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PROFESSOR DAVID HOPKINS

HSBC iNet Chair of International Leadership, Formerly the Chief Adviser to three Secretary of States

LEADERSHIP

with a

MORAL PURPOSE

TURNING YOUR SCHOOL INSIDE OUT

"... its messages pack an incredibly powerful punch. It is a deafening clarion call to arms for everyone in the school system who has ever questioned the relevance to children of the curriculum they felt pressured to deliver."

MARTIN HARVEY, Education Consultant

Will Ryan
Edited by Ian Gilbert



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Introduction

Less of a book—more of a campaign

This book shows primary school leaders how to create vision and lead their school to an outstanding future by turning their school inside out. The time is right. We must grasp the opportunity—there is no time to lose.

There are so many positive elements to primary education in the twenty-first century. Investment has been high. Results show we have the fastest improving educational system in the industrial world. Teachers are now better technically and technologically equipped than ever before. Schools are staffed by dedicated professionals who want to make a substantial difference for pupils in both the short and the long term. The vast majority of pupils come to school because they want to and because they want to succeed.

However, there are equally elements that are deeply disturbing. Unicef state that the children in our schools are amongst the unhappiest. The independent Primary Review, chaired by Robin Alexander, tells us that over-testing has had a significant detrimental effect. Social mobility remains too low. A child's life chances are determined largely by parental aspirations and where they are born. The curriculum in many of our schools remains subject and content driven and based upon a model that goes back to the nineteenth century.

These introductory notes are being written in the week that celebrates the twentieth anniversary of the Education Reform Act of 1988. Wave after wave of government initiative has followed since this time creating a primary education system dominated by compliance and fear. Schools feel compelled to implement the latest government directive and they are fearful of a fall in results, an Ofsted inspection or Local Authority intervention.

In short the pressures all come from the outside into the school. The time has come to turn the process inside out. Those who have the knowledge and understanding of a school and its community should claim autonomy and turn primary education inside out. They should lead the school to a brighter and better future through their own minds, hearts and knowledge of the community they are serving. They should use the best of the outside—

without being a government puppet. The balance of power needs to shift towards those who have the expertise, the passion, the energy and the belief to do the right thing.

The book regularly uses the term **inside out school**. So right at the start let us describe the concept. An inside out school is driven by a clear moral purpose. The school leaders are passionate and energetic people with a clear set of values. They have unwarranted optimism and believe their children can succeed. They have a clear understanding of their pupils and recognise that they have just one childhood. They also have an understanding of the community they are growing up within. From this school leaders can create a vision of what the school needs both in the long and short term. This vision is articulated and disseminated to all. Expectations are high and tolerance of underachievement is low. Adults and children know that they can improve, have a duty to improve and a duty to help improve others. The school systematically moves towards its vision through carefully devised strategic plans and appropriate systems which sometimes involves national strategy materials and frameworks. The inside out school monitors and evaluates its progress against its own personally devised measures and success criteria.

Our best schools have already done this, and many of them have leaders with maverick qualities. However this book is not about rebellion. It is about developing a vision and creating excellent schools that meet the full needs of their community in the present whilst sowing the seeds for an even brighter future.

So the book has the fundamental purpose of helping primary school leaders create a clear three-year vision of the future. I believe that this is an important and vital activity. Too often the vision for the future sits in the mind of the head teacher or other school leaders and is guessed at by others. This book argues that vision should be clear within school documentation and disseminated and articulated to all. The book provides the background and the materials to carry out the process.

There are key areas where a school must have a vision for the future and these are reflected in different chapters in the book. In short they are:

- The curriculum and teaching and learning
- Developing positive attitudes and the social and emotional aspects of learning

- Inclusion
- The professional learning community
- Leadership
- Parents as partners

Each chapter provides background information which leads to a reality check before constructing a broad three-year vision for the future. This is followed by a statement about the progress the school will make over a one-year period. The visioning process places a key emphasis on developing key systems to make the vision work and establishing targets and measures that will be key indicators of success.

The materials are tried and tested and they have helped schools to become judged as outstanding by Ofsted. They were outstanding because they provided precisely what the pupils and the community needed, and those employed there sought to genuinely inspire young lives rather than be an implementer of frameworks. In short they successfully turned their schools inside out.

The text is less of a book and more of a campaign. For thirty-three years I have lived and researched primary education, and a while ago, Ian Gilbert—who is one of Britain’s most influential and inspirational speakers on educational matters—challenged me to write the book that only I could write. It incorporates all that I believe in and also a wealth of stories from my time as a teacher, head teacher, inspector and Local Authority adviser. Each chapter starts from such a story because I think that there is so much to be learned from them. This is the book that only I could have written. I hope you enjoy it and that you use it to help you lead your school from the inside out.



CASE STUDY

The challenge of producing a simple logo, emblem or motto can be very tough. In training sessions I often begin the process by asking such questions as: If your school was an animal, which animal would you want it to be and why? If your school was a vehicle, which vehicle would you want it to be and why?

From this exercise one school came up with the emblem of a butterfly. Two members of staff backed this up with a short piece of writing that was also going to become marginally altered to become a school prayer.

I am Treeton School,
I am as beautiful as a painted butterfly.
I proclaim our spirituality, the cross raised high above the school
for all to see.
I embrace the children and staff, and enfold my family.
All of my children are seen and heard.
I care.
I celebrate the wonder of childhood.
My children celebrate their creativity.
They sing like the birds in spring.
They dance like autumn leaves blowing in the wind.
They paint with all the shades of nature.
They laugh and it brings on the sunshine
My walls are invisible, our learning knows no bounds.
I am here to guide, and nurture, and create
The Future.

This process was the final part of the school's visioning process. The school wrote about its vision in Section 1b of the Ofsted Self-Evaluation Form and set to work on turning the vision into reality. When the school was visited by Ofsted in the summer of 2007 it was judged to be outstanding.

Summary

The best school leaders lead a school to a better and brighter future. They have a clear vision of where they are going and make sure that others do too. This is not only shared with the school community but also with others. One essential way they do this is through the Ofsted Self-Evaluation Form where schools are asked to state what is special about their school. The best **inside out school leaders** nail their colours to the mast stating unequivocally what they provide for their pupils and for the adults in the community, and they state how they will measure their success. If this is then followed by appropriate action the school will be on its way to becoming outstanding.

The process described above works because it is based upon a technique called whole brain visioning. The methodology allows you to use the creative intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of the right brain to develop the dream of a brighter future and communicate it to others. It also fully engages the logical and systematic left brain through developing key processes and measures for success.

Many have researched and written about what constitutes an effective school. I have developed the following list from a wide range of sources—at the top of the list is vision.

- Shared vision and goals
- Positive learning environments for pupils
- Pupils have rights and fulfil their responsibilities and receive positive reinforcement
- A concentration on teaching and learning that is backed by high expectations
- Monitoring and evaluating progress towards defined goals
- An organisation where staff learning is promoted and celebrated
- An organisation where professional leadership is constantly improving
- High quality home-school partnership

Our teachers sit in staffrooms day after day discussing the quality of leadership over their milky coffees. It is the way of the world. They are desperate to be part of a vision for the future. They want to hang on to your every word and take part in an exciting journey to a better future. The children look at their head teacher as he or she stands before them, willing them to be the best in the game and to provide an awesome childhood full of discovery and fun. School leaders must not let them down. They must remember: ‘The most pathetic person in the world is someone with sight but no vision.’

Chapter 7

Creating a Vision for Inclusion

People who say it cannot be done should not interfere with those who are doing it.

Anon.

The Prologue

Thomas

‘Oy, give me my lollipop back!’ screamed Mrs Barton as she set off in hot pursuit of Thomas as he raced up the busy lane. Thomas was a fit 10 year old who was now hurtling away brandishing the fluorescent pole saying ‘STOP—CHILDREN CROSSING’. Other children and their parents ducked for cover as the lollipop was waved vigorously from side to side. Mrs Barton, who had a heart of gold and had patrolled the crossing for twenty-five years, gave good chase. Children leaned over the school fence urging their favourite lollipop lady to find extra pace; others chanted her name as the race picked up further speed. In reality, there was only ever going to be one winner. Thomas’s younger years and Nike trainers were always going to be a greater asset than Mrs Barton’s bright yellow heavy waterproof coat and furry boots. Once Thomas had gained sufficient ground he turned round and shouted a four-letter expletive and tossed the crossing lady’s lollipop over a garden fence where it came to rest in a pond next to two garden gnomes and a sign saying ‘Gone fishing’. Mrs Barton hitched up her coat, climbed over the fence and retrieved her pole, which had served her for twenty-five years. Every year at Christmas she had decorated it with tinsel and fairy lights and she was darned if she was going to lose it now.

Ten minutes earlier I had been sitting with Thomas and his mother discussing ‘What next?’, because his problems and behaviour were starting to spiral out of control and he was causing deep concern. We retraced the events of the past year since Thomas had joined the school. Thomas came to us late in Year 5 when he had moved into the area with his older brother who had become addicted to drugs. In order to fund the addiction he stole from his mother and sold many of Thomas’s possessions. The house was frequently trashed. Thomas did not find

school work easy and he found building relationships even harder. He knew that it would never be possible to invite a potential friend round to the house to play because there was nothing to play with, nor was it a home that he could be proud to entertain in. The other families were wary anyway and parents regarded Thomas as bad news. Thomas therefore couldn't make the friendships he was desperate for. Each time a new child or family joined the school he sought friendship; sometimes he would steal money to buy the newcomer presents but it never worked. As a consequence Thomas became more and more aggressive and he was very good at fighting.

Serious problems had developed over recent weeks and they were rapidly escalating. It was summertime and the days were longer. It was light well into the evening and Thomas had started hanging around with a group of youths who were much older than him. In reality this group were using Thomas as a plaything. They were ridiculing him and having a good laugh at his expense. However, to Thomas any company was better than no company, and he could make them laugh and that made him feel good. However, before long alcohol and drugs were introduced to Thomas and at that point the decline became rapid.

On one particular evening Thomas passed out after being given a cocktail of strong lager and a cannabis cake. The group he was with shaved his head and tied him to a lamp post. Whilst Thomas felt stupid the next day he was praised by his new 'mates' for being such a 'good laugh'. That was all he needed to be hooked on their company. At last he considered that he had friends and that gave him some form of self-esteem. Before long the group were using him to hide drugs and to steal alcohol from a local supermarket.

The situation was rapidly deteriorating in school. Stories of Thomas's evening escapades were starting to circulate and this was making him even more aggressive. Violence towards and theft from other pupils was now prevalent and after a series of incidents I decided to exclude Thomas for a short fixed term. It seemed that the other children needed a break from Thomas and it didn't seem fair to keep bringing him into an environment where he was constantly failing. Whether or not this was the right decision or not, I still do not know. However, a week where his mother could focus totally on Thomas seemed like a good idea.

Half way through the week's exclusion Thomas appeared in school, even though this was strictly forbidden under the regulations. However he knew when and where he could find me alone. He told me he had some drugs hidden at the home of one of his teenage accomplices and that he wanted me to go with him

to destroy them so he would not be tempted into further trouble. I briefly told the deputy head what was going on and where I was going. I was feeling sort of brave about it until she said, 'You do know they shot someone up there last week?'

I parked outside the house. Thomas made up a story that he had left his homework there and that we had come to collect it. He entered the house and returned a few minutes later with a supermarket carrier bag containing his stash of illegal goods. He handed them over and pleaded with me not to tell the police. Rightly or wrongly I didn't. The deputy head witnessed me destroy the drugs.

And so the story moved on to the infamous Monday morning of the great lollipop theft. Thomas had arrived in school with his mother to discuss his return to the classroom. I deliberately asked them to come early so that Thomas could be reintegrated back into his class with all the other pupils at 9 a.m. Together the three of us drew up a programme of support and things seemed to be going well until near the end of this conversation Thomas's mother asked him why he was wearing so many clothes. True enough, when you looked closely he was actually wearing three jumpers and underneath his trousers were a pair of tracksuit bottoms. He simply said he felt cold when he got up. In reality he was preparing to run away from home.

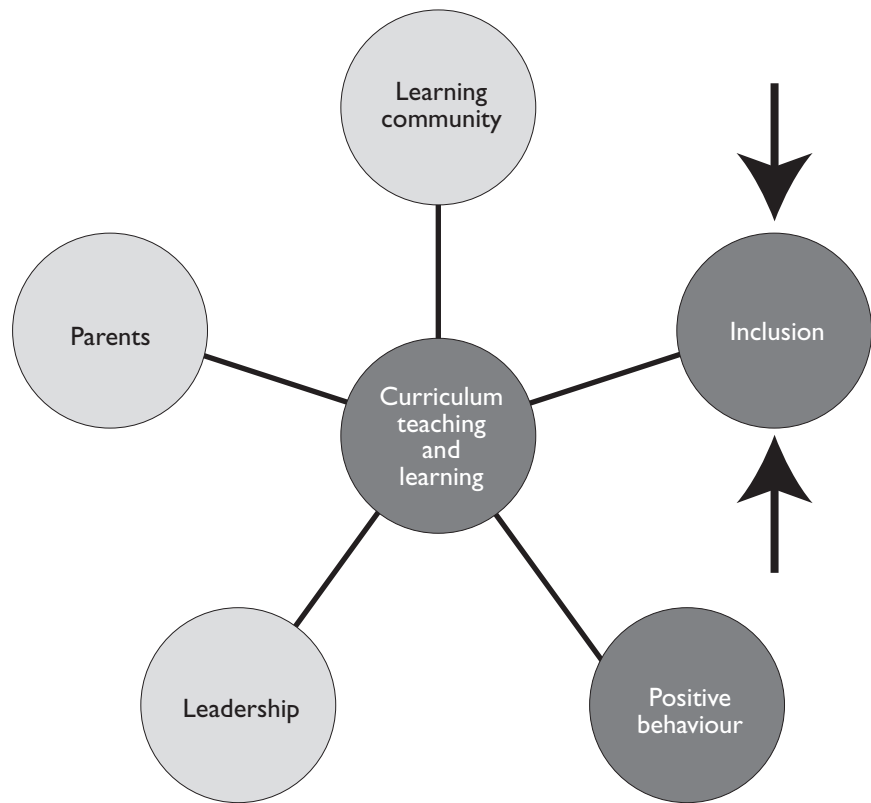
As our conversation concluded Thomas said he wanted to go to his classroom before the other children arrived. He walked though the hall. He smiled and waved at his teacher who said that he was pleased to see him back in school. But Thomas just kept on walking straight out of the school gate and towards the school crossing. As he left the kerb Mrs Barton said, 'Thomas, you are going the wrong way.' That proved to be the straw that broke Thomas's back. He grabbed the lollipop and went careering up the road with Mrs Barton in glorious pursuit.

That was the last I saw of Thomas for a while. A few weeks later I went to see him in a secure home for troubled and vulnerable youngsters which was operated by the Local Authority. He seemed pleased to see me and was clearly trying to make amends. Shortly afterwards he left the area and I am left still wondering.

As I look back I do not know which bits I got right and which bits I got wrong. Some people say I should have given up on him at an earlier stage. Personally I don't think that I have given up on him now and ten years have passed. Amongst all the confusion that I still feel, there are certain things that I do know. Thomas

was not born bad. It was other things that drove to him to low self-esteem and in the end crime. Often in our schools inclusion comes at a tremendous cost but non-inclusion is even more costly.

This chapter provides a clear principled rationale for inclusion. It helps you identify those pupils who may be missing out in your school through a checklist of pupil inclusion indicators. It urges schools to seek creative solutions to break down the barriers to the learning process for these pupils. The text provides a clear view of what our most inclusive schools look like and provides a reality check which will help you to shape your vision for the future.



"Leadership with a Moral Purpose is a complete primary school leadership manual for the immediate future. It has its head in the skies and its feet on the ground. A fantastic combination – vision and pragmatism, head and heart, in equal measure. With books like this we might, at last, break the final shackles of that debilitating Thatcherite premise, that schools are essentially factory-like businesses, and assert the unique, incomparable, vital nature of expertly-led, community-appropriate, student-focussed, individually-configured, globally-aware, creatively-charged, values-driven, sky-is-the-limit places of learning. Will, I am asking every primary headteacher I meet to read your book.
It swims with the changing tide."

PAUL GINNIS, best selling author *The Teachers Toolkit*

"Will Ryan has written a powerful resource that will both challenge and reassure school leaders. He writes from the perspective of effective learning and is unswerving in his commitment to the quality of the learner's experience as the primary purpose of leadership. He provides abundant stimuli and resources to stimulate reflection and review and support action."

"At the same time his approach affirms the very best of primary education and offers a wide range of resources to reinforce what many professionals believe to be the way forward for primary education in England. His approach is clear and logical and is supported by a wide range of examples, insights and stories that make his text come to life."

JOHN WEST-BURNHAM, Visiting Professor of Education leadership, Queen's University, Belfast

"Leadership with a Moral Purpose is just the kind of book today's primary headteachers need. It gives them the intellectual permission to think outside the strict confines of government initiatives. Instead, it encourages them to focus on an inspiring and heartfelt vision that will bring rich rewards for learners and the wider school community. Based on his experience leading and advising schools, Will Ryan explains clearly and convincingly how to create an inspirational school. If you've ever thought that education has lost its way in this country, this is a book for you. But more than that, this text will help you rediscover the reasons you first came into teaching. It is the kind of book that can genuinely change the world for the better."

BRIN BEST, award winning author and education consultant

"Will Ryan has taken up a theme dear to my heart-What's Worth Fighting For in the Headship-And he does it with powerful and practical results. He shows how Heads can and must take greater charge of their own and their schools' change destinies. He furnishes a fantastic framework, gems of ideas and easy to grasp conceptual tools, and useful and easy to use checklists and rating forms. Ryan says at the outset, this is "less of a book more of a campaign" Actually it is more of both, precisely because it is a book of ideas and passion. Every page has ideas worth grasping. Read it and it really will make you a better leader."

MICHAEL FULLAN, Professor Emeritus, OISE/University of Toronto

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