



# Compelling School Visions

9 examples of visions that work

# Vision is a necessary courtesy of leadership

I believe vision is a necessary courtesy of leadership. You want your team to follow you, to get on board, but often, as leaders, we've not communicated clearly what that is. That makes it hard for others to follow. Why haven't we communicated it clearly? I believe it's because it can be hard to put our true vision into words.

Every school has a vision, yet I believe very few are effective.

*Why is that?*

Because most of us have not been shown how to create a vision.

*A vision should tell your team where you are going.*

It should be compelling.

*Compel comes from 'compellere' which is the Latin for 'to drive together', and an effective vision will galvanise your team into action.*

I've been lucky to help lots of schools create their vision and I thought it would help more heads and more schools if you could see examples of what a great vision looks like. In 'Compelling School Visions', you will see a collection of great visions; some are long, some are short, some are stories, and some are poems.

I hope they will inspire you and show you what a great vision can look like.



*Sonia Gill, Founder, Author & Director of Heads Up Ltd*

# 9 compelling school visions

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# The making of Joseph Martin – Capel Manor Primary School, Enfield, London

Dear Diary,

My little baby, Joseph, started school today. Boy was he nervous! He wouldn't let go of my leg and the worry was etched on his little face!

Susan

Merry Christmas Mum & Dad,

Our Joseph is a proper little man now. He loves school, has lots of friends, and is reading and writing a bit too!

Love Simon, Susan & Joseph xxx

## Capel Manor Year 6 Personal Comment

As Joseph leaves Capel Manor, I am extremely proud of the young man he has become. He is respectful, kind and is not afraid to stand up for what he believes in. He says he wants to be a vet, and I truly believe he will be!

Miss Cannon

## Year 11 Presentation Evening

As Headteacher of Lee Valley High School, it is with great honour to open this presentation evening which showcases our pupil's successes. Our first award, the community award, goes to Joseph Martin for his dedication and service to the Enfield Dog Rescue Centre.

Dear UCAS,

My name is Joseph Martin and I would like to be considered for the veterinary course at the Royal Veterinary College.

As I enter adulthood, I look back upon my life experiences which have brought me to this point and I know the skills I have learnt will take me far in life.

My parents and first school years gave me confidence, independence, and made me resilient. Teachers inspired me to develop a true love for learning.

My voluntary work at the Enfield Dog Rescue Centre and my passion for science has motivated me through the years to become a successful qualified vet.

I am a hard-working individual who, I know, can make a difference to the life of animals.

Yours sincerely,

Joseph Martin



# Balfour Junior School, Chatham, Kent

We will build a community in Medway where children are more than just educated and where all feel safe and supported. They will be empowered to change their own lives and the lives of those around them. They will be able to stand up and become pillars of the community, making a difference.

We will be good role models who inspire through a love of learning and be motivated to make a positive impact on each other's lives. Together, we will continually strive to remove the barriers to success and fear of failure.

We will provide a culture of mutual respect and acceptance with children moving onto their next venture with the skills and values to set them on the path to achieve their dreams. Our school will take pride in leading the children in Medway on their journey - both educational and for life; enabling them to drive their own futures to greater success and shape our diverse community for the better.

'Our Senior leadership team worked with Sonia to devise and refine a vision that felt right for our school; one that we could not only all be committed to now but we could also 'grow into' as we moved forward and staff and children changed.'

'The impact of the final version has been remarkable as it is used by all stakeholders to not only define what we, as a community, stand for but also what we all expect from any new members who join us.'



'It is a living record of our ambition for the children in our care and it was the guidance of Sonia that made it a possibility.'

'It gelled us together and gave us a common language to aspire for the very best for all our pupils, not just in attainment or progress terms but in the development of attitudes and life -long skills.'

*Mrs Parnell, Headteacher*

# Sandridge Primary School, St Albans, Hertfordshire

We promise to make sure that no door is closed to you because we want you to have a life full of choice. We will make sure our excellent teaching means that you will make better progress than most other children in Maths and English. This will open some of the biggest and heaviest doors. These doors take time, patience, effort, trust and resilience, but we promise to help you and support you and you will find the way through.

If you choose the music pathway, we promise to teach you an instrument – you can be part of a band and then an orchestra – you will learn harder and harder pieces – you will become a musician and speak musical language. You may choose the sport pathway – this leads to a variety of exciting doors and through each door a specialist teacher will coach you and train you and help you to improve. There are many more doors and many more pathways.

When you get through them, you will see some different pathways ahead of you. Whichever pathway you take will lead to another door – each door is colourful and exciting.

The doors and pathways all connect – you can go from one to another – there is no limit to your doors.

*At Sandridge, your pathways  
will be endless.*



# Elveden and Forest Academies, Brandon, Suffolk

Our children will journey through this school building a memory bank of learning experiences that positively impact on them for the rest of their lives.

We will build a collection of amazing memories where learning is fun and education is valued.





# Worple Primary School, Isleworth, Greater London

Our job is to give every child the life chances they deserve, no matter what their starting point. We have a responsibility to guide our children to their future and, at Worple, we do that by delivering lessons guided by the children's curiosity. We make sure there isn't a moment's boredom and teach them in a way they will remember. We make every second count.



# St John's Church of England School, Stanmore, London

*I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength.*

*I made a difference when you felt safe enough to come into school and not look back.*

*I made a difference when you trusted me enough to talk and allowed me to care.*

*I made a difference when I recognised your strengths and enabled you to reach for the stars.*

*I made a difference when you felt it was ok to be different and confident about who you are.*

*I made a difference when you punched the air and said 'Yes!' so many times.*

*I made a difference when I took the time to make your learning exciting and engaging.*

*I made a difference when I met you 10 years later and saw how happy and successful you were.*

*You're the reason I made a difference today.*

Hear Headteacher Jo Hester talking about the impact of the vision in their school at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOHSzfaR47Q>

# Julian's Primary School, Streatham and West Norwood, London



"To open doors."

# Kenmore Park Junior School, Queensbury, London



"We believe Education is the most powerful gift, ours to give."

The process of developing the vision not only helped to develop our shared vision but it was also a mechanism for bringing the senior and middle leaders together to talk about what was really important to us'.

*Michael Baumring Headteacher ,  
Kenmore Park Junior School*



# Chellaston Academy

## Secondary school and sixth form

It's our privilege to have a role which is going to change the future, to shape society and the world.

At Chellaston, we need to lay the foundations for our students, because somewhere along the line someone will have the impact.

Shakespeare must have had an English teacher. Who gave him such inspiration? But who talks about them? Einstein must have had a physics teacher. Who unlocked that potential in him? There could be someone in our school who saves the human race.

There could be someone in our school who leads us when the world's resources have run out.

There could be someone in our school who resolves the crisis in the Middle East.

My job, our job, is to find that person and help them become it, because they won't know it yet.

It's our privilege to have a role which is going to change the future, to shape society, and the why.

And it doesn't matter where they have come from, they all have something valuable to contribute to the human race.

So what if "Doing a Chellaston" became synonymous with educational excellence...

We've all heard it said, in corridors, in staffrooms and conferences across the land 'We're doing a Chellaston'. It's become such a phrase in schools we've almost forgotten what it means and where it came from.

So let's go back. Let's go back to Derby. Back to Chellaston Academy in 2016.



The school was 'technically' doing ok... at least on the surface. But underneath were cracks, cracks that papering over wouldn't fix. Results were slipping, parents were complaining, and staff were confused – because a new boy had arrived; the new head.

Fast forward 2 years and the school was judged outstanding and in the twenty years since then it has only been outstanding. It has even been said to be at least as desirable a school as Harrow and Eaton.

We use the phrase when we are referring to the endless pursuit of educational excellence, particularly in challenging circumstances.

By its very definition, it's a bar that will never be reached. But that's what Chellaston began striving for 20 years ago, and continues to this day.

How did they do it? Well it's hard to bottle, to sum up, and no list is by any means definitive. But speaking to former Headteacher , Kevin Gaiderman, it's clear that expectations had a key role. Ed Moore talks about how everyone was expected to be a leader and teaching staff, who lived through those formative years in the twenty-teens, talk openly about their own development and how the school gave as much as it expected by supporting their excellence in completing masters courses, developing teaching skills, and even pioneering new, better ways of creating learning, particularly thinking skills. All this happened at a time when the teaching profession was being undermined and teacher shortages were rife.

You just need to look at what their students are doing now to see what this pursuit of excellence has created - many sit in parliament, others are sporting stars and others, less well known, like Sheena Day who is leading a project to replant the Amazon rainforest, all hailing from Chellaston Academy.

So, next time you use the phrase 'we're doing a Chellaston' remember it's a lofty pursuit, the pursuit of excellence, and you'll never get there, but it doesn't mean you shouldn't try.



# Do you want a compelling vision that your team can remember, get excited about and make a reality?

Our free 'Create a great vision' e-course can help you! [Click here](#) to sign up. On it you'll learn:

1. Is your vision working? A simple acid test to find out.
2. Why is a vision so important (why you can't just 'tick the box' of having one)
3. Who should write your vision
4. The difference between a vision and mission
5. The most common mistakes made in visions

And all in bite size chunks (5 mins or less for each part) because I know how busy school life is.

See you on the course!



*Sonia Gill, Founder, Author & Director of Heads Up Ltd*