



Thought Leadership – Will your Strategy deliver your Vision?



Do you have a vision for your school? Is it something that you can 'hang your hat on' and know when you have achieved it? Are your 'Strategy Plan'\* and Headteacher/Staff objectives all aligned?

One of the key priorities of the autumn term is Performance Management. By a strange quirk of fate the Headteacher's performance management (HTMP) doesn't need to be completed until Christmas whilst the staff performance management must be completed by the end of October. This can lead to staff having their appraisal before the Headteacher and to me this has always been a nonsense. It surely makes more sense for the HTPM to be carried out first so their objectives cascade through the staffing structure.

Whilst we are on the subject of HTPM, do make sure it is the Governing Board selecting and appointing the external advisor, and certainly avoid any 'recommendation' from the Headteacher.

It makes a lot of sense before carrying out HTPM to go through the school's 'Strategy Plan'\* to ensure it is still relevant to the challenges the school currently faces. More importantly, is it still taking you in the direction you should be going, as laid out in your Vision Statement?

When running Governor training sessions it never ceases to amaze me how many Governing Boards have a solid strategy document but when I ask them about their vision for the school there is a lot of head scratching with many admitting they don't have one, even though it is one of the three stated core functions.

A good Vision Statement should state explicitly what the school will look like in three to five years' time, including an expression of what the children leaving school will have achieved.

**The strategy should flow directly from the vision, since the strategy is intended to achieve the vision!**

So why not review your Vision Statement and Strategy, and carry out a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis at the same time in the summer term so you can use it to inform objectives set in the autumn term!

The Logical Order of Things

- 1. Mission Statement:** Who we are? What's our purpose?
- 2. Vision Statement:** Where do we want to be?
- 3. Strategy:** How we will achieve our vision?
- 4. Goals, Tasks and Objectives:** What actions need to be taken?

So there you have it - a clear plan to move your school forward.

Ensure:

1. You have an agreed and well-communicated Vision for your school.
2. Your SWOT analysis is telling you where you are right now
3. Your 'Strategy Plan' is taking you on the right path to achieve your Vision.
4. The Head's Performance Management takes place before the staff's.
5. The Head's objectives are linked to the school's priorities.
6. The staff's objectives 'tumble down' to ensure the performance of both them and the school improves and are aligned.

\*The school's 'Strategy Plan' is referred to by different names/acronyms including SDP, SIP, School Development Plan, Strategic Development Plan, School Improvement Plan etc.