

## National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers (2015)

The above standards were published in January 2015 and can be accessed on the website link (National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers)).

These latest standards are for headteachers only and are not mandatory. They replace the headteacher standards that were originally published in 2004. They are designed to be accessible to all maintained phases and sectors. Employers may choose to use them. The Department for Education (DfE) has produced supplementary guidance which suggests how the standards might be used. The NASUWT submitted evidence to the Review Group which developed the standards ([www.nasuwt.org.uk/Leadership](http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/Leadership)).

### **NASUWT's advice**

The NASUWT has serious reservations about the Standards for Headteachers and also about the accompanying DfE guidance document.

The NASUWT is concerned about the way in which the Standards are used in the context of headteacher appraisal.

The use of the Standards for the performance management of headteachers in the context of the 2012 Appraisal Regulations in effect gives the Standards de facto statutory status and changes profoundly the way in which the Standards are understood and used in practice. As soon as the Standards are used in headteacher appraisal, they become relevant standards that headteachers would, as required by the 2012 Regulations, be 'assessed against'. Many governing bodies would be likely to understand this as meaning that the Standards should, in fact, be used as a checklist of baseline expectations, with an annual requirement on headteachers to demonstrate that they are continuing to meet each Standard. The NASUWT has evidence that this is happening in practice.

The DfE guidance and the preamble to the Standards state that they are 'aspirational', that they should not be used as a crude appraisal checklist and that they do not represent a minimum baseline of expected performance. The NASUWT is concerned that, despite this guidance, the Standards are being abused in practice.

Under no circumstances would the NASUWT support use of the Standards in their current form for the purposes of headteacher appraisal.

The NASUWT believes that the Standards are not fit for purpose.

The NASUWT advocates that any coherent system of school leader standards must apply across the entire leadership group, they should be developmental, supportive and progressive, and should not solely be applied to headteachers.

*Briefing*

Any standards for headteachers should operate on the basis of ensuring that headteachers have the requisite knowledge, skills and disposition to be lead practitioners and therefore bona fide leaders of teaching and learning. These do not.

Standards for school leaders should cohere with those in place for other members of the teacher workforce and should reflect their statutory status. These are not statutory.

Parents and the public will not understand why these are optional standards and not a requirement for all headteachers.

The Standards pretend to exist to 'secure high academic standards' but, since they are not statutory, this cannot be the case.

The NASUWT believes that the language used in the Standards within each domain is ambiguous, arbitrary and open to interpretation by headteachers and governors and therefore leads to inconsistencies across schools. The NASUWT is concerned that in their current form the Standards create conditions which contribute to increased workload and excessive bureaucracy and monitoring, which is contrary to Ministers' expressed concerns on ending excessive workload.

The NASUWT is concerned that the supporting guidance accompanying the Standards offers headteachers and governors huge variance in the way they can be used.

The NASUWT believes that all aspiring leaders should have the opportunity to develop into leadership roles and should have a clear understanding of what standards they will be expected to meet. The current framework of standards does not support this, neither does it ensure that aspiring leaders can identify or obtain the CPD they need.

The NASUWT is concerned that not all headteachers/governing bodies are even aware of the Standards and how they can be used.

The supporting guidance published by the DfE stresses that the Standards inspire public confidence. However, the NASUWT believes the Standards offer little remedy to the current challenges faced by schools and the teaching profession and have made no positive contribution to resolving the current crisis in school leader recruitment and retention.

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