



Vision Exercise

During the course of the 2017/18 academic year, Mugginton conducted a “vision exercise”.

What is a vision?

The intention was to establish a clear picture of what the school should look like over the longer time horizon (5 – 10 years).

Why do it in 2017/18?

The decision to conduct the vision exercise at that point in time was taken on the basis of the school being at a “crossroads”:

- ◆ The school was (is) full, with a waiting list. Should the size change to accommodate this obvious demand? How can it change?
- ◆ Nearly 50% of families with children at the school were (are) “new” (They have not had a previous association with the school and do not live within walking distance.) Do they want the same kind of school going forward? Do they subscribe to the present ethos?
- ◆ Very few of the individuals managing the school (Headteacher, staff & Governors) 10 years ago were still formally associated with the school. There had been significant changes even over the past 5 years. There was no reason to believe that this pattern would change in future. What was (is) important is that the structures supporting the school are strong and enduring. The questions were: "Are these structures robust enough to weather future storms?" and "Do we need to change these structures to strengthen them?"
- ◆ Short-term decision-making is always easier if a long-term strategy is in place. The vision would assist in decision-making when appointing staff and Governors, considering a change to the length of the school day, the emphasis of teaching in the classroom, discipline etc.

Before the exercise started it was recognised that the conclusion might be that the stakeholders liked what was (is) on offer, the school worked to a successful formula and should not be tinkered with to any great extent and that school life should carry on much as it was (is). However, even if that was to be the outcome, it was felt to be good practice to question the status quo regularly and that alone would be worth the effort.

What questions were asked?

The vision addressed three aspects of school activity:

- ◆ The length and makeup of the school day and use of facilities
- ◆ The ethos of the school
- ◆ The size of the school

Who was asked

All stakeholders were invited to provide an input to the vision:

- ◆ Governors
- ◆ Staff
- ◆ Parents
- ◆ Pupils
- ◆ Community/Church
- ◆ Former parents and pupils.



How were the views collected?

Notice of the details of the vision exercise and its components were posted on the school website and in the local village newsletter.

The opinions of stakeholders were collected in several ways:

- ◆ Online surveys. Surveys for each of questions posed were posted on the school web site starting in term 2 for the first question with the response period ending in term 5.
- ◆ Workshops. To allow face-to-face discussion, workshops were organised for stakeholders (largely parents) at the end of terms 2,3 and 4. These took place in the church at 2.00 pm just before the end-of-school service and each had one of the questions as a focus. Nearly 50 stakeholders attended the workshop at the end of term 4.
- ◆ Small group interviews.

Conclusion

The survey responses for each of the questions are on the web site.

The feedback from stakeholders from all sources would suggest that:

- ◆ The length and makeup of the school day satisfies the needs of most stakeholders.
- ◆ Stakeholders approve of the ethos of the school. There is no burning desire to change a formula that is working well.
- ◆ Stakeholders appreciate that it is not possible to change to size of the school without considerable outside investment (which is unlikely). They are comfortable with a school numbering around 55 pupils.

In short, the vision message was one of “steady as she goes”, one of the possibilities envisaged at the start of the exercise but, as was noted at the time, a message that was worth confirming.

The school was very conscious that substantial effort would be required to maintain and continue to build upon all that is good at the school and was committed to devoting whatever resources necessary to achieve that aim.

It was also recognised that satisfaction with the existing operations at the school did not imply that development would remain static or unchanged. A case in point was the proposed building works in the Infant classroom, opening up the possibility of a new teaching area and providing greater flexibility in delivering the curriculum. School Improvement, in its widest sense, would continue to be a priority.

The Mugginton Forum, below, is also an example of positive change at the school.

Mugginton Forum

At the vision workshops, stakeholders confirmed that they would find it useful and informative to have further opportunities to discuss school matters in a collective environment.

The Mugginton Forum has been established to accommodate that aspiration.

Details are available on the Mugginton Forum Fact Sheet.