

## ***Watch This Space 4 Teacher Placement***

**National Glass Centre, Sunderland**  
**Alison Cleland**

**Framwellgate School, Durham**  
**Venerable Bede's School, Sunderland**

### **About National Glass Centre**

National Glass Centre is currently focusing on delivering extended learning projects to schools. Extended learning projects consist of visits of the National Glass Centre's facilities and art galleries before taking part in a creative project in response. These extended learning projects last from 3 – 20 sessions and are intended to give students invaluable learning experiences in creativity, technology, science and design; working with real artists and makers whilst seeing finished products and art in the NGC gallery.

### **Why I applied**

When I applied for the WTS 4 Teacher Placement; I was a new employee of National Glass Centre in an education role still in its development stage. My main reason for applying was to help develop a programme of extended learning activities with secondary schools; an area that NGC has much scope for but has had little focus on in the past. These visits would mean NGC works with less schools but the quality of each creative experience will be raised.

WTS 4 would also give me the opportunity to have contact with more secondary schools in the surrounding area, make new contacts with teachers and create and develop good working relationships and further projects with teachers that NGC have not previously worked with. I also intended the placement to give me further understanding of teachers' needs and interests and learn how such projects can fit in with the curriculum. Working with 2 teachers gave me opportunity to investigate how NGC can develop projects further, apply for funding, link up with other schools and galleries/institutions, how NGC and schools can evaluate and learn from projects and the best way to make sure students get the most out of such projects.

### **The teachers**

During WTS 4 I worked with 2 teachers/schools that NGC has never worked with before, Wendy Brookbanks from Framwellgate School and Paul Sutcliffe at Venerable Bede's. I worked with the schools because they were schools that NGC had not worked with, schools that rarely took part in such projects, had enthusiastic teachers who were both relatively new in their posts (Wendy has only been a teacher for 2 years and Paul only started at Venerable Bede's last September and both schools were science schools so could bring a slightly different viewpoint to the project and placement.

### **Before the placements**

Before the placements took place we had an introduction to WTS 4 which meant all the gallery educators met up and discussed past placements, advice and ideas. I found meeting up with gallery educators from other galleries was invaluable in sharing thoughts, enthusiasm and ideas, something I hardly ever get the chance to do. I also got ideas for projects and how we could evaluate them.

## **What we did**

Day 1 (Introductory Day) Both teachers had a tour of the art galleries with the curator, met the glass studio team then took part in a glass making workshop and watch a glassblowing demonstration. I gave both teachers a tour of the building, behind the scenes and gave them an induction of how the building as a whole operates. During this day we discussed what we all wanted from the placement and how we could take this forward.



**Teacher visit and workshop**

Days 2 and 3 (Visits x 2). Both schools brought Key Stage 3 and 4 students in for visits over 2 days. This gave a number of students the opportunity to experience the National Glass Centre, get an understanding of what it does, see the exhibitions, research the artists, take part in a glass making workshop and see glass blowing and making demonstrations. These visits were intended as a pilot for further workshops we will be doing in the future with secondary schools and these pilot days allowed us to assess them and their suitability.



**Student visit**

Days 4 (Evaluation Days) During these days we evaluated the projects and discussed further projects that NGC will do with both schools. These days included; discussing the funding of longer learning experiences, pupil selection for smaller groups, artists, how longer learning experiences will run, what will happen and how they could benefit students.

### **After the placements**

The key aspect of the placement - inviting secondary school teachers and schools into NGC, raising their awareness of what they can do with us on longer term learning experiences and how they can benefit from working with us in the future was fulfilled.

Both relationships were very successful and NGC has made definite plans and received funding to work with both schools and teachers in 2008.

- Venerable Bede's School/ Paul Sutcliffe: NGC has secured funding to work with 6 students from Venerable Bede's to work with the international artist's 'United Visual Artist's' to produce a lighting and technology exhibition for the National Glass Centre.

- Framwellgate School/ Wendy Brookbanks: Framwellgate School has secured funding to produce a stained glass window with one of NGC's glass artists for their school.

I hope to work with more non-visiting schools in the future, inviting teachers to work with me on projects using the current extended learning pilot as an example of what we can achieve with schools. The experience has given me time to work with teachers on the funding, planning and evaluation of such projects so that I can approach other schools with confidence and illustrate the value of taking part and visiting the NGC.

### **What I would do next time**

Even though we worked with art teachers initially, a science aspect was brought in with Framwellgate school; a science teacher came to one of the placement days with a view to setting up an exhibition based on science and glass at the school. In the future I would like to work with a science teacher in order to develop further projects around this area.

I would work with a range of teachers from different subject areas in order to focus on the different aspects of glass making and the gallery. I would also work with different specialist schools or primary schools to get further knowledge in these areas.

### **Pupil Quotes after visit**

"It was fun and interesting"

"We researched artists work and made our own sandcasts chosen from the designs we did in school"

"It was fun and informational"

"I liked the workshop because I like to use my hands"

"The glass blowing was cool and really interesting to watch"

### **Teacher Quote**

"I was really pleased with how the visit went and pupils could see the link between their work in school, the gallery and the workshop at the glass centre. Pupils enjoyed the gallery visit, glass blowing demonstration and the sand casting workshops and were enthused and motivated by both activities." Art teacher Framwellgate School Durham.

**Photos courtesy Alison Cleland**