

# Meet the 5 Vision Gremlins



**They stop you having a powerful, effective vision.  
Get to know them and how you can beat them!**

# Heads Up: Supporting you to create the outstanding school you've always dreamt of leading.

To be outstanding (really outstanding, not just Ofsted's definition), you need to create the right culture. How do you do that? We believe an outstanding culture is created when 3 core strategies are used very well:



**Sonia Gill** is the Founder and Director of Heads Up, an educational leadership consultancy whose mission is to make every UK primary school outstanding. She's supported 100s of school leaders create an outstanding culture and here she's going to tell you about the Vision Gremlins that hold school visions back, so that you can be free of them.

# There was a head teacher who worked hard at creating the best school she could.

She had a vision - she'd got the whole team to join in with making it because she wanted them to get behind it, to really own it, and be inspired to do everything in their power to make it a reality.

But she found that it didn't work the way she thought it would. People always said a leader should have a vision, which she did, but no-one seemed to want to follow it. In fact, no-one even seemed to remember it. Why was this...?

## Meet the Vision Gremlins.

These gremlins are found attacking and damaging visions up and down the land, and once you know who they are, you can fight back. There are 5 common gremlins, each with their own unique skills to damage your vision; come and meet them, find out their weak spots, and how to get them out of your vision.



Mr Motto



Ms Dull



Shallow Hal



Hypno-gremlin



Miss Sion



# Gremlin one: Hypno-gremlin



## Special powers:

This gremlin has the power to hypnotise you with your vision, but he won't hypnotise you so you remember - quite the opposite - he hypnotises people so they don't remember the vision.



## The damage:

People struggle to remember your vision, and although sometimes they get around it by rote-learning it, this doesn't work well enough. You're a teacher, you know rote-learning isn't a strong form of learning, so this wastes time and energy and, at the end of it, no-one really understands what the vision is about anyway!



## How to spot this gremlin:

He loves confounding, unnecessary, superfluous, verbosity to position your sentiments to your educational conglomerate.

Yikes! He bit me! Ok, what I meant to write was:

He works his magic by using long words to tell people your vision.



## Weapons to defeat:

Use the Simplicity Sieve. I know a sieve is not the most likely weapon but its beauty is, well, it's simplicity, because it sieves out any words with more than 3 syllables, which gets this pesky gremlin out of your vision and out of your hair.

Here's a vision that Hypno-gremlin has been gnawing on:

To provide an exceptional educational experience which excites, inspires, and challenges children and teachers to be the best they can be.





# Gremlin two: Shallow Hal



## Special powers:

This is a particularly nasty gremlin. He rips the heart right out of your vision by hiding the reasons you want it.



## The damage:

He makes your vision lack emotional connection and that is what makes a great vision so compelling. This way, people might agree with your vision on an intellectual level but they don't feel moved by it. A vision needs to move people; it needs to get them to shout 'Yeah! I want that too!' otherwise it's just words. Shallow Hal works his particular breed of mischief by making sure that doesn't happen.



## How to spot this gremlin:

Is anyone excited by your vision? Are you? When you tell people your vision, do they look excited? If not, this devious and tricky gremlin has gotten in there.



## Weapons to defeat:

The Mirror of Meaning is your best defence. These mirrors have been upgraded in recent years so that they can record you, and these are the best ones to use (modern names include iPhone and Galaxy). Look in the mirror and tell yourself why you want your vision. Then watch it back. Then go out there and use this in your vision; why you want this vision is the heart of it and puts Shallow Hal in his place!

Here's a vision Shallow Hall has got his hands on:

To create a school where everyone has a love of learning.





# Gremlin three: Miss Sion – The queen of disguise



## Special powers:

Illusions are her forte; she loves to make what is really a mission, pass off as a vision.



## The damage:

Missions are important, but a mission is not a vision and a vision is not a mission - if they're confused, then you don't get the full power of your amazing vision. A vision needs to be unachievable, that's what its power is, whereas a mission needs to be achievable. The problem with just having a mission is that when you achieve it, all the energy drops out of it, that's because a vision is the thing that keeps the energy up, making your team as inspired and motivated as you want them to be.



## How to spot this gremlin:

A mission is something that can be achieved, even if it takes 5, 10, or even 100 years to achieve it, but the fact it's achievable makes it a mission.

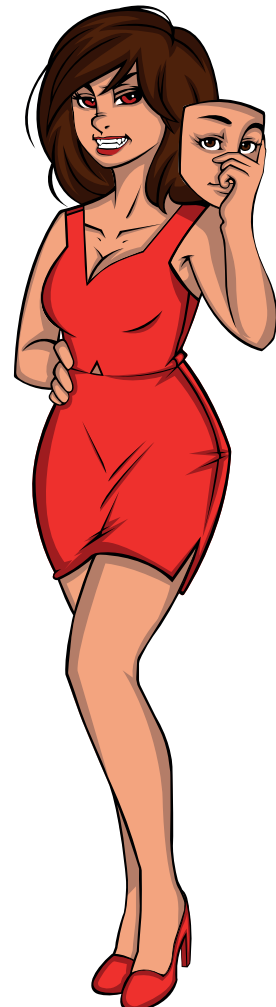


## Weapons to defeat:

Use the Unachievable Wand – it might sound like an unlikely weapon, but a great vision is unachievable, and that's where its power comes from. Your vision should never be achievable, it should be such a large change that no amount of time will get you there, but it's somewhere good, that's worth the work to get there and every step closer to this infinite goal does good in the world.

Here's a vision Miss Sion has been able to sabotage:

To be an outstanding school.





# Gremlin four: Mr Motto



## Special powers:

This master gremlin casts a spell to let you think a motto is a vision. It works so well because it's so easy to remember and so we think we've dodged Hypno-gremlin, but we've only been attacked by another gremlin!



## The damage:

Love learning every day. This has all the hallmarks of Mr. Motto. A motto is nothing like a vision; it doesn't convey anywhere near the amount of information needed for a real vision because it doesn't tell us where we're going or why.



## How to spot this gremlin:

You need to look out for short, catchy, alliterative statements that don't paint a picture of the place, or the vision, that you're trying to get to. Mottos are good, and they do have their place, but that's not in the place of a vision.



## Weapons to defeat:

Yeast. Yep, you read that right. You need to go bigger, not smaller, so people can understand what the vision really means, so go back to your vision and spend some time expanding it, work that yeast in and let it rise. Understand what sits behind those motto words, and then don't try to boil it down to just a few.

Mr Motto has had his way with these visions:

Shine bright  
Love learning everyday  
Every child matters





# Gremlin five: Ms Dull



## Special powers:

She does the total opposite of what a vision should do; instead of exciting people, she bores the socks off anyone who comes into contact with it!



## The damage:

No-one remembers or even cares about your vision, and hearing it is a bit like watching paint dry. You might hear people say 'It's just words!' or 'But what does that mean?!'



## How to spot this gremlin:

When you read your vision, does it create pictures in your mind? A vision should, that's why it's called a vision. If it doesn't, Ms Dull has had her hands all over it.



## Weapons to defeat:

Jackanory – tell a story which illustrates your vision. Simple, but so effective against Ms Dull that it's power will scare her off for a long time, possibly even for good.

Ms Dull has been able to weave her dull magic on this vision (and it looks like she's teamed up with Hypno-gremlin as well):

We are committed to delivering inspirational teaching that develops confident learners. Our pupils take ownership for their learning and are proud of their achievements, develop resilience and are prepared for life in modern Britain.





# If you want your school to be outstanding, you need to get your vision in shape...

...a bad one does little for you, but a great one gets your team on your bus and chomping at the bit to achieve it.

**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!



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