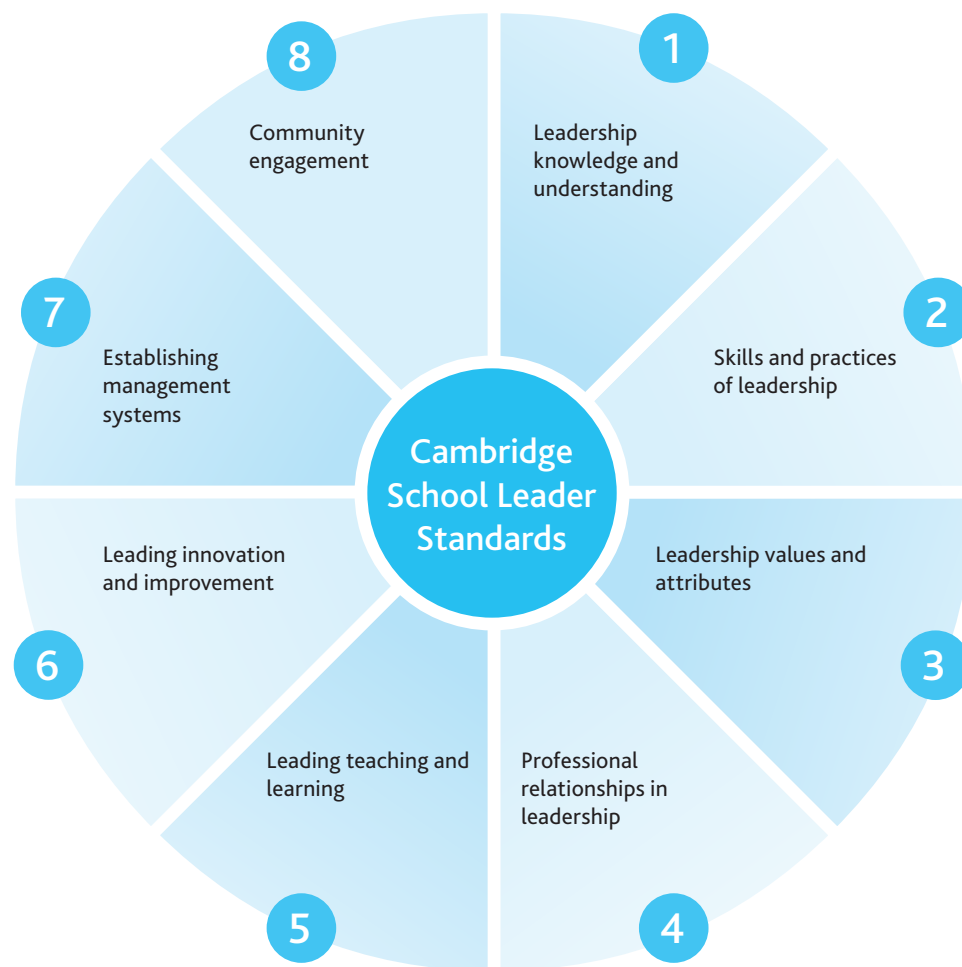
There are 40 Standard statements, organised under eight headings. The individual Standard statements are detailed and concrete. This should allow heads of schools and other users to clearly understand how to show they have met individual Standards.

The first four groups of Standards focus on the characteristics of school leaders in terms of knowledge and understanding, skills and practices, values and attributes, and professional relationships. The remaining groups of Standards focus on the most important parts of school leaders' work, including teaching and learning, innovation and improvement, management systems and community engagement.

Together, these eight groups 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 knowledge and understanding

Cambridge school leaders:

- 1.1 develop an understanding of the school and its community in order to inform their strategic leadership of the mission, vision and priorities of the school
- 1.2 maintain a current knowledge of research into child development, curriculum development and teaching and learning as a basis for their on-going evaluation of the school's work
- 1.3 understand the principles and practice of school improvement and of the leadership and management of change, in order to progress and refine the school's improvement programme
- 1.4 demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of contemporary research into educational leadership and the practices of effective leaders to support the reflective evaluation of their own practice.

2 Skills and practices of leadership

Cambridge school leaders:

- 2.1 use the range of leadership skills necessary to communicate the vision, mission and objectives of the school to staff, learners and the school community, and to create shared purpose and commitment to the vision and objectives
- 2.2 apply decision-making skills, and promote decision-making processes within the school, based on the use of data and characterised by collegial and consultative practice
- 2.3 distribute leadership responsibilities throughout the teaching staff and model professional support for others in leadership roles, including developing their own skills in mentoring and coaching
- 2.4 model lifelong learning by reflecting actively on their own practice, seeking feedback from others and taking opportunities for their own professional development, including advanced certification in leadership.

3 Leadership values and attributes

Cambridge school leaders:

- 3.1 demonstrate a consistent commitment to the learning, personal growth and well-being of all students and value high standards of achievement and conduct for all learners
- 3.2 demonstrate a consistent commitment to the well-being and professional development of all staff and to the development of their leadership potential
- 3.3 promote the best interests of the school and the community it serves, and the continuing improvement and sustainability of the school's vision and mission
- 3.4 model ethical conduct, marked by personal integrity, respect for others and fairness in their dealings with learners, staff, parents and the community.

4 Professional relationships in leadership

Cambridge school leaders:

- 4.1 establish professional relationships with all members of the school community characterised by respect and effective communication, and based on the development of trust and common educational purposes
- 4.2 demonstrate emotional intelligence and empathy, responding appropriately to the different values and perspectives within the school community, and seek positive outcomes to problems and challenges
- 4.3 facilitate team-building for the senior leadership team and model effective teamwork and professional conduct for other teams within the school
- 4.4 establish professional relationships with colleagues in other institutions, professional bodies and educational organisations, including Cambridge International, to contribute to the development of education and of leadership practice more widely.

5 Leading teaching and learning

Cambridge school leaders:

- 5.1 create a positive culture that provides professional support and challenge for teachers, promote individual development and value the achievements of all learners
- 5.2 lead, motivate and hold teachers accountable for developing effective teaching plans and activity programmes that take account of the developmental and learning needs of all their students, as well as developments in their subject and subject teaching
- 5.3 promote and model collaboration between individual teachers and teams, to evaluate and share effective practice and to develop curriculum knowledge and teaching skills
- 5.4 establish a culture of high expectations and high reward where exemplary student and staff conduct and commitment to learning is the norm and high achievement is valued and recognised in all aspects of school life
- 5.5 make sure that the school has appropriate policies and procedures in place for monitoring learning and progress at all levels, and that sound assessment data is used in decisions concerning students and in the evaluation of programmes and teaching
- 5.6 value the Cambridge Learner Attributes, interpreting them in the context of the school and its vision, and using them to shape the aspirations of teachers and students.

6 Leading innovation and improvement

Cambridge school leaders:

- 6.1 create a professional culture in which innovative practice is encouraged and where teachers are given opportunities to apply new ideas in their own teaching and in collaboration with others within and beyond the school
- 6.2 communicate information about and support for innovative programmes and practice to students, parents and other stakeholders, in order to create a receptive atmosphere for improvement
- 6.3 make sure that the school curriculum and other programmes are evaluated cyclically, using input from teachers, learners and other stakeholders, as the starting point for school improvement planning
- 6.4 lead the improvement planning process, based on the school's vision, mission and values, and use data about student progress and achievement as a key element in the plan
- 6.5 establish staff responsibilities, structures and timescales for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the improvement plan, motivating staff and making sure that plan objectives and outcomes are achieved
- 6.6 engage students, parents and the wider school community in support of the improvement programme, making sure that accountability requirements to the school governance and the community are met effectively.

7 Establishing management systems

Cambridge school leaders:

- 7.1 develop a leadership team of suitably qualified staff that is appropriate to the current and expected operational and developmental needs of the school
- 7.2 review the school's management processes and procedures to make sure that they are appropriate for the needs of the school, evaluating and making adjustments to achieve positive impacts on learner outcomes
- 7.3 establish procedures and responsibilities for identifying and filling staffing needs with appropriately qualified individuals who have clear job descriptions and lines of accountability
- 7.4 establish documented procedures to assess and develop the work of all staff, supported by adequately resourced professional development programmes, including for those aspiring to positions of leadership
- 7.5 make sure that financial and other resources are properly and effectively developed and managed, in line with relevant governance requirements and the current and projected needs of the school and its programmes
- 7.6 develop policies and procedures for the work of teachers and staff, ensuring that guidance is clear and consistent with school values and external requirements, and that it is communicated effectively within the school community.

8 Community engagement

Cambridge school leaders:

- 8.1 promote and facilitate the involvement of parents and other adults responsible for learners in the life of the school and support the development of home–school partnership in support of learning
- 8.2 identify and engage other stakeholders and stakeholder groups, communicating the mission and objectives of the school to its community and encouraging contributions to the life of the school by community members
- 8.3 encourage students' contribution to the wider community and support initiatives for community and service learning in the school programme
- 8.4 establish effective working relationships with school governance and/or management, carrying out responsibilities in line with agreed governance policies and guidelines, and representing the school and the needs of learners and staff effectively within the governance or management structures
- 8.5 develop and maintain professional relationships with leaders in other schools and educational institutions locally to support the needs of the school and to promote professional communities of practice for the benefit of the wider educational system
- 8.6 take opportunities to engage with other educational bodies, including Cambridge International, to contribute to the improvement of educational provision and leadership practice nationally and internationally.