

## How to create genuinely outstanding schools

Sonia Gill,  
Founder and Director,  
Heads Up

**@SoniaG\_HeadsUp**  
**#heads up**

---

Would it be helpful if I help you:

- Understand where your school is on the journey to being genuinely outstanding?
- Show you what need to focus on to make your school exceptional?
- Give you some quick actionable tips to help you move forward?

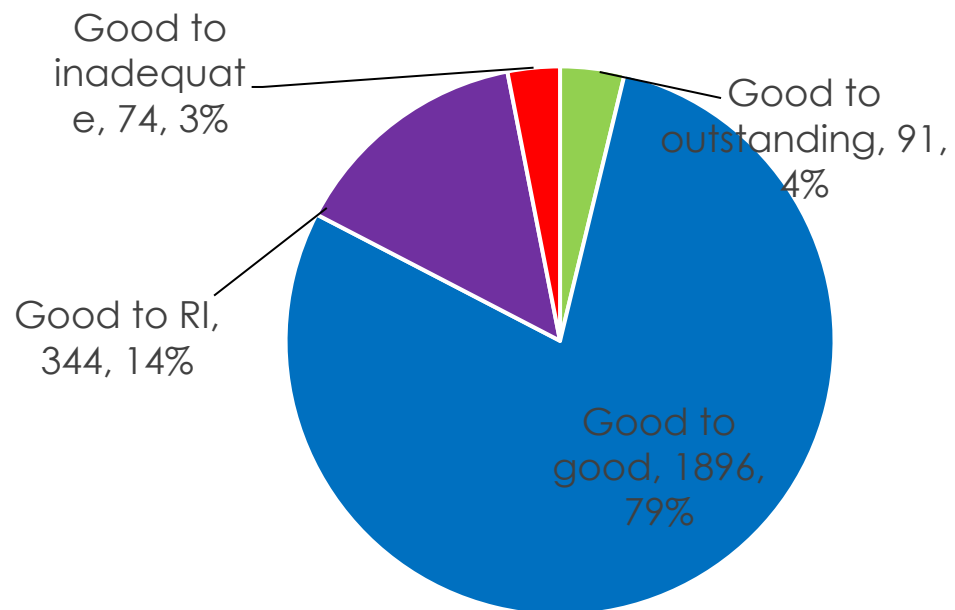
Can every school can be outstanding?

# But very few schools move from 'Good' to 'Outstanding'

## Primary 2016/17

2405 reports

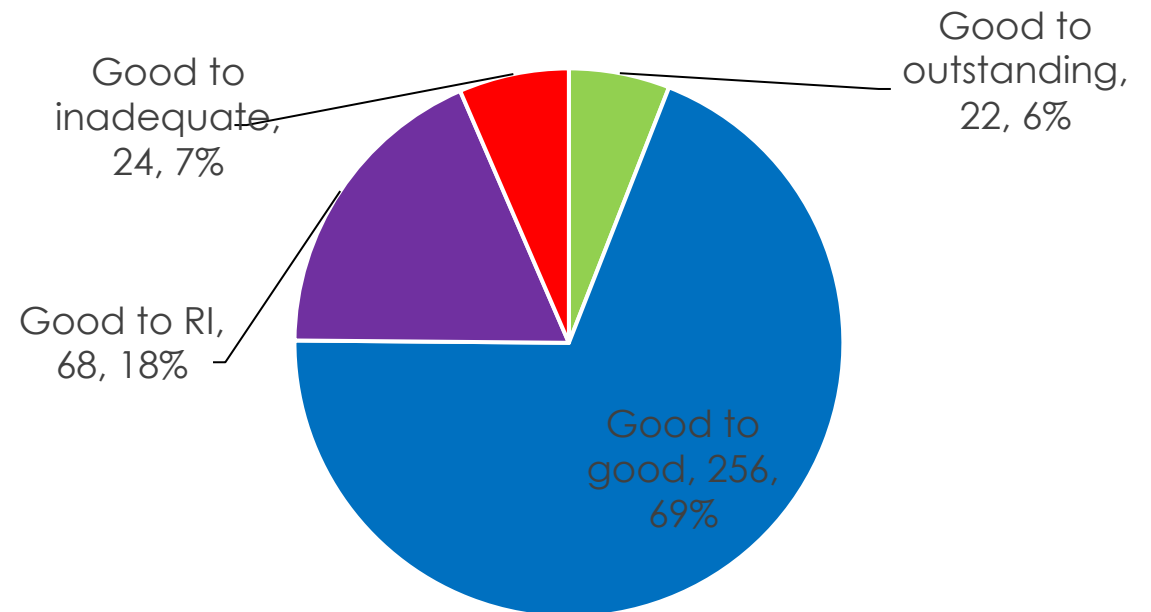
96% stay at good or get worse



## Secondary 2016/17

370 reports

94% stay at good or get worse



What makes it hard for your school to move from good to great?

- Tell me in the chat box

# What gets you to 'good' doesn't get you to 'outstanding'

1. Common limiting beliefs
2. Myths about being outstanding
3. Good is the enemy of great
4. 'Good' is good enough

I've met a lot of outstanding heads and walked into a lot of outstanding schools. The myths aren't true.



So if none of that is true why is it so hard to create a genuinely outstanding school?



The real barrier to outstanding is our ability to create a high performing culture

Culture is the qualitative shift to move from good to outstanding.

## What is culture?



Behaviour



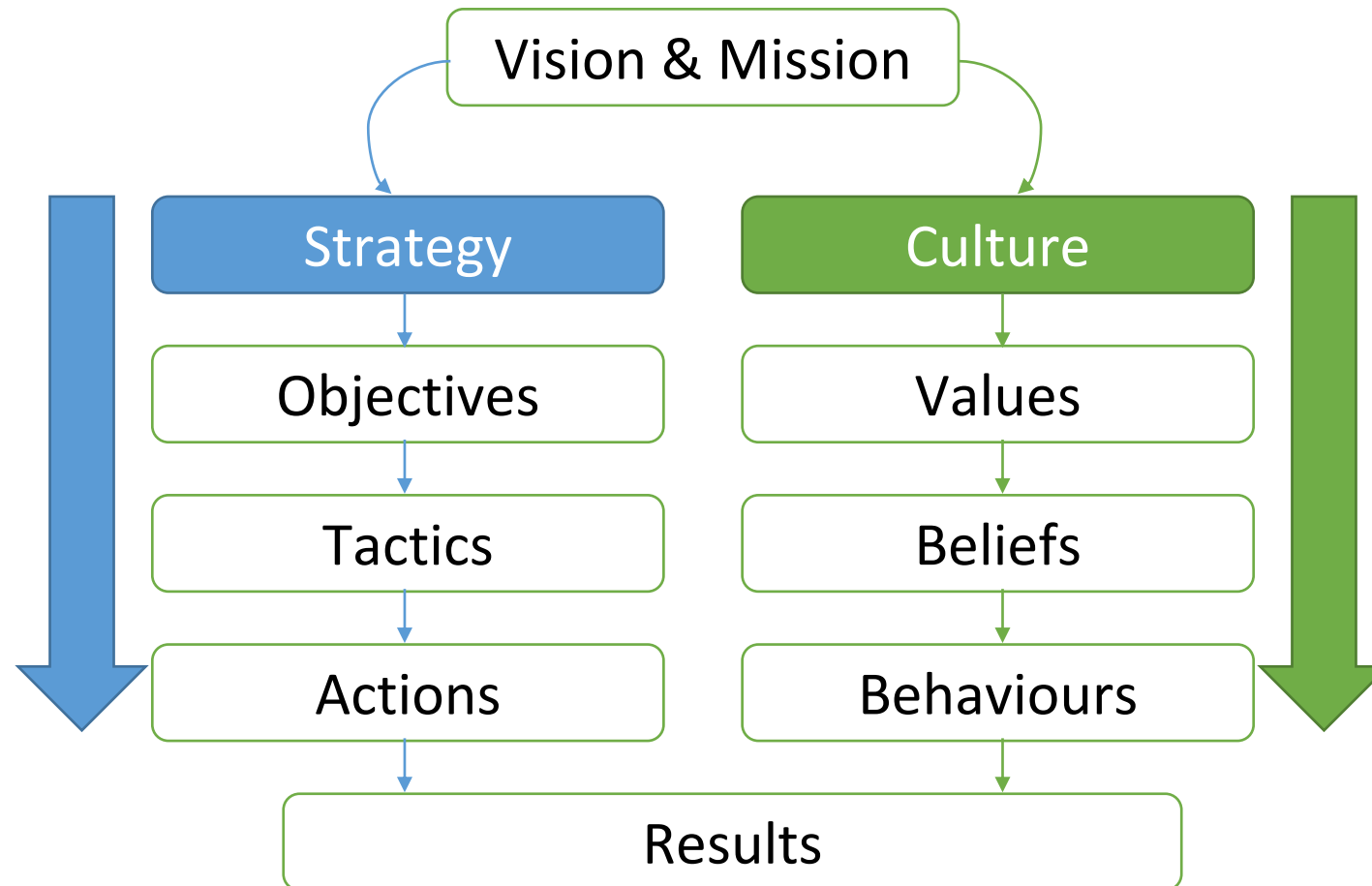
Time



Culture

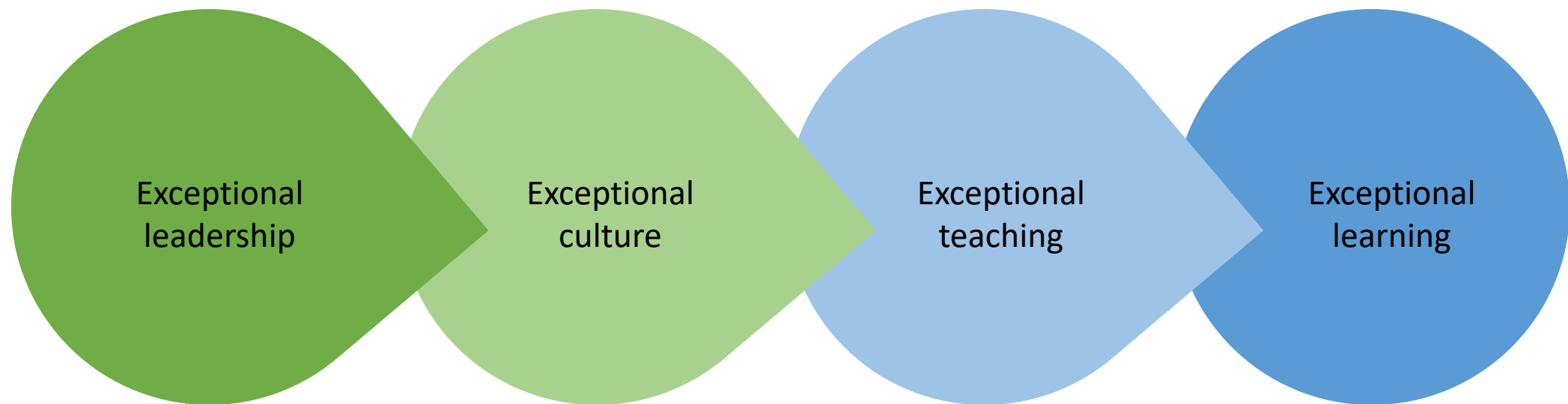
- Culture is a way of life for a group of people
- The behaviours, beliefs, values and expectations
- Often not explicitly stated
- Usually a result of happenstance

Culture enhances strategy in a way strategy can't do on its own



It's why every problem you have is a people problem

## Leaders create culture



At Heads Up we help schools become genuinely by creating high performing cultures using three leadership strategies:

Percentage of schools that maintain or gain 'outstanding':

Average since 2014: 6%  
Heads Up: 24%



## Diagnostic questions:

- Does everyone know your vision and use it to drive forward their actions?
- Does everyone live the school's values?
- Are there no difficult conversations to be had in your school, only feedback conversations?
- At least 20% of your team will become outstanding practitioners in the next year (in whatever role they are in) because of how you develop them?

What would you like to focus on today?



Create a compelling vision which inspires your team:  
where are we going and why should I come along?

A vision creates your culture because  
it gives purpose and meaning to what you do  
and speaks to your values

Vision is a necessary courtesy of leadership

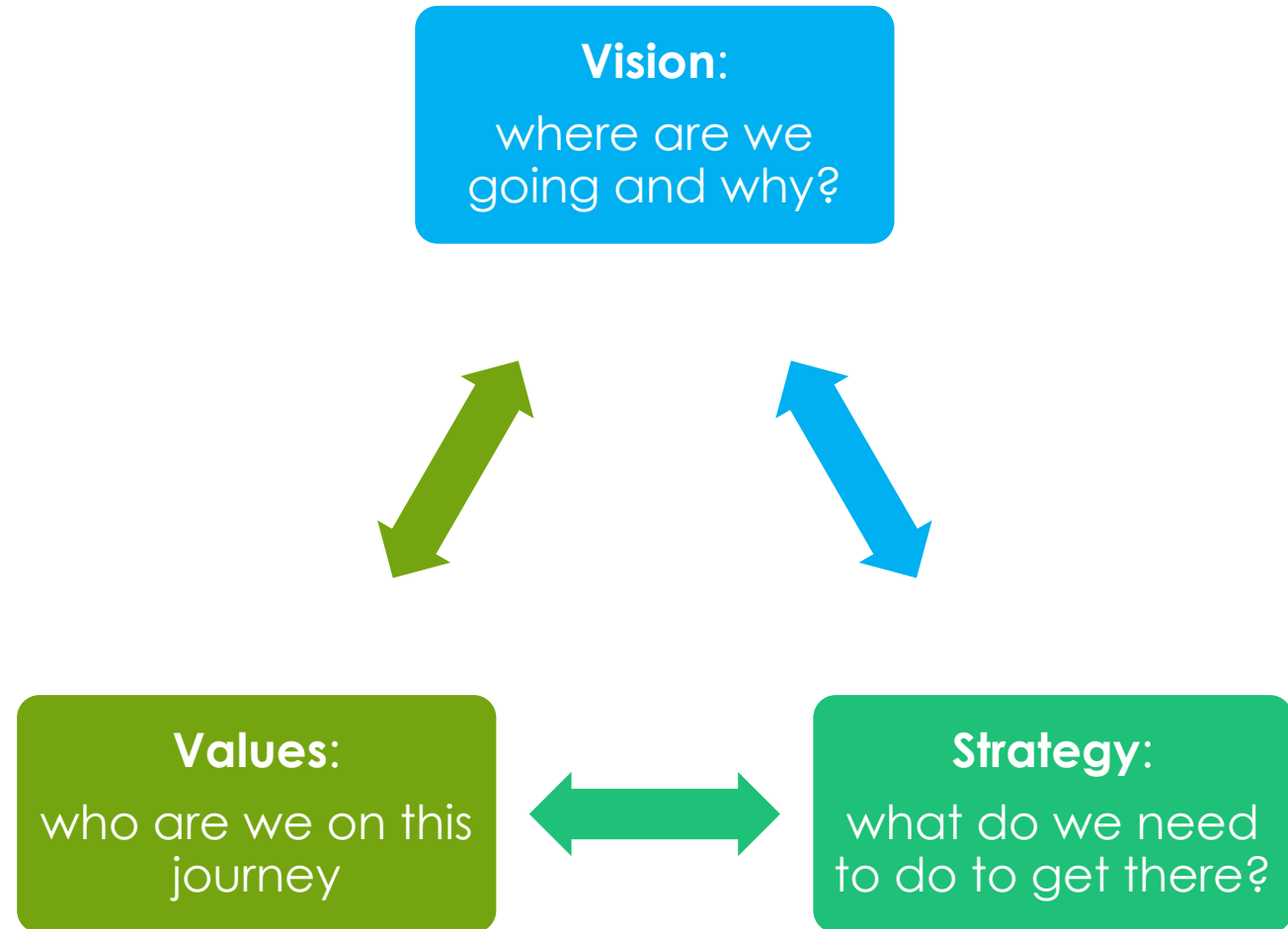
You've all got a vision...

- But is it working well enough?

We're going on a holiday...

## Your cultural eco-system: vision, values and strategy

They have distinct,  
interlocking roles.



A cultural eco-system, set up for excellence, makes life a lot easier

- Decision making is easier
- Well-being
- What to say no to, what to say yes to
- Recruitment
- Filling your school roll
- Difficult conversations – take care of themselves or are simply feedback
- Where to spend, where not to
- And more!

Why visions go wrong:

Meet the five vision gremlins



## Mr Motto



**Mr Motto** is a master gremlin who casts a spell to let you think a motto is a vision.

It works well because it's so easy to remember but it lacks depth and meaning.

# Miss-Sion



## Miss-Sion

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.



## Shallow Hal



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

He makes your vision lack emotional connection.

## Ms Dull



**Ms Dull** 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!

## Hypno Gremlin



**Hypno Gremlin** has the power to hypnotise you with your vision, but he won't hypnotise you so you remember - quite the opposite - he hypnotises by using big, long words.

The result: people forget the vision.

## What most visions are like:

We are a school who is aspirational for all our children.

We focus on quality first teaching and individualised learning.

We continually strive to develop confident, successful, happy and unique individuals who foster a deep love of learning and are able to make a positive contribution in the world.

Live, love, learn.

## What most visions are like:

We are a school who is **aspirational** for all our children.  
We focus on quality first teaching and **individualised** learning.



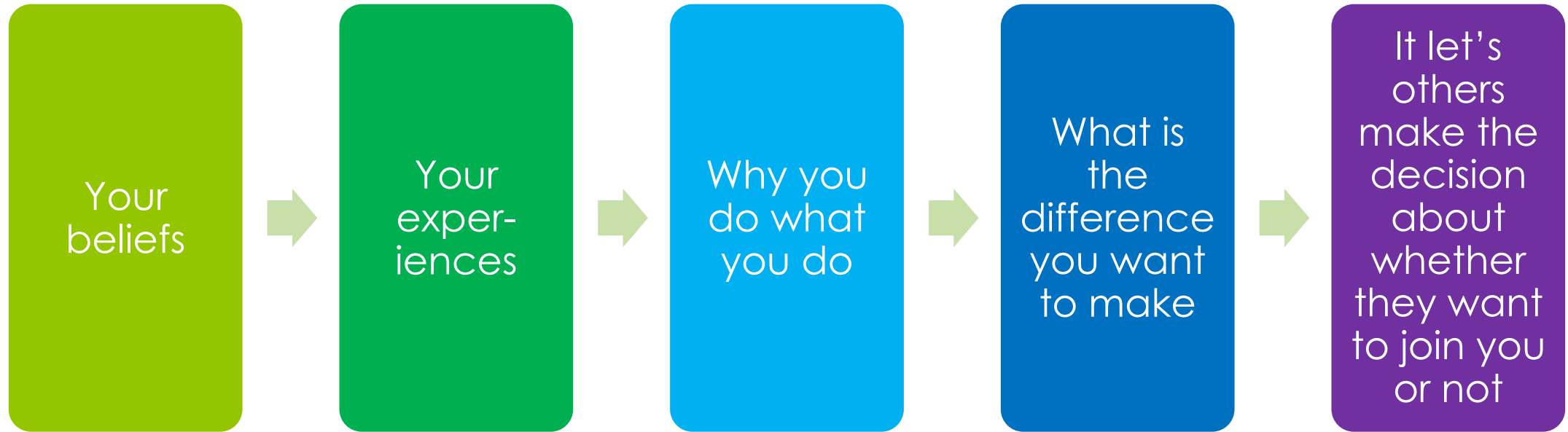
We **continually** strive to develop confident, **successful**, happy and unique **individuals** who foster a deep love of learning and are able to make a positive **contribution** in the world.



Live, love, learn.



## Vision is about who you are as a school:



**BUT it has to be a powerful vision  
communicated well**

## How to get your vision working

- Stories
- Pictures
- Emotions
- Simple, clear language
- It's about what is most important to you



Who told you how to  
create a vision?

9 examples of visions  
that work

<https://ukheads up.com/resources/9-visions/>



On the journey to  
outstanding there  
are no magic  
bullets or fixes

Creating a high  
performing culture –  
that's the shift from  
good to great

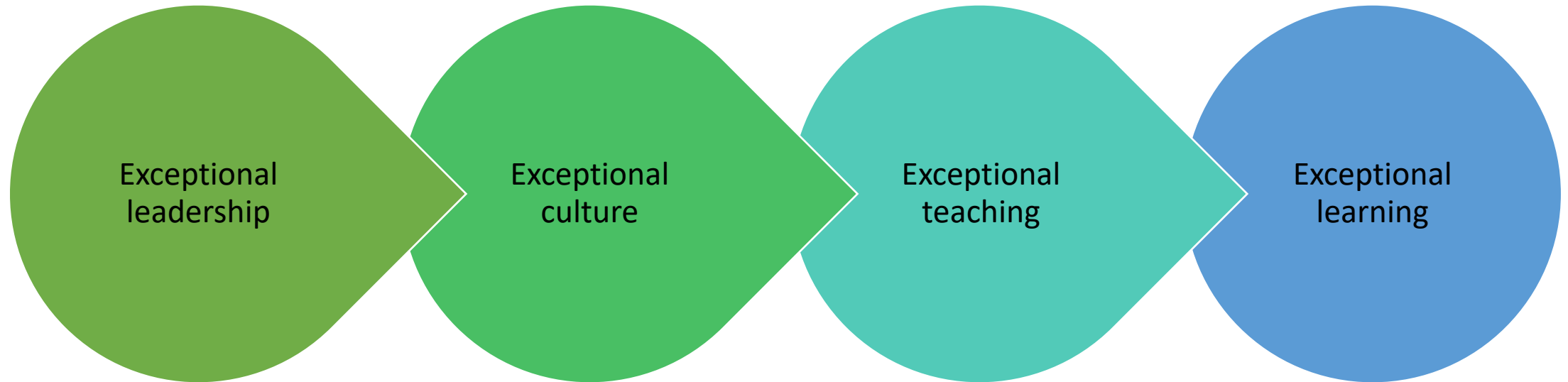
Culture is the necessary change for becoming 'Outstanding' and breaking the glass ceiling of good



## This isn't about Ofsted

- Ofsted is an end point, a mission
- Education and excellence are wonderful ongoing endeavours

Create a high performing culture so you can create exceptional **learning** and keep creating it



The key role you have as a leader who wants to create an exceptional school

Leaders make outstanding schools  
Through their culture  
Through their team

That is what you need to do if you want to create a genuinely, outstanding school

## Questions:

- What does it mean to be truly outstanding?
  - You need to define that in your cultural eco-system – take education back. BUT it does need to be to a high standard e.g. great results, enrichment, team doing better and better, fulfilling work.
- How do Ofsted truly measure culture?
  - They don't, they get a sense of it e.g. how to judge a school in 30 seconds.
- How do you prepare for a recovery curriculum and upcoming Ofsted SEN ungraded inspections in autumn?
  - Tactical approaches – seek expertise
- What are the quick wins and long-term changes to change an organisation culture alongside an agenda of staff wellbeing?
  - Quick wins – successful difficult conversations
  - Long term – cultural eco-system
- How do you bring staff with you who are 'work shy' for want of a better phrase?!?
  - Vision and values, successful difficult conversations

# Becoming genuinely outstanding takes work

Not everyone is up for it.

Are you?

## First steps to outstanding – online programme

- For your SLT
- Dates – 5 1-hour sessions over 5 weeks



## Practical sessions to tangibly improve your culture

Session	What we will cover	Outcome
1	What stops your school being outstanding and to create a genuinely outstanding school	You will identify what the real barriers to outstanding are in your school
2	How to quickly create excellence in your team	A strategic map to improve performance faster than you could imagine
3	How to have successful difficult conversations	Know how to fix common issues in your school
4	How to create a more powerful vision	Quick ways to make your vision more powerful
5	How to judge a school in 30 seconds	Know the secret messages your school is giving and how to fix them

Will it make your school outstanding?

- No - it's 5 hours, if only that was enough!

Will it move your school closer to outstanding and help you understand what else your school needs?

- Yes.

## First steps to outstanding – online programme

- Starts Mon 14<sup>th</sup> Sept – 1 session a week
- Sessions recorded on an online portal which you'll have access to for a year
- <https://ukheadsup.com/events/fso/>
- Sign up closes 9<sup>th</sup> September
- £399+VAT per school