

Creating a new vision for your school or trust

How to create a vision and strategy

Clarity of vision is the first of the three core functions for every governing board. It's up to the governors and trustees to ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined.

But a number of barriers prevent governing boards from creating a clear and effective vision.

Understanding the word 'vision'

The first is that there can be confusion about what the word 'vision' means. Typically, the answer to a question about vision will yield an answer that either articulates the values of the school or trust, or references the senior executive leader's vision. Our view is that the school's vision should state explicitly what the school or trust will look like in three to five years' time, including a concise expression of what the pupils will have left school having learned.

Whose vision is it?

The second barrier is a misunderstanding about who owns the vision. The initial visioning work should be carried out by the governors or trustees in partnership with senior leaders.

Carry out a SWOT analysis?

To get to where you want to be, you've got to know where you are now. A good starting point is a 'strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats' (SWOT) analysis to ascertain how well the school or trust is doing in the light of both internal performance and external pressures.

Listen to your leaders

It's also important to listen to senior leaders, so they should be given a chance to express their views about the current landscape and possible direction of travel. Not only are they experts who know the likely pitfalls, they are also going to be tasked with achieving the vision - and it must be achievable.

Aim to improve

In projecting forward a few years, we should be aiming to do things better, to continuously improve, to make the experience of school the very best it can be for children and young people.