



‘The best part of DesignLab Nation was ... having my own creative freedom around a project without having to worry about getting things wrong.’

Participating student, DLN Ipswich

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DesignLab Nation is generously supported by Sarah Nichols and the Annie Tranmer Charitable Trust. DesignLab Nation Bradford is supported by Art Jameel as part of the V&A's Jameel Programme.

‘As national investment in young creativity becomes more vital, the V&A is proud to extend DesignLab Nation to more schools across the country. Six years on, this nationwide campaign to inspire the next generation of creators is sharing the V&A’s collection further to tap into local design heritage, support more teachers and ignite more creative ambition than ever before.’

Tristram Hunt, Director of the V&A



Overview

As the world’s largest museum of art, design and performance, the V&A has an essential role to play in the nation’s creative education.

Creative education has the power to change and shape young people’s lives for the better. Rapid technological developments are rendering many traditional jobs obsolete, and creativity is now recognised as one of the top three ‘future skills’ needed to flourish in a fast-changing world. In the context of education and skills, we see clarion calls for responsive change, and global bodies are questioning the fundamental tenets of education if it is to equip today’s learners for an uncertain future.

Design and creativity can enact and help drive the change needed. Design & Technology (D&T) is a distinctively interdisciplinary subject and its focus on real-world problem solving and the practical applications of knowledge and skills gives young people the confidence to tackle the many interconnected issues we are facing in the world today. However, there are far fewer creative subjects being studied at GCSE and A Level across England’s schools than a decade ago. D&T has seen the greatest decline in entries since 2010, with 71% less students choosing the subject. There is a critical shortage of qualified D&T teachers: the number has halved since 2011 and teacher training recruitment continually falls short of targets. Furthermore, many schools with academy and free school status are using their autonomy to drop the subject from their curriculum offer. Without focused support and policy change, the decline of the subject will continue.

The V&A’s national secondary schools programme, DesignLab Nation, aims to:

Inspire the next generation of professional designers, makers and innovators

Equip young people with 21st-century skills necessary for workplaces of the future

Develop partnerships with regional museums, designers and schools to expand the reach of the V&A’s collection and expertise outside of London

Focus on local making, design heritage and industry, highlighting both historical and contemporary design and its importance to regional collections, place-making and learning

Support in-depth student projects through the delivery of design challenges that mirror the design journey

Support teachers and build regional and national design networks

Targeting regions of the country where the creative industries have historically thrived, yet the current need to improve D&T provision is particularly acute, we work with regional museums to deliver in-depth design projects. Students respond to a Design Challenge over four contact days with a local designer, as well as staff at partner museums and the V&A. The programme specifically targets schools with higher-than-average levels of pupil premium figures to reach those students most in need.

To date, DesignLab Nation (September 2017–August 2023) has been delivered in nine regions across the UK. Phase 1 regions included: Blackburn, Coventry, Sheffield, Stoke-on-Trent and Sunderland. In September 2021 we entered Phase 2 and welcomed new partnerships in: Blackpool, Ipswich, Plymouth and Bradford. From September 2023 we will be launching Phase 3 and plan to kickstart new partnerships in Newcastle/Gateshead and Stoke-on-Trent (V&A Wedgwood Collection). We have now reached the end of Year 6 of the programme and have produced this report to share our achievements and learning to date (31 September 2023).

1. <https://www.culturallearningalliance.org.uk/arts-gcse-and-a-level-entries>
2. <https://bit.ly/DTinschools>
3. <https://www.designtechnology.org.uk/media/4638/reimagining-design-and-technology-report.pdf>

‘I achieved what I wanted because now I’m more confident with working with others.’

Participating student, DLN Plymouth



Students visiting the V&A, DLN Ipswich
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4/5 | Year 6 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|----------|--------|
| Blackburn: Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery | | | | | |
| Coventry: Culture Coventry | | | | | |
| Sheffield: Sheffield Museums | | | | | * |
| Stoke-on-Trent: Potteries Museum and Art Gallery /V&A Wedgwood Collection | | | | | |
| Sunderland: National Glass Centre | | | | | |
| Ipswich: Colchester and Ipswich Museums | | | | | |
| Plymouth: The Box | | | | | |
| Blackpool: Grundy Art Gallery/Showtown | | | | | |
| Bradford: Bradford Museums and Galleries | | | | | |

*DesignLab Legacy programme, which is self-run and self-funded by regional museums

Deliverables

In each participating region, we partner with a museum and a professional designer. Together, we deliver in-depth design projects to local secondary school groups (aged 11–16, about 25 students in each) and continuing professional development (CPD) sessions for regional networks of teachers. In selected areas, student projects are supported by the loan of inspiring and relevant objects from the V&A’s collections for public display in the partner museums. All participating students will visit both their local museum and the V&A South Kensington during their project, as well as additional engagement with other local design industries, colleges and universities. The programme supports the teaching of the 2017 Design & Technology (D&T) GCSE, which launched in September 2017. Each year of the programme, partner museums recruit three local schools that they have not recently engaged with. Participating schools must be based in areas with above-average levels of income deprivation or/and have low levels of cultural engagement.

DesignLab Nation is fully funded for all schools taking part, including travel to London and workshop materials.

In Year 6 of DesignLab Nation, Year 6 projects were run with established regional partner museums in Ipswich (Colchester and Ipswich Museums) and Plymouth (The Box), as well as new partner museums in Blackpool (Showtown: Museum of fun and entertainment) and Bradford (Bradford Museums and Art Galleries). During Year 6 we piloted a new Teacher Development Strand programme in Bradford and in Stoke-on-Trent (V&A Wedgwood Collection). Our new Teacher Development Strands aim to embed teachers in the planning and testing process of student design projects and resources. They include paid trips for teachers to the V&A and regional museums and codesign activities and content with museum professionals and designers. Our alumni partner museums, Sheffield Museums ran a DesignLab Legacy project as part of their core schools programme.

| Participation Summary Year 6 (September 2022 to August 2023) | |
|--|--|
| 348 Students (Target: 300) | 1,391 instances of participation (Target: 1,500) |
| 68 Teachers (Target: 78) | 207 instances of participation (Target: 196) |

| Participation Summary for whole programme (Sept 2017 to August 2023) | |
|--|--|
| 1,489 Students (Target: 1,725) | 6,605 instances of participation (Target: 7,725) |
| 350 Teachers (Target: 420) | 879 instances of participation (Target: 922) |

Key highlights of Year 6 programme

Inspired students

- 348** students engaged from 15 regional schools – 1,391 instances of student participation.
- 91.6%** of students are more confident in their art and design skills after the project.
- 75.3%** of students are more interested in choosing to study a creative subject at school or beyond.
- 68.9%** of students are more interested in pursuing a career in art or design.

Supported regional museums

- 2** V&A objects were lent to partner museums to inspire students in DesignLab Nation projects – also seen by 55,993 visitors.

Developed culture capital

- 63.8%** of students visited their local museum for the first time.
- 59%** of students were in receipt of Pupil Premium funding (compared to 27.1% of students nationally).
- 20.5%** of students had special educational needs (compared with 13% of pupils in England in 2022/23).
- 95%** of students visited the V&A for the first time.
- 83.1%** of students felt that they now know more about design industries in their local area, at the end of the project.

21st-Century skills

- Creative thinking:**
 - 92.3%** of students agree that DesignLab Nation has helped them with coming up with new ideas.
- Critical thinking:**
 - 76.7%** of students agree that DesignLab Nation has helped them with solving problems.
- Collaboration:**
 - 80.4%** of students agree that DesignLab Nation has helped them with working in a group.

Empowered and supported teachers

- 68** teachers engaged from across 15 groups – 207 instances of teacher participation.
- 100%** of teachers thought that the project had supported their students with: working in groups, generating new ideas and feeling connected to local design history and industry.

Please see pages 30–41 to find out more about the wider impact of the Year 6 programme.

‘Opening up their world to new landscapes, new ideas, new people, new experiences and new perspectives. Realising that the world outside of Bradford is for them and they have a right to be in it.’

Participating teacher, DLN Bradford

‘I would like to say that I’m really happy I had the chance for this, I’m now really inspired to do Art Design.’

Participating student, DLN Plymouth

Students exploring Lightworks, DLN Blackpool
© CJ Griffiths

‘Students gained an ... understanding of creative thinking, an alternative insight to working creatively, an experience of culture and art outside of the classroom.’

Participating teacher, DLN Blackpool



Students exploring The Globe during V&A visit, DLN Ipswich
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Developing Key 21st-Century Skills

Evaluation findings show that students have developed key skills for the 21st century in the following ways:



- Decision making based on experimentation and testing
- Increased understanding of stages of design process
- Outward looking – consideration of ethics and sustainability
- Observation and questioning



- Increased practical skills allow ideas to take physical form
- Confidence to experiment without fear of failure
- Cultural capital – experience scaffolds imagination



- Compromise – through discussion and idea sharing
- Flexibility – working in unfamiliar groups
- Receiving and acting upon feedback
- Consideration of different points of view

‘The best part of DesignLab Nation was ... making something out of clay because it used our creativity and looking at things in museums.’

Participating student, DLN Blackpool



Students taking part in ceramics workshop,
DLN Blackpool
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

New Resources

Exploring Ceramics

Working with teachers, V&A Ceramicist in Residence, Florence Dwyer, and the V&A Wedgwood Collection, we developed the new *Exploring Ceramics* resource. This resource aims to support secondary school teachers to engage their students with ceramics, empowering young people to develop their own ceramics practice while gaining critical, creative and collaborative-thinking skills. This resource is designed to support both KS3 and KS4 students, studying either Art & Design or Design & Technology.



bit.ly/VASchoolresources

Each object card of the resource covers a different stage of the creative design process a ceramicist or ceramic designer may take including material exploration, experimentation, gathering inspiration, learning techniques, design iteration, using tools, development and production. This resource will act to support future DesignLab Nation projects, linking to ceramics, as well as sharing learning from the programme with all secondary schools across the UK.



Ceramic Techniques

Faceted onggi vase, by Ahn Seong Man, South Korea, 2015, Height: 20cm
Diameter: 14cm

Ceramicists and ceramic designers use many different techniques to create ceramics.

Onggi jars have been produced in Korea since 5000BC to pickle, cook and store condiments and foods. They have thick walls and are laborious to produce due to the coarse clay paste.

3D printing is an additive form of manufacturing, which involves heating and the layering down of material such as plastic to construct 3D objects from a digital file.

Korean ceramicist Ahn Seong Man takes advantage of the new creative possibilities of 3D printing to create his ceramics. He first designed his onggi vases on a computer. He then modified an existing 3D printer, adjusting the nozzle to print the ceramic vase design. He had to thin out the coarse clay so it could be printed.

Discuss

What are the advantages and disadvantages of 3D printing in ceramics? Think about different uses of ceramics: are handmade ceramics or 3D printed ceramics more favourable?

Find out

Find out more about 3D printing through other V&A objects here bit.ly/VAS3dprinting

Student Activity: Practice different ceramic techniques

- Students working individually or in small groups.
- Materials: approx 400g of clay per student per activity, cheese wire, rolling pin, water pots, basic clay tools, cardboard or wooden boards to work on, table cover, aprons
- Suggested duration: each technique approx. 20–40min

Explore each of these different ceramic techniques:

- Have a go at creating a pinch pot: bit.ly/pinchpotfilm
- Have a go at coiling: bit.ly/coilingfilm
- Have a go at slab rolling and building: bit.ly/slabfilm

Notes for Teachers

Each of these films have suggested pause moments so you can pause the film as needed.

Image credit: Faceted onggi vase, by Ahn Seong Man, South Korea, 2015 © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Find out more about how this resource was developed on page 23.

Object Discussion Cards

V&A Object Discussion Cards support students to develop critical, creative and collaborative thinking skills in the galleries and the classroom. A large-scale image of an object is complimented by a concise, young-person-friendly object description and ‘conversation starter’ questions. For Year 6 partnerships, new Object Discussion Cards packs have been created to support discussion of issues such as traditions and routine, sustainability and furniture.

‘The Object Discussion Cards ... gave me some ideas of how I would use something like this when visiting a gallery or museum to help the students engage.’

Participating teacher, DLN Blackpool

Year 6

Blackpool



Students exploring Lightworks, DLN Blackpool
© C.J Griffiths

Green and bright! with Nicolas Burrows and Showtown

In Year 6, Blackpool schools' projects were inspired by the world-famous Blackpool Illuminations and the seaside town's efforts towards sustainability. Showtown, Blackpool's new museum of fun and entertainment, commissioned artist Nicolas Burrows as lead designer for the project. Nicolas is a visual artist, using collage-based processes to create bold, direct, and dynamic imagery applied across a range of media, formats and contexts.

Students were set the challenge to design a light installation for the Blackpool Illuminations that communicated the benefits of sustainable lighting to highlight the fact that Blackpool Illuminations only use green electricity from renewable resources comprising of wind, small-scale hydro, landfill and biogas.

In the first session at the local arts space, Aunty Social, students were able to discover Blackpool's tourism collection, exploring how designers of Blackpool's past communicated messages of fun, health and happiness. Nicolas then led a printmaking workshop where students included their own messages of Blackpool and sustainability.

Students travelled to London to visit the V&A for the second session where they gathered further inspiration. After exploring objects around sustainability and visual communication in the V&A Design 1900–Now galleries, students visited

the V&A's Ceramics galleries to take part in drawing activities to support them with breaking down complex forms into basic shapes. Alongside V&A Ceramics Technician, Charlie Brookes, Nicolas led ceramics workshops supporting them to transform their ideas for 2D visual messages into 3D.

In the third session centred around a visit to Lightworks, the Blackpool Illuminations Depot, students had a guided tour with the Lightworks team to see how the large-scale light installations are designed, produced and stored. After exploring further into the Illuminations archive, a part of Showtown's collections, the group started to develop their ideas into a final lighting design.

In the final session, also at Lightworks, students worked with Nicolas to create a large-scale version of their illuminations design through stop motion animation or collage techniques.

Unfortunately, due to low uptake from schools and teachers, Showtown were unable to run a Celebration Event or Teachers CPD this academic year. In summer 2023, students' work will be going on public display at a town centre shopping centre unit. Nicolas is also developing a teacher's pack, so activities and learning from the projects can reach a wider teacher network.

To find out more about the Blackpool projects please follow this link: bit.ly/DLNBlackpool

Year 6 Participation Summary (September 2022 to August 2023)

61 students

227 instances of participation

9 teachers

41 instances of participation

Year 6 schools

- Educational Diversity, Blackpool
- Blackpool Aspire Academy
- South Shore Academy

Bradford



Student taking part in textiles challenge, DLN
Bradford © Bradford Museums and Galleries

Textiles for traditions with Zahid Rauf and Bradford District Museums and Galleries

In Year 6, Bradford schools’ projects were inspired by the city’s strong reputation for textiles. Bradford Museums and Galleries commissioned fashion designer and tailor, Zahid Rauf, to lead on the projects. Zahid is passionate about crafting luxury Asian bridal and formal wear. He has built a reputation creating handmade bespoke outfits with a creative flair and intricate detailing.

Zahid set the challenge for students to create a textile to enhance a routine, ritual or tradition that they took part in on a regular basis.

To help develop project plans, lead teachers from each school were invited to take part in a three-day Teacher Development Strand in autumn 2022. This included teachers co-designing and developing gallery-based activities and creative workshops at the V&A, Cartwright Hall and Bradford Industrial Museum, alongside Zahid and museum professionals. Find out more about the impact of 22/23 Teacher Development Strands on page 38.

In the first session at Cartwright Hall, students explored artworks linked to Bradford’s migration story to understand the different cultures and influences which make up the city. They were able to see the *Nylon Rainbow Sweater and Trousers* by fashion designer Tatyana Antoun, a V&A object loan on display, which they used to explore youth identity and discuss their own routines, rituals and traditions.

In the second session, students visited the V&A, London to undertake further research. After exploring objects around identity and sustainability in the V&A Design 1900–Now galleries, students visited the

V&A Islamic Middle East and V&A Fashion galleries to take part in drawing activities to support them with developing their own patterns and textile forms. Beckfoot School (Bingley) had the opportunity to meet with architect, Shahed Saleem and find out about the 2023 *Ramadan Pavilion*, a temporary structure designed as an assemblage of architectural parts drawn from the V&A collection of drawings and photographs of historic Islamic architecture.

In the third session, the students visited Bradford Industrial Museum where they were able to find out about Bradford’s textile heritage in the historic textile machinery and mill worker houses. Zahid led the group in a printmaking activity, supporting them to refine their ideas further.

In the final session, students had the opportunity to visit Melrose Interiors, the UK’s foremost manufacturer, importer and distributor of rugs, flooring and interior products. Students took part in a factory tour and learnt from industry designers about how they produce interiors using recycled fibres. Groups worked with Melrose designers to mock up textiles using professional software. Zahid and teachers then led students to finalise their textiles designs using a range of creative processes – including laser cutting and embroidery.

Students’ work was then displayed at Cartwright Hall, allowing them to celebrate their achievements at a special event with teachers, family and friends. Unfortunately, due to low uptake from teachers, the Bradford team were unable to run a Teachers’ CPD this academic year.

| Year 6 Participation Summary (September 2022 to August 2023) | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 55 students | 207 instances of participation |
| 9 teachers | 30 instances of participation |

Year 6 schools

- Hanson Academy
- Beckfoot School, Bingley
- Beckfoot Upper Heaton School

Ipswich



Student exploring V&A Furniture galleries, DLN
Ipswich © Victoria and Albert Museum, London

Are you sitting comfortably? with Jessica Sanders, Marcus Woolf and Colchester and Ipswich Museums

In Year 6, Ipswich schools’ projects were inspired by the area’s design heritage for furniture. Colchester and Ipswich Museums commissioned artist Jessica Sanders and designer Marcus Woolf to lead on the projects. Jessica led on five projects and is a freelance designer and tutor, and has taught in schools and colleges. She used her experience and skills as an illustrator and art technician to set the design challenge. Marcus led on one project and used his practice of traditional restoration and upholstery to incorporate redesigning and reusing items that would otherwise end up in landfill.

Designers Jessica and Marcus set the challenge for students to design a chair or seat to provide a solution to a 21st-century problem – including the climate emergency, cost of living crisis and personal wellbeing.

In the first session, students explored Christchurch Mansion, where they were able to study different pieces of furniture from Tudor, Georgian and Victorian Britain, examining and discussing how objects show evidence of social status and historical events. They were able to see on display the V&A object loan, *Lilla H* chair, by Swedish artist Caroline Schlyter, which they used to explore the concept of chair design and contemporary materials. Students then took part in activities with designers and museum teams to identify their own design principles, unpick what a chair is, explore form versus function and experiment with limited materials.

For their second session, students set out on an exciting journey to London to visit the V&A to gather

further inspiration. After exploring objects around sustainability in the V&A Design 1900–Now galleries, students visited the V&A Furniture and V&A Fashion galleries to take part in drawing activities to support them with understanding how different materials can be joined together and designing for a particular user. Students also explored *The Globe* installation, by Cuban artist collective, Los Carpinteros, and discussed the idea of seating for different purposes within the museum.

In the third session, the students started to develop their own chair/seating prototypes after writing their own personal design brief. Working with either Jessica or Marcus, participants took part in different technique-based workshops and demonstrations to help them expand their making skills and understanding of techniques, ranging from working with willow and gold leaf.

In the final session, students had the opportunity to refine their designs and start to learn how to structure a convincing design pitch. Either individually or in small teams, students presented their designs to the group where they were asked to compare their final design to their original brief and gather feedback from others.

Unfortunately, due to low uptake from schools and teachers, Christchurch Mansion were unable to run a Celebration Event or Teachers CPD this academic year. In summer 2023, students’ work will be going on public display at Christchurch Mansion, and students will be invited to attend with friends and family.

Year 6 Participation Summary (September 2022 to August 2023)

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| 120 students | 515 instances of participation |
| 22 teachers | 57 instances of participation |

Year 6 schools

- Thomas Gainsborough School
- Stoke High School, Ormiston Academy
- Chantry Academy
- Ipswich Academy
- Thomas Lord Audley School
- Felixstowe School

Plymouth



Students taking part in sculptural challenge, DLN Plymouth © Dom Moore

Abandon Ship! with Anna Boland and The Box, Plymouth

In Year 6, Plymouth schools’ projects were inspired by the city’s boat building heritage. The Box, Plymouth commissioned interdisciplinary artist Anna Boland to lead on the projects. Anna works with wide ranging materials, techniques and processes, and is currently creating sculptural forms that combine human biological forms with exterior architecture.

Anna set students a design challenge inspired by the real-world problem of marine fly tipping, introducing the fact that there are approximately one million abandoned vessels, from large boats to kayaks, in the UK every year. Students were challenged to come up with a design to deconstruct, recycle or reuse these old boats, giving them a new purpose.

The first session started at The Box, Plymouth where they were able to explore museum collections related to the historical, economic and cultural heritage of Plymouth. Anna led students in a 3D sculptural task to reconstruct a deconstructed ship and explore how this ship could be recreated in other forms. Students then had the opportunity to visit Princess Yachts, a British luxury yacht manufacturer, where students were able to see the different stages of yacht construction and all the elements that made up a yacht at the boat yard. They met with specialist yacht designers and had the opportunity to ask them questions about their work and approach to sustainability. One group were also able to visit FabLab, Plymouth to discover digital manufacturing processes.

The second session groups travelled from Plymouth to London to visit the V&A to carry out further object-based research. After exploring objects around sustainability and design for different audiences in the V&A Design 1900–Now galleries, students visited

the V&A Furniture galleries to take part in drawing activities to support them in understanding how materials can be joined. Students also explored *The Globe* installation, by Cuban artist collective, Los Carpinteros, and discussed the idea of designing a structure which has multiple purposes. Anna then led students in a sculpture workshop, where they were challenged to use their knowledge from the furniture gallery to explore joining and connecting to build the tallest structure using only paper rods.

In the third session at The Box, students undertook further sculptural experiments inspired by American artist, Richard Serra’s infamous 1967 work *Verb List*, where they were asked to create quick fire sculptures based on verbs such as to bend, to swirl and to twist. Anna and The Box team worked with students to develop their ideas, setting themselves a design brief, with sustainable practice at its core.

In the final session at The Box, students created their prototypes from a huge array of recycled materials. The groups then presented their designs, asking for feedback from Anna, The Box team and peers.

Students’ work was then displayed at The Box, which they were invited to view with friends and family. Unfortunately, due to low uptake from schools, the Plymouth team were unable to run a Celebration event this academic year. In July 2023, The Box hosted a DLN CPD for ten local teachers, which included teachers taking part in a workshop exploring the potential of everyday and recycled materials to create sculptural forms. Influenced by the *Rana Begum: Dappled Light* exhibition at The Box, as well as artists Phyllida Barlow and Louise Nevelson.

Year 6 Participation Summary (September 2022 to August 2023)

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 70 students | 280 instances of participation |
| 17 teachers | 37 instances of participation |

Year 6 schools

- UTC Plymouth
- All Saints Academy- Plymouth
- Stoke Damerel Community College

Stoke-on-Trent



Teachers taking part in clay slip workshop,
DLN Stoke-on-Trent
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

DLN Stoke-on-Trent, Teacher's Development Strand with Florence Dwyer and the V&A Wedgwood Collection

In autumn 2022, the V&A appointed Florence Dwyer as V&A Ceramicist in Residence. Florence's practice is informed by embodied research into social and cultural histories most related to industrial manufacturing, domestic craft and vernacular design. As part of a six-month residency, Florence was asked to support the creation of a new ceramics resource for secondary schools across the country working with teachers and museum teams at the V&A and the V&A Wedgwood Collection.

To support the development of the resource, Florence led a four-day Teacher Development Strand with three teachers from local, Stoke-on-Trent secondary schools. Sessions were held at the V&A, South Kensington and the V&A Wedgwood Collection.

Throughout the sessions teachers worked with V&A museum professionals to explore V&A galleries and identify objects and themes which they thought would engage students. In Stoke-on-Trent this included exploring the collection and UNESCO-recognised archives showcasing the commercial and design history of Wedgwood ceramics. In London this included exploring the V&A Ceramics, Design 1900–Now and Islamic Middle East galleries. At both sites, teachers took part in drawing activities within the galleries, testing the resource as experienced by participating students.

Teachers also worked with Florence to test out several hands-on ceramic activities planned for the resource. These included experimental hand building, mould making and creating ceramic tools for experimenting with slip-liquid clay.

The teacher development group visited Florence's ceramic studio, based within the Ceramics galleries at the V&A and were taken on a tour of the Wedgwood Factory where they were able to see state of the art ceramic production in action, including casting, glazing and hand decoration.

To support the processes of bringing the resource together, teachers took part in mapping exercises, working with Florence and V&A staff to discuss the format, tone and content which would best work for students and teachers nationally. Teachers were a vital asset to this process as they were able to make key links with the national D&T/Art & Design Curriculum and highlight what works well in a school environment.

Once the resource was drafted, teachers were then asked to test activities and content with their current students in schools. Feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the final resource.

View the Exploring Ceramics resource here:
bit.ly/VAteachersresources

Find out more about the teachers' experience in our Evaluation section on page 38.

Find out more about Florence's residency here:
bit.ly/VAflorencedwyerblog

All three schools will be taking part in DesignLab Nation Year 7 school projects with V&A Wedgwood from autumn 2023.

Year 6 Participation Summary (September 2022 to August 2023)

| | |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| 3 teachers | 12 instances of participation |
|------------|-------------------------------|

Participating schools

- Co-op Academy, Stoke-on-Trent
- Thistley Hough Academy
- St Thomas More Catholic Academy



Students exploring Kelham Island Museum, DesignLab Sheffield © Andy Brown

DesignLab Legacy Projects with Studio Polpo and Sheffield Museums

Following on from a successful four-year DesignLab Nation partnership with the V&A, Sheffield Museums embarked on a one-year, self-led, self-funded DesignLab Legacy programme with local secondary schools, based around the ergonomics of design. To lead students through the 22/23 design journey, Sheffield Museums recruited Studio Polpo, a design team with a particular interest in social enterprise research and a wealth of experience of working with schools and young people.

The first session was held at Millennium Gallery, Sheffield where students used the city's Metalwork collection and *Cutting Edge* exhibition for inspiration. They had the opportunity to look more closely and handle objects from the collection, with support from the gallery curators. The groups took part in drawing activities, focusing on scaling up and scaling down. Students then worked in groups to create large-scale drawings, exploring how tools work alongside the human body, showing action and movement through the layering of images.

Follow up second sessions were held in schools, where groups were set design challenges using a series of flash cards, where they identified user

groups, function, form and location options. In groups they were tasked with designing ideas first in 2D and then refining ideas as 3D models.

During the third session students travelled to the V&A to gather further inspiration. For many students this was their first trip to London. Exploring V&A galleries including – Design 1900–Now, Furniture, Japan and the Cast Courts – groups were encouraged to take part in quick-fire drawing activities, looking at the relationships across the different spaces. The fourth session was held at Kelham Island Industrial Museum giving the students the opportunity for deeper exploration of Sheffield's industrial design heritage.

A celebration event for school groups is planned for the 2023 autumn term. The Sheffield Museums' team are addressing how best to support teachers to continue learning back in the classroom and create their own design-based projects in the future.

These legacy projects were made possible thanks to the generous support of Durham Duplex, a world leader in the design and manufacture of high-performance machine knives and industrial razor blades.

'I really appreciate all your help and it was a great experience for the kids. I will definitely stay in touch and please let me know if any opportunities arise for me to become involved.'

Participating teacher, DesignLab Sheffield

Year 6 Participation Summary (September 2022 to August 2023)

| | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|
| 42 students | 153 instances of participation |
| 8 teachers | 22 instances of participation |

Year 6 schools

- Yewlands Academy
- Sheffield Park Academy
- Hinde House

Supported by:



Year 6 Programme Loans

In Year 6 of DesignLab Nation, the V&A has lent two objects to Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich and Cartwright Hall, Bradford. To Bradford, the V&A loaned *Nylon Rainbow Sweater and Trousers*, 2010 by Lebanese fashion designer Tatyana Antoun to support their projects about Islamic textiles. To Ipswich, the V&A loaned *Lilla H* chair, 1989 by Swedish artist Caroline Schlyter to support their projects about furniture.

As well as supporting student projects and Teacher Development Strands, the loans engaged 55,993 members of the general public.



‘The loans from the V&A added a level of depth and modernity against which to contrast the historical objects in our own collections. They enabled new and different conversations with both visitors and staff and offered insights into the changing worlds of design and material cultures.’

Christchurch Mansion, Ipswich

Lilla H plywood chair, designed by Caroline Schlyter, 1988-89, Stockholm, Sweden. Gifted by Jan-Erik Elblom. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

‘The loan object generated some brilliant discussions around fashion and identity amongst participating students. It allowed them to consider Middle Eastern fashion from a different perspective. It was an eye-catching addition to our collections and was also very well received by other visitors.’

Bradford Museums and Galleries



Designer Zahid Rauf talking about V&A loan *Nylon Rainbow Sweater and Trousers* by Tatyana Antoun © Bradford Museums and Galleries

‘It was really fun, and I enjoyed the freedom of making what I wanted.’

Participating teacher, DLN Ipswich



Students taking part in printmaking activity,
DLN Blackpool © CJ Griffiths

Press Highlights

To read some of our press highlights go to the following links:



bit.ly/dlnbradfordcelebrate

bit.ly/dlnbradfordzone

bit.ly/dlnzaidrauf

Wider Dissemination

Director of the V&A, Tristram Hunt presented ‘The Civic and the Global: The V&A and the Cultural Mission of Museums’ Lecture for DesignLab Nation at the following events:

- The Rotary Club of London (October 2022)
- Patrons of Portland (December 2022)
- The Art Workers’ Guild (January 2023)
- Clergy Consultation, St. George’s House (July 2023)
- Victor Suchar Christmas Lecture, Bath Royal Literary and Scientific Institution (December 2022)
- Ofsted Launch for Art & Design Research Review (February 2023)
- Dr Coleman Mopper Memorial Lecture, Detroit Institute of Arts (April 2023)
- NMITE Leadership Masterclass (May 2023)
- Usher Gallery Trust dinner (June 2023)
- Design & Technology Association (DATA) – ‘Reimagining D&T’ Launch (July 2023)

Dr Helen Charman, Director of V&A Learning and National Programmes, discussed DesignLab Nation in the following publication and at the following conferences:

- EDI Global Forum, Naples (October 2022)
- A&DO Seminar for Architecture and Design Learning (November 2022)
- ACC International Symposium, Gwangju (December 2022)
- Association of Children’s Museums InterActivity 2023, New Orleans (April 2023)
- UNESCO Multistakeholder Dialogue on Culture and Arts Education, Paris (May 2023)
- *Museums and Design Practices & Design Research for change*

Evaluation

In Year 6 of DesignLab Nation, the V&A worked alongside external evaluator, Beth Dyson, to evaluate the programme against our Key Programme Objectives (page 5). The evaluation employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods, adapted and refined during the first phase of DesignLab Nation, in order to gain a full and rounded picture of the project which builds upon the front-end and summative student/teacher evaluation from previous years. An In-Focus case study investigating the new Teacher Development Strand pilots complimented the evaluation from Year 6 to provide insight for the future of the programme. The evaluation findings on the following pages are extracted from a full evaluation report created by Beth Dyson, which is available on request.

Evaluation Methodology

In order to gain a rounded picture of the programme, the evaluation framework includes a number of different methods:

- Front-end and summative evaluation
- In-Focus case study
- Partner museum focus group
- Designer and teacher telephone interviews
- Teacher CPD evaluation forms
- V&A Learning Producer observations

‘DesignLab Nation has supported by ... visiting The Box museum and learning just how important Plymouth was as a historical port gave a great deal of context to their local area.’

Participating teacher, DLN Plymouth



Students exploring Princess Yachts,
DLN Plymouth © Dom Moore

'I achieved what I wanted in DesignLab Nation ... due to the increase in interest I have discovered, and the confidence built through this experience.'

Participating teacher, DLN Blackpool

Evaluation: Impact on Students

Through the programme the V&A aims for students:

- To have a better understanding about design industries in their local area
- To be more interested in pursuing a career in the creative industries
- To be more interested in studying a creative subject at school or beyond
- To be more confident in their art and design skills, and develop 21st-century skills (creative thinking, critical thinking and collaboration) essential for future workplaces
- To have a better understanding about design, and how to access collections and industries at a local and national level
- To gain a sense of place, understand their regional design network and see the purpose of design in their local area

Here is an overview of our findings of Year 6 student evaluation:

63.8% visited their local museum for the first time

91.6% of students felt more confident in their art and design skills

68.9% of students are more interested in pursuing a career in art or design

75.3% are more interested in choosing to study a creative subject at school or beyond their art and design skills

88.2% of students said they had achieved what they wanted when taking part in DesignLab Nation

83.1% know more about design industries in their local area

80.4% of students agreed that DLN helped with 'working in a group'

76.7% of students agreed that DLN had helped them with 'solving problems'

92.3% students agreed that DLN had helped them with 'coming up with new ideas'

95% visited the V&A for the first time

'I really liked doing this as I was actually included in what we were doing.'

Participating student, DLN Blackpool

Students exploring V&A Ceramic galleries,
DLN Blackpool
© Victoria and Albert Museum, London

‘Some students have been to places they will never get the opportunity to go and it will be a formative experience for them. It’s also good for them to be able to take a creative brief and see it through from start to finish and be proud to exhibit their work to the public and represent their school.’

Participating teacher, DLN Bradford

Evaluation: Impact on Teachers

Through the programme, the V&A aims for teachers:

- To gain new skills and approaches of learning ready to take back to the classroom
- To be inspired and passionate about their subject and wanting to endorse it within the school
- To feel enthusiastic and more prepared in teaching the new D&T GCSE and/or other creative subjects
- To feel more connected to their local museum, local design industries and local teacher networks
- For headteachers and governors to have a better understanding of the V&A and partner museums as a resource to support D&T and offer greater support to D&T teaching

Here is an overview of our findings of Year 6 student evaluation:

Teachers thought that their students had gained important experience with

- Developing cultural capital
- Creative thinking and collaborative skills
- Increased confidence
- Greater understanding of the design process
- Consideration of ethical and sustainable issues

93% (16/17) of teachers described the project as **positive or very positive** (14 described it as ‘very positive’, two as ‘positive’, one as negative).

100% of teachers thought that DesignLab Nation had **supported their students** with working in a group, generating new ideas and feeling connected to local design history and industry.

100% of teachers thought that taking part in DesignLab Nation has **impacted on perceptions of their subject area** in school (61% of teachers thought that taking part in DesignLab Nation has had a big impact, while 39% thought that it has had a small impact on perceptions of their subject).

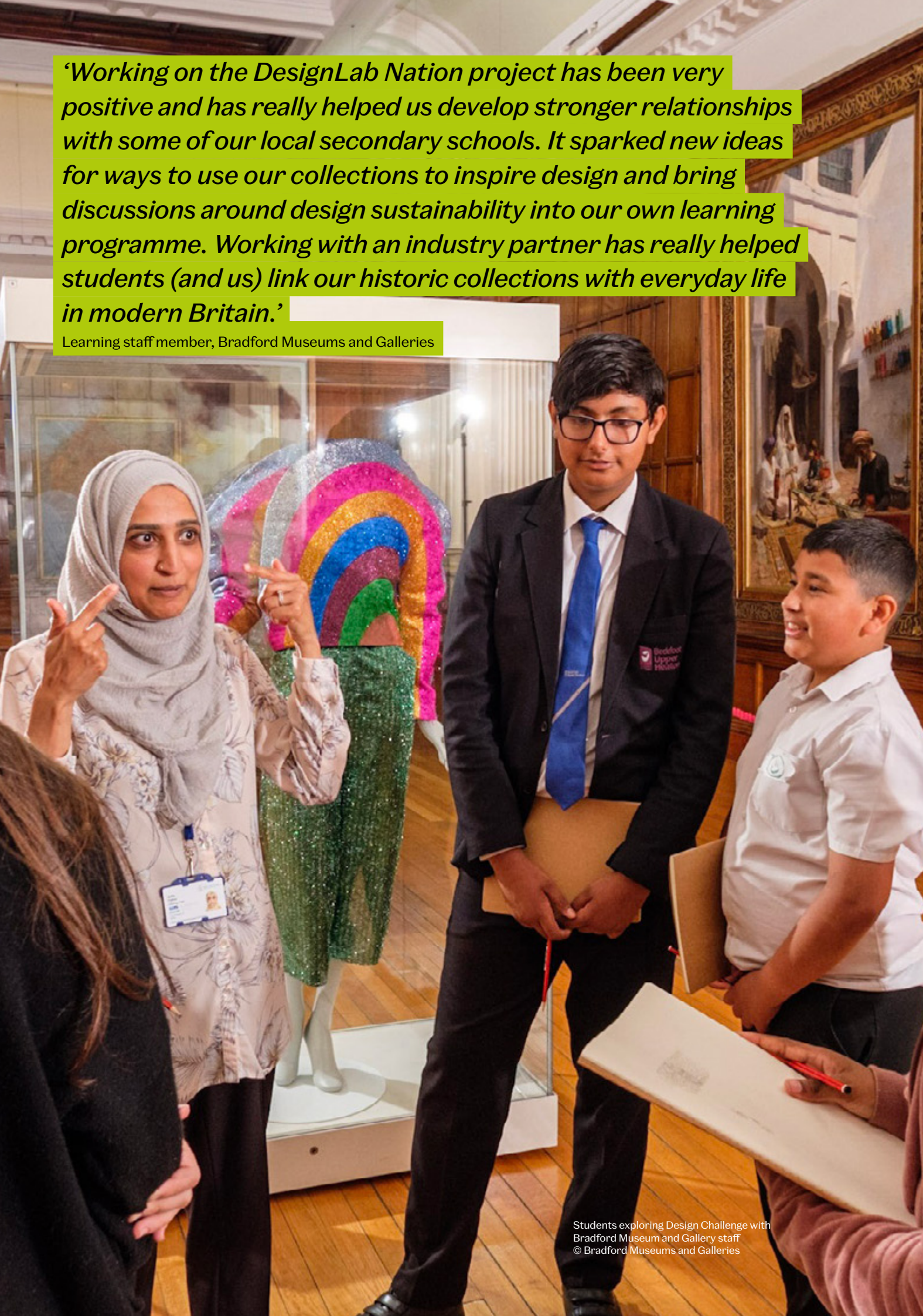
‘All voices were heard, and opinions and ideas considered. For those less vocal they demonstrated this practically enabling them to find their role within the team. It was a challenge for some but the amount of supportive conversations taking place were great.’

Participating teacher, DLN Blackpool

Teacher exploring *Rana Geum: Dappled Light* at The Box, DLN Plymouth © Dom Moore

‘Working on the DesignLab Nation project has been very positive and has really helped us develop stronger relationships with some of our local secondary schools. It sparked new ideas for ways to use our collections to inspire design and bring discussions around design sustainability into our own learning programme. Working with an industry partner has really helped students (and us) link our historic collections with everyday life in modern Britain.’

Learning staff member, Bradford Museums and Galleries



Students exploring Design Challenge with Bradford Museum and Gallery staff
© Bradford Museums and Galleries

Evaluation: Impact on Partner Museums

Through the DesignLab Nation programme, the V&A aims for partner museums:

- To feel more connected to local secondary schools and teachers.
- To feel more connected to local designers and local design industries.
- To feel that the V&A loans have supported the way visitors interact with their own collections and local design heritage.
- To feel connected to the V&A and other partner museums.
- Raise the profile of D&T in the curriculum in their local area.

For Year 6 projects, highlights of the year were:

- Growth of partnerships with secondary schools, designers, industry partners and the V&A, helping to affirm and strengthen the work that local museums are doing.
- Schools making return visits to the partner museum after DesignLab Nation.
- Schools making return visits to the industry partner after DesignLab Nation.
- High proportion of pupil premium students taking part.
- Hosting a successful celebration event (DLN Bradford).
- Influencing conversations about partner museum redevelopment post partnership.

For Year 6 projects, challenges of the year were:

- Budgeting against the rising costs of travel and travel organisation.
- Scheduling Teachers, CPD and Celebration events during busy summer terms.
- Recruiting schools and scheduling sessions.
- Having appropriate spaces within partner museum for creative activities.
- Adapting project plans between schools.
- Managing the relationship and planning between designers/industry partners.

‘The partnership with the V&A has been excellent. It has offered an unparalleled and high-quality learning experience for young people in the South West, particularly those who may otherwise face barriers to accessing museums and galleries.’

The Box, Plymouth

Evaluation: In Focus - Teacher Development Strands

A new Teacher Development Strand (TDS) was introduced to DesignLab Nation (DLN) in Year 6. This element of the programme provides an opportunity for museum staff, designers and teachers to work together to co-design and develop DLN projects and resources, as well as offering teachers a CPD opportunity to develop key skills and specific subject knowledge and prepare for taking part in projects with their students. The Year 6 TDSs took place over three or four sessions at both the V&A and partner museum sites and were planned and run by the V&A, partner museum and designer, and sessions.

The key aims of the TDS are to:

- Support the development of DLN projects plans and resources leading to the delivery of the three school projects.
- Support teachers to develop critical thinking, creative thinking and collaboration skills.
- Support teachers to develop awareness and understanding of Islamic Culture, Art & Design (Bradford)/Ceramics (Stoke-on-Trent).
- Build a new or develop an existing network between local teachers, design industries, local museums and the V&A, focussing on design.
- Provide teachers with ideas and approaches to take back to the classroom to support their teaching.

The first TDS was held in autumn 2022 with Cartwright Hall in Bradford, designer Zahid Rauf, and two local teachers due to take part in Year 6 projects. The development focus of this TDS was on the Year 6 Bradford projects, including integration of the loan object to the project and the final Student Design Challenge. Find out more about Bradford project on page 17.

The second TDS was held in Spring 2023 with V&A Wedgwood in Stoke-on-Trent, V&A ceramicist-in-residence Florence Dwyer, and three local teachers due to take part in Year 7 projects. The development focus of this TDS was on creating a new ceramics resource for secondary schools (Exploring Ceramics). Find out more about the TDS on page 23 and more about the resource on page 13.

Impact of Teacher Development Strands

- 100% of participants of the TDS had a highly positive experience, finding the experience to be creative, inspirational, and highly rewarding.
- Teachers and designers appreciated the collaborative nature of the TDS, commenting that they felt that their opinions were heard and valued. The TDS allowed for more opportunity for integrated planning and early identification of potential challenges. For the Stoke-on-Trent TDS, teachers enjoyed the opportunity to input practically to the creation of the resource – including classroom logistics, embedding flexibility and ensuring content was accessible for students.
- Teachers valued having space and time to increase their subject knowledge and be creative through practical making experiences. They enjoyed being challenged and pushed out of their comfort zones, building confidence for materials and techniques.
- Teachers commented on how they are now using these skills to support their teaching, and some have passed the knowledge onto other teaching staff.
- Teachers felt equipped for starting DesignLab Nation projects with students, feeling enthusiastic, engaged and ready to make the most of the opportunity. Teachers were looking forward to their students benefitting from the project, citing raised aspirations, increased cultural capital and the opportunity to take part in tangible and tactile activities as their hopes for their students' experience.
- Keen to continue their relationships built with partner museums. One school had already exhibited student artwork at the museum since starting the TDS, as a direct result of having that contact with the institution.
- Teachers thought the TDS provided a good opportunity to network with other teachers and creative industries. However, they identified that having enough time is a major barrier for ongoing networking. Teachers suggested building networks through academy trusts and Design & Technology Association.

'It's been fabulous ... the opportunity to be part of a group of creative people that were combining ideas was very rewarding ... the accumulation of ideas was really inspirational.'

Participating teacher, DLN Stoke-on-Trent

'I enjoyed ... having the time and capacity to think of new things, come up with new ideas, just be out there and see what's going on in the world of design.'

Participating teacher, DLN Stoke-on-Trent

Teachers exploring artworks at
Bradford Museums and Galleries
© Bradford Museums and Galleries

Evaluation: Strengths

Below we have compiled comments from students, teachers, designers and partner museums regarding the ‘strengths’ of the programme in Year 6. We look forward to building upon these in the next academic year.

Students

- Creative workshops/Making things/Prototyping/Testing/Design process/Drawing.
- Visiting V&A/London/Regional museums/Seeing Museum objects/experience new things.
- Working with a designer/Learning new things about D&T.
- Increased confidence/Public Speaking/Learning new things about themselves.
- Working with others/teamwork/spending time with friends/meeting new people.
- Pride in seeing their skills improve/outcomes.
- Having fun.

Teachers

- Increased students’ cultural capital.
- Increased student creative thinking skills – including generating new ideas and access to different materials.
- Increased students’ self-confidence – including asking questions and making decisions.
- Students gaining an understanding of the design process – including design ethics and sustainability.
- Seeing their students working in groups – including ideas sharing and opportunities to collaborate.
- Students feeling connected to local design history and connection to city.
- Students working independently but being able to access support if needed.
- Inspiring own teaching.
- Building relationships with the V&A, partner museums and local industry partners.
- Teacher Development Strand: Collaborative nature.
- Teacher Development Strand: having space and time to increase subject knowledge and be creative.
- Teacher Development Strands: preparing teachers for student projects.
- Access to Object Discussion Cards in museum and classroom.
- CPD events: Playful practical activities, finding out about opportunities, exploring local exhibitions.

Partner Museums

- Active student workshops encouraging mistake making and freedom of choice.
- Growth of partnerships with secondary schools, designers, industry partners and the V&A.
- Schools making return visits to the partner museum.
- Schools making return visits to the industry partner.
- High proportion of pupil premium students taking part.
- Influencing conversations about partner museum redevelopment post partnership.

Evaluation: Recommendations

Evaluation shows that the experience of taking part in DesignLab Nation is very positive for students and teachers, and recommendations this year are to focus planning and provision on refining the offer rather than making any fundamental changes.

- Continue to clarify roles, relationships and responsibilities between the V&A, partner museum, designers and local industry partners. Set clear project expectations for teachers to support with the delivery of school projects, outlining schedule and outcomes of each session.
- Review the future scheduling of Wider Teacher’s CPD for teachers and Celebration events – considering scheduling events earlier in the term, mark dates further in advance, embedding local INSET days etc.
- Continue to streamline and unify working process across the V&A and partner museums. Provide a programming checklist for partner museums to support them with project admin and onboarding of schools. In response of inflation review travel budget with partner museums.
- Continuing to ensure the student design challenge and student design journey is clear, structured, has direction and is accessible for students of different abilities. Continue to adopt ‘a less is more’ approach. Ring fencing further time for play, mistake making and imagination into busy project plans. Suggest specific roles within the team structure of students to support collaboration.
- Reviewing student group structures and dynamics with teachers pre-project – including the options to allow/mix up friendship groups and bring together mixed year groups.
- Working with teachers to ensure any access needs are shared with the V&A, partner museum and designer well in advance of projects starting so support can be provided.
- For Teacher Development Strands to condense into shorter schedules and to outline key actions for teachers before, during and after sessions, to utilise teacher knowledge, they feel prepared and school projects can progress shortly after. To also use the Teacher Development Strand to recruit schools prior to the start of the academic year to support with scheduling.
- Ensure activities and resources provide students and teachers with the necessary background knowledge when discussing design processes and techniques.

‘As a result of visiting the V&A we have embarked on creating our own museum within the school. We have been able to talk to the local museums as a result of this experience and we believe that we will be able to access funding in the next financial year to progress this initiative.’

Participating teacher, DLN Bradford

Looking Ahead

We are currently looking forward to:

- Continuing our existing partnership with The Box in Plymouth. Year 7 projects will draw inspiration from the theme, 'Plymouth – City for the Future'.
- Continuing our existing partnership with Bradford Museums and Art Galleries. Year 7 projects will draw inspiration from the theme of transport.
- Kickstarting a new partnership with Tyne and Wear Museums and Archives. Year 7 projects will draw inspiration from the theme of glass.
- Kickstarting a new partnership with V&A Wedgwood Collection, Stoke-on-Trent. Year 7 projects will draw inspiration from the theme of ceramics.
- Embedding a two-day Teacher Development Strand within all partnerships from autumn 2023.
- Launching our new Exploring Ceramics resource in autumn 2023.
- Devising and delivering 12 in-depth schools' projects, including 48 student workshops and four teacher development sessions, with another 12 regional secondary schools. We are currently working with partner museums and Year 7 designers to develop and prepare for projects starting in autumn 2023.
- Continuing to develop our suite of resources to support students and teachers with object-based learning and their design journey.
- Reviewing Wider Teachers CPD events with possibility of four events to share programme learning with other teachers and educators from surrounding areas and develop wider D&T networks.
- Continuing to develop programme legacy for schools and teachers we have engaged with and building connections between DesignLab Nation and our national schools challenge, V&A Innovate.

The Box

BRADFORD
DISTRICT
MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

THE
SHIPLEY
ART GALLERY

V&A Wedgwood Collection



DesignLab Nation regional partnerships map,
September 2017–August 2024

Programme Funding

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our donors who have supported DesignLab Nation, and we look forward to fundraising for Phase 3 of the programme beginning in September 2023.

We would also like to thank:

The students, teachers and staff of our DesignLab Nation Year 6 Schools

Educational Diversity-Blackpool, Blackpool Aspire Academy, South Shore Academy (Blackpool), Hanson Academy (Bradford), Beckfoot School (Bradford), Beckfoot Upper Heaton School (Bradford), Thomas Gainsborough School (Sudbury), Stoke High School, Ormiston Academy (Ipswich), Chantry Academy (Ipswich), Ipswich Academy, Thomas Lord Audley School (Colchester), Felixstowe School, UTC Plymouth, All Saints Academy, Plymouth, Stoke Damerel Community College (Plymouth)

The teachers from our Teacher Development Strands

Vicky Bone (Beckfoot Upper Heaton School , Bradford), Jonathan Barton (Hanson Academy, Bradford), Drew Wicken (Co-op Academy, Stoke-on-Trent), Tracy Warrener (Thistley Hough Academy, Stoke-on-Trent) and Melanie Stace (St Thomas More Catholic Academy, Stoke-on-Trent)

Our Year 6 DesignLab Nation Partner Museums

Colchester and Ipswich Museums, The Box (Plymouth), Showtown: Museum of fun and entertainment (Blackpool), Bradford Museums and Art Galleries, V&A Wedgwood Collection (Stoke-on-Trent)

Our Year 6 Project Designers

Jessica Sanders, Marcus Woolf, Anna Boland, Nicolas Burrows, Zahid Rauf, Florence Dwyer

Our Year 6 Industry Partners

Princess Yachts, Plymouth FabLab, Lightworks, Melrose Interiors

Our Year 6 DesignLab Legacy Partner Museums

Sheffield Museums

Partners:

The Box

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Museums

Sheffield Museums

SHOW
TOWN

V&A Wedgwood Collection

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JAMEEL

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Students exploring The Box, DLN Plymouth
© Dom Moore

If you have any questions about DesignLab Nation, please contact:
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