

3. Educational vision

This section is relevant for all proposer groups.

You should produce a brief description of your rationale and vision for your Free School. You should do this in no more than a couple of pages, setting out why you want to set up *this* school, and what you want it to achieve. You should include data where possible and use short, clear sentences.

The educational vision puts forward the purpose of the school, and as such it should underpin the rest of your application. It provides the basis for all other decisions, including the way you organise your curriculum and your pupils, the range of staffing, how you allocate the budget and the premises in which the school will operate.

A clear vision is the foundation of a strong application – it will convince the DfE and the parents of prospective pupils of the value of your proposed school.

Rationale

This outlines why *your* school is required in *your* area.. You should consider using data to make your point clearly and form an argument that makes a compelling case. Some of the most common rationales for a Free School include:

- The schools in the local area **perform poorly;**
- There are **not enough school places** in the local area; and
- There is **no school of this type** in the local area (e.g. providing your school's particular curriculum or ethos).

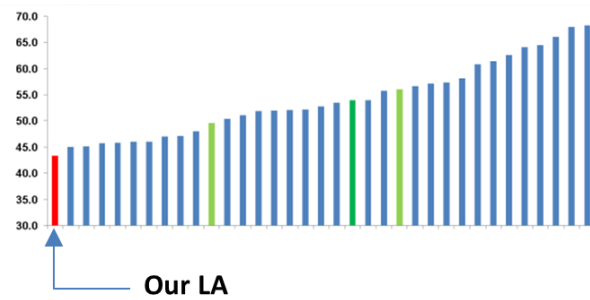
Below is an example of how you can use data effectively to give a compelling rationale.

Example rationale for a Free School

Secondary schools in our LA perform poorly and many local pupils are forced to attend schools elsewhere

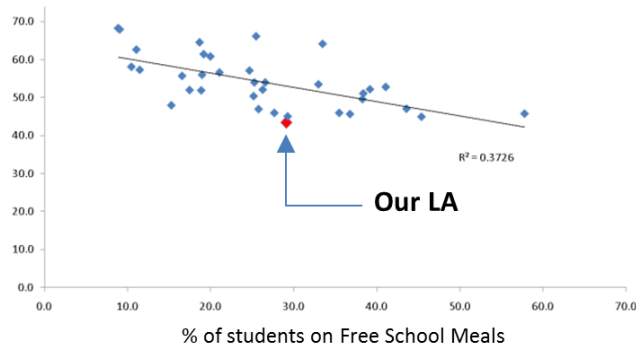
GCSE results position our LA as the worst performing in our Metropolitan Area

% with 5 A*-C, including Eng. & Maths



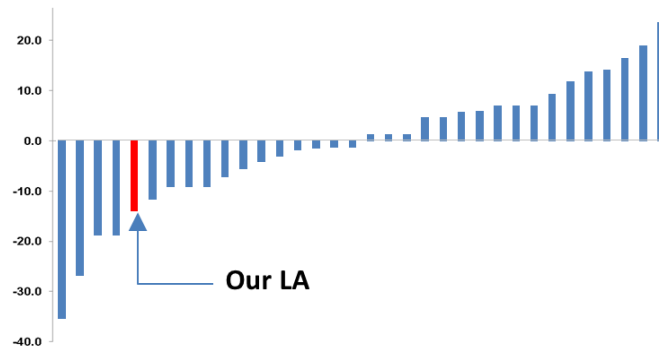
This cannot entirely be explained by social deprivation factors

% with 5 A*-C, including Eng. & Maths



Our LA can't provide for its children, exporting 17% (net) of its school-age population to nearby LAs...

Number of pupils in local schools, compared to school-age population (%)



Vision and ethos

Your vision will describe what you want your school to achieve. You should briefly describe how your school will meet the need you set out in your rationale.

You should think of your vision as the short summary that will convince the DfE and prospective parents that your school is a good thing. Spend time getting the wording right.

School vision: Example 1

The overall aim of our school will be to offer outstanding educational provision for children aged 3-11 years so that all pupils will achieve highly by the end of Key Stage 2. With this firm foundation pupils will be given the opportunity to achieve more highly at secondary school. This aim will be fundamental to the ethos of the school as the children who will be attending our school live within an area with very high levels of deprivation and disadvantage.

The Mission Statement for our school will be: 'Achieving Excellence Together'

The Vision Statement is: To teach all children to acquire and develop the skills, knowledge and understanding to succeed at all stages of their education and equip them with high aspirations for their future lifelong learning.

Through our school's high expectations for all children's learning, there will be a strong moral purpose and a unique ethos of warmth and respect to educate young people who:

- Respect themselves and show respect to others
- Understand the importance of learning and who will achieve their best
- Understand the importance of making a positive contribution to the community and society as a whole
- Communicate well with others and show consideration to others beliefs and points of view
- Present themselves with confidence and pride
- Take responsibility for their actions
- Develop the ability to show compassion and give support to others

The vision is a reference point for the leadership of the school and will serve as an inspiration for staff. It should be:

- Brief;
- Long-term; and
- Aspirational.

You might consider the following:

- How will the lives of individual children be different once the school has been opened?

- What will a week in the life of the school look like, during and beyond the school day?
- What will parents say about the school?

You should also tie your vision to measurable outcomes for your pupils, so that it focuses on what they are achieving and you can find out whether you are achieving it. Examples of possible outcomes to which you could refer include:

- The level of academic progress and attainment of pupils;
- The number of pupils progressing into Higher Education;
- A reduction in the number of NEETS (those Not in Employment, Education or Training);
- Pupils' acquisition of non-academic skills (e.g. through national programs such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award); or
- The number of parents who make your school their first choice.

Writing a vision statement can be daunting. If you do not know where to start but already have a clear idea of what your school will be like, it may be helpful to make a list of the features of your school under the following headings:

- Why you think education is important?
- Why you believe a school is needed (your rationale)?
- What will be the focus of the school?
- What will your curriculum include – what courses will you offer?
- Who you want to be involved?
- What facilities and activities you want to promote?

Having done this, you can pick out the most important points and summarise them. For your vision you only want a few distilled sentences that clearly communicate what your school is about and what it is going to do.

School vision: Example 2

Our vision is to create an outstanding school that radically improves our pupils' life chances. We want every pupil to do well enough by the age of 18 to go on to university or pursue the career of their choice.

To achieve this we prioritise six key principles across our schools:

1. High expectations: We set exceptionally high expectations for all our pupils which we reinforce constantly as they go through school. We believe every child can realise their potential with the right teaching and support.

2. Exemplary behaviour: Our schools are characterised by a respectful and orderly environment, where teachers can focus on teaching and pupils on learning.

All our schools aim for uninterrupted teaching and learning to make exceptional achievement possible. We do not accept excuses and we do not make any either.

3. Excellent teaching: Nothing is more important than excellent teaching, underpinned by high quality professional development. We make intelligent and appropriate use of data to improve teaching and the curriculum and to ensure that no child is left behind. We draw on evidence and experience of the best ways to achieve excellent outcomes for all children.

4. More time for learning: Our longer school day provides more time to embed core subjects and to extend the curriculum through enrichment. Our curriculum is planned to provide pathways from any level at entry to high achievement at exit.

5. Depth before breadth: A strong command of English and mathematics is a vital foundation for the whole curriculum. We prioritise depth before breadth, so that all pupils secure firm foundations in these core subjects as early as possible.

6. Small school: We will be a small school so that every pupil knows and is known well by every teacher. Positive relationships between pupils reinforce a culture of excellent behaviour and commitment to learning.

Further information

Contact NSN for tailored specialist advice: info@newschoolsnetwork.org