



## Thought Leadership – The School Vision



## Arriving at or reviewing the school vision

As we all know the first core function as exemplified in the governance handbook of any governing board (GB) is to ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. This is a simple sentence loaded with a complex meaning. I will attempt to unravel the first aspect surrounding 'clarity of vision' and the information needed to support a school vision in being clear.

The essential focus of this sentence is the word 'clarity', and unfortunately this is where many governing boards flounder. It leads us to ask the questions, is there clarity in our school vision or does it lack clarity?

Let's explore this further. The school vision is often spoken in conjunction with the school mission statement, motto, values and ethos statement. These aspects are all interconnected by a common thread, but they are all subtly different.

Effective vision statements are usually short, memorable, inclusive, aspirational and capture the essence of what the GB aims to do.

The vision statement seeks to improve on your current situation and arrive at the potential of your school. It outlines the future telling all where you want to be, it answers the questions where do we aim to be? This is the chance to tell everyone about the big dream you hope to achieve in an inspirational way. It describes a new destination for you. What you see as possible for others. It is aligned to your core values and ethos. Core values and ethos usually centre around honesty, excellence, integrity, fairness, inclusivity, responsibility, respect, reliability, team work and a positive attitude.

Arriving at a **vision statement** must involve the GB talking to stakeholders – pupils, parents, staff and community. Then, using the information gathered, making a sharp analysis of the current situation enabling the GB to crystallise what the school vision should look like.

Example of a vision statement.

**St Mary's Primary will be the school of choice for those seeking excellence in learning in an inclusive environment.**

Your **school motto** supports the vision statement. It is a very succinct version of the vision statement which is usually used as a header for letters and documents.

The vision can then be expanded into a **mission statement** that centres on the ethos and core values of the school. The mission statement is the job description of the vision statement. It states clearly and without ambiguity how you will achieve your vision, it answers the question what do we do, who you do it for, how you do it? It talks about the present leading to the future. Here are two examples of how it could look-

**St Mary's Primary school is an inclusive learning community where all will work co-operatively striving for excellence, preparing pupils to gain a positive attitude for full participation in an ever-changing society.**

or

**St Mary's Primary school will provide a creative and stimulating learning environment, always aiming to meet the needs of all our pupils supported by a culture of excellence and nurture.**

It takes time and effort to arrive at a school vision which outlines the potential for your school, that can be understood by all and fulfils the core function of the GB having 'clarity of vision'.

If you need any support with this please contact the Entrust Governor Services team at [governors@entrust-ed.co.uk](mailto:governors@entrust-ed.co.uk).