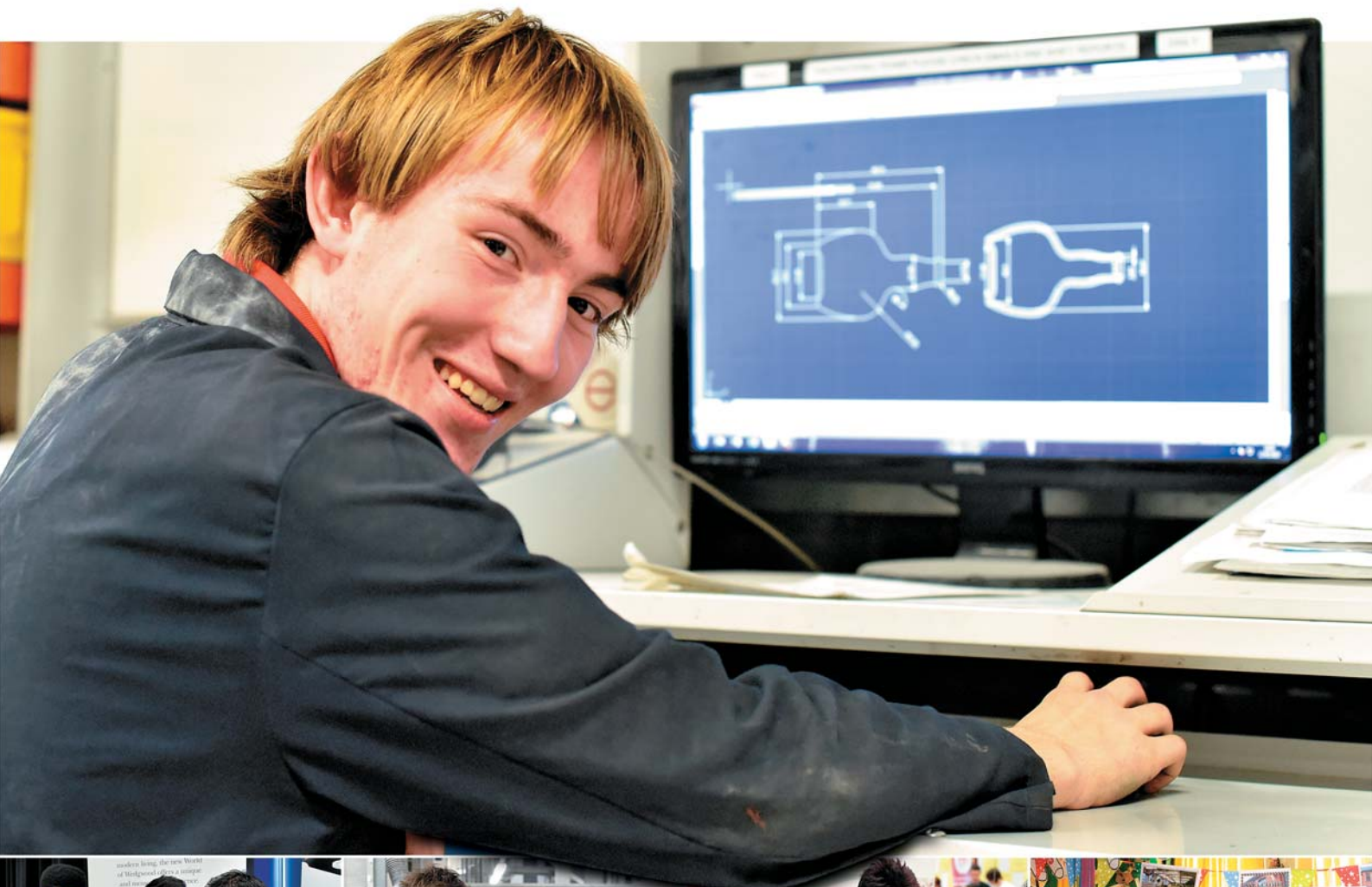


Ceramic Skills Academy

Independent Evaluation



Wider Impact Consultancy
March 2015



Embracing ceramics as a career

On behalf of the CSA Board I would like to thank all of those who have played key roles in making this Project an outstanding success and model of good practice. This includes UKCES, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, the British Ceramic Confederation, business and education leaders and their representatives, the CSA Director and her team, and most significantly those young people who are embracing the exciting career choice opportunities the ceramic industry is delivering.

The level of change in ceramic technology is such that the industry has recognised the importance of encouraging and training young

people in the skills that are needed for a successful career in ceramics today. As this project has clearly proved, this can only be achieved by the industry and education working together in close collaboration.

We are grateful to Wider Impact Consultancy for delivering such an innovative report, which in addition to highlighting the impressive successes of the Project, succinctly points out that the task is not complete. As a pilot project, the CSA has established what works; and most significantly what still needs to be done if we are going to continue to compete globally, whilst remaining an international centre of ceramic excellence.

The CSA Board is committed to continuing to work together to build on what we are proud to be achieving. We do however require continued support in the form of high level business and educational expertise, experience and commitment; and most importantly external and matched funding. We have no doubts that with both, the CSA will continue to develop and grow from strength to strength, enriching the UK's economic and employment prospects for many years to come.

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Introduction

Wider Impact Consultancy is delighted to present this executive summary version of our independent evaluation of the Ceramic Skills Academy (CSA) Project, which has received funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

We are pleased to deliver access to our innovative **Augmented Reality (AR)** images, which has without doubt brought reporting of the Project to life. Our full report can be accessed within the news pages of our website www.widerimpact.com

It has been rewarding to support such hard working and dedicated people to present such a positive report, which reflects the dedication, tenacity and innovation of all those



**Edwin Lewis, Director,
Wider Impact Consultancy**

stakeholders involved in the development and delivery of the Project. It is clear that the CSA is achieving outcomes and milestones agreed with the funder, and there is no reason to believe that in a significant number of cases, these will be impressively exceeded.

We have no doubts that with high-level strategic support and commitment, there is scope and justification for the work of the CSA to continue and, based on research findings, that the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce is an appropriate delivery agent.

Augmented Reality (AR)



Download our free app to your smartphone or tablet and bring this document to life using the power of a new technology called Augmented Reality (AR).

To access the bonus content follow these instructions:

- Download the ooh-AR app from the App Store (Apple) or Google Play (Android).
- Open the app and point your device at the photo above and wait for the surprise.
- Double tap for a full-screen.



About the Project

Delivered by the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce in collaboration with the British Ceramic Confederation and enabled by funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), the key objective of the **Ceramic Skills Academy** has been to grow the proportion of businesses in the ceramic industry investing in skills and training for the workforce.

Led by an Academy Director, this has been achieved by encouraging new entrants into technical roles, increasing the skills of those already in the industry, and making the industry more attractive to schools, pupils and graduates.

Becoming a catalyst to transform the industry, and in collaboration with ceramic businesses, the Academy has worked with providers to:

- open up pathways into the industry,

through increased graduate placements and apprenticeships

- stimulate skills and knowledge transfer with a major mentoring programme
- provide an enterprise hub to support ceramic entrepreneurs
- promote the industry as a modern place to work
- promote attractive career options for young people
- challenge a culture of low training spending to increase the strategic importance of investing in people and skills

Steered by an Executive Board, who, over the life of the Project have included senior members of Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce, British Ceramics Confederation

and industry representatives from companies such as Johnson Tiles (Chair), Churchill China Plc, Ibstock Brick Ltd, Morgan Advanced Materials, Portmeirion Group, Steelite International Plc, Wade Ceramics Ltd, Waterford Wedgwood Royal Doulton, Emma Bridgewater, objectives of the Academy have included:

- putting the industry in the driving seat to develop the right qualifications and training, enabling the right people to be recruited at the right level
- working with both public and private sector providers, making it easy and attractive for companies to take on more apprentices and graduates
- acting as a hub for ceramics enterprise and supporting those who wish to set up new businesses with training and premises
- through events and mentoring, enabling the sharing of best practice and the transfer of skills, information and knowledge within and between large and small companies



Good Practice

There are a number of examples of impressive good practice, which include:

- collaboration and participation of key multi-agency stakeholders
- appointment of a skilled and dynamic Academy Director, supported by an excellent team
- creation of a concise industry database
- delivery of comprehensive training needs analysis (TNAs)
- ongoing development of the Career Pathway
- creation of a high quality website – see www.ceramicskillsacademy.co.uk
- ongoing development of the Ceramics Foundation Degree
- links with the education sector, with particular regard to supporting primary schools
- ongoing development of the Apprenticeship Trailblazer
- expertise, support and structure provided to work place mentoring
- enabling students and young people into work
- supporting UK economic growth and prosperity

Royal approval

Emma Bridgewater have been delighted to host a visit from the Duchess of Cambridge, who as this photograph demonstrates, clearly enjoyed learning about how products are made and appreciated by world-wide customers.



Photograph source: Emma Bridgewater

Statistics and facts

Project Outcomes

It is clear from both quantitative and qualitative research findings that on the whole, the Project is achieving outcomes agreed with the funder. It is anticipated that a number of these will be exceeded..

Outcomes of note include:

- apprentices (+30%)
- work placements (+16%)
- students engaged (+77%)
- companies in network (+20%)

Performance

There can be no doubts about the hard work, dedication and innovation of those involved in the delivery of the Project, which includes stakeholders such as members of the CSA Board, Delivery Groups, Strategy Group, CSA staff, businesses, education, and most significantly beneficiaries, who include students and young people.

On the whole, milestones have been met and the Project has significantly achieved an 'Assurance Rating' (Green) by the independent auditor (Moore Stephens).

Business Support

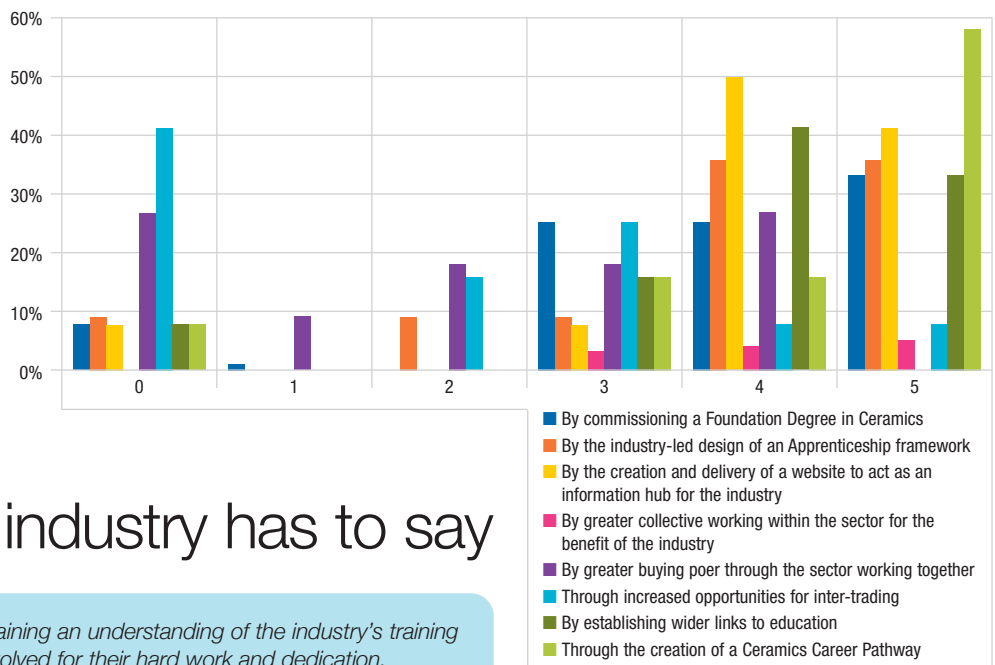
The graph on the right highlights positive justification for the CSA (1 low, 5 high, 0 no views).

It is clear that on the whole the majority of respondents feel that the CSA is working and is delivering outcomes that support strategic business objectives.

Project Outcomes (28 February 2015)

Outcomes	Targets	Achieved (28-02-15)	Comments
Apprenticeships	49	64	
Work placements	43	50	Further data anticipated from ceramic companies
Graduate short term	19	52	Combined total
Graduate long term	14		
Business starts	13	13	
Students engaged	1,050	1,856	Reflects the impressive involvement/ support of education
Staff in mentoring	225	162	Reflects businesses not realising mentoring is taking place as unofficial roles, therefore difficult to capture data and record
Companies in network	300	361	
Companies with TNA's	120	120	Further data expected from Stoke on Trent College

What the ceramic industry has to say



What the ceramic industry has to say

■ The CSA has been a tremendous help in gaining an understanding of the industry's training needs, and we must congratulate those involved for their hard work and dedication.

Other highlights are the website and the developing career pathway. We have certainly benefited from opportunities to meet local young people at careers fairs and other excellent events, who have certainly had their eyes opened in relation to the many career choices open to them in this sector. Real jobs have been filled, and we are looking forward to working with the CSA in the future.

There is still lots to do; for example, we would be looking to the CSA to assist in initiatives such as developing joint industry based training packages.

HR Manager

■ I have been so impressed with my employer, as I have been given the opportunity to further my education as an Engineer at degree level, whilst continuing to learn my trade as an Apprentice on the 'shop floor'. The ceramic sector has changed and is not just about clay and pots. This is clearly demonstrated on the CSA website, which is a brilliant place for young people like myself to visit!

If all goes well I could be a Director at this company, and I would like to thank all of those involved for the support and guidance I am currently receiving.

Apprentice Engineer



■ From a strategic business perspective the role of the CSA is extremely important as the sector as a whole is not good at working together on key issues such as upskilling the local workforce. This clearly cannot continue, and we are confident that the CSA has the potential to build on its success as an important strategic platform, from where we can all learn, collaborate and build on a growing and aspirational industry.

Company Director

CASE STUDY 1: **Wade** – www.wade.co.uk

Apprentices' valuable input

Established in 1810, **Wades Ceramics Ltd** is enjoying steady growth, and diversifying into new product ranges such as lighting, vases, pie funnels and dishes.

Director **Paul Farmer, OBE** says, "The decision by the Board to diversify our product range has been an amazing success, which has been achieved in part by a further decision to utilise the skills and talents of young people from our local universities, colleges and schools. A significant recent appointment was a young intern with knowledge of social media and marketing. Her input has proved impressively crucial to the success of our marketing strategy, which has included updating our website, utilising platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and the introduction of new brochures, which she had a direct involvement in. Her fresh and innovative approach to marketing has proved inspirational, and we can directly attribute new markets and sales to her input.

"Another success has been the appointment of an Engineering Apprentice, which is linked to the succession planning of the company. It was our original objective to appoint him full-time, but he was understandably and impressively determined to enter university and gain appropriate qualifications. We understood this, and are currently supporting him during his further education, whilst employing him during the process. His energy and commitment is impressive, and we have high hopes for him in the company. There is every possibility that he could become a future Director.

"We currently employ four Apprentices, and are looking to employ four more in the future. Their input is extremely valuable to us, and is without doubt playing a significant role in the ongoing successful growth of the company'.

"We encourage local students to visit our factory, and will continue to make direct collaborative links with establishments such as Newcastle College. A recent initiative has been to commission photography students to become involved in the design and delivery of our company brochures."

Paul has no doubts of the importance of the Ceramic Skills Academy, "I have



supported the Academy from the start, and we fully understand the importance of attracting young people in particular into the industry. This has proved challenging, due in part to local negative perceptions about the ceramic industry, but these are being overcome by our continuing to deliver positive messages and working in partnership with all key stakeholders."

Paul is clear about the way forward, "It is essential that we involve and engage the owners and Directors of those businesses that can benefit most from the role of the Academy. To date this has proved difficult and challenging, as the ceramic sector is not good at working in collaboration on such initiatives. We are extremely keen to share our good practice, and have no doubts that the sector as a whole can learn from us, as we can learn from others. The future of this sector is extremely positive, however continued development and growth will be held up if we are unable to attract the skills and experience we need."

CASE STUDY 3: **Potclays** – www.potclays.com

Sector is on the up

Founded in 1932, **Potclays** is a Stoke-on-Trent based, highly successful and innovative fourth generation family company, with its premium quality clay bodies enjoying a world-wide reputation. The company also boasts a highly qualified and experienced team of engineers, building top-quality kilns for hobby, educational and industrial use.

Director **James Otter** (pictured) says, "We are proud of our links to our areas of operation and our reputation as an ethical, community facing company, and have been delighted to support the Ceramic Skills Academy (CSA) from its inception.

"We get what the Academy is all about and understand the importance of attracting a younger work-force to the industry, which has and is facing a number of challenges. These of course include a lack of knowledge and in some cases general negativity about the sector from those within local schools, colleges and universities.

"We are proud of our workforce and accept that it is ageing. It is therefore important that we forward plan and look to recruit and train the people with the skills we need to meet what we are confident is a bright future for our business and the ceramic industry as a whole. A problem we face is that those who approach us for work have little knowledge about local heritage and clay in particular. They have little concept of the science and logistics behind turning clay into beautiful things.

"This is why the role and functions of the CSA are important; and have played a significant role in meeting such challenges. Its links with local education are inspirational and timely, and as part of the initiative, we have enjoyed hosting school children; arranging site tours and delivering our full days 'Pottery Basics' course free to a number of teachers.

"It is rewarding to see young faces come to life as they tour the company, experiencing raw 'dirty' clay and the technical processes it goes through; right through to finishing and production processes, as they gain an insight and

understanding of links to key academic subjects such as heritage/history, geography, science, IT, business studies, maths/finance, art and design.

"The feedback we receive is extremely positive, and we are confident that the work of the CSA is the way forward if we are to raise the profile of the sector, and nurture a positive image that will encourage young people in particular to enter such a diverse, dynamic and exciting industry.

"The sector is really on the up, and there is a real risk that local young people will lack the skills, experience and 'work-readiness' to provide the workforce we need to take advantages of growing and developing opportunities and growth.

"As a leading local company with world-wide links and experience, we have no doubts that the role of the CSA should certainly continue into the future. The sector is fragmented in terms of 'joined up' working and the CSA has the potential to support and facilitate the sector as a whole in terms of developing and delivering a strategic and reactionary collaborative approaches to tackling key issues linked to workforce recruitment, development and retention."



Mentoring support

Stoke-on-Trent based **Johnson Tiles** IT Support Manager, **Dan Birks** (pictured right), was himself an Apprentice at the company, and fully understands the role a mentor plays in the development of young people entering the workplace, “I remember being a new apprentice at this company 10 years ago, and how daunting it was. I didn’t have a dedicated mentor, and believe I understand the needs of new apprentices. I have been determined to ensure my new staff members, including Daniel Cooper (pictured left) our IT Apprentice, receive this type of support.

“Daniel joined us from Stoke 6th Form College in response to our looking to employ an IT Apprentice. We were impressed by his attitude and aptitude for the role and he has a bright future at this company. It is our policy to adopt mentor/mentee roles, and my role is to support him in lots of ways as he learns and adapts to the job. IT plays a huge role in this company and he has a lot to learn.”

Daniel says, “Whilst I did consider going to university, I decided that the best option for me was to become an apprentice in a company such as Johnson Tiles. I searched appropriate websites utilising the term **IT Apprentices**, and quickly located this position. It has proved to be amazing and everything I was looking for. I have just completed an NVQ Level 3 and am looking to achieve a university degree, whilst continuing to carry out my job. I am really impressed and grateful that the company will fund and support me with this!

“Dan is an excellent mentor and really understands where I am and what I need to learn and do. As with the rest of the team, he is so willing to pass on his knowledge and experience and is always there for me. It is amazing that there are so many different and varied careers within the ceramic industry and so many opportunities to advance your career and of course salary. I am so happy here and am so grateful to Johnson Tiles, Dan and the rest of the team.”



Dan says, “Learning never stops, and I am looking to complete a Masters Degree, which the company will be sponsoring and supporting me with. This company and the industry in general is growing and we all excited to be a part of it. I get to travel across the UK and no two days are ever the same.

“It is a shame that a lot of young people don’t understand this, and my advice to them is to visit the CSA website and gain an understanding of what is on offer.”

Promoting British values

Founded in 1879, **Thursfield Primary School** serves the North Kidsgrove area of Stoke-on-Trent. With an aim of delivering a curriculum objective to promote ‘**British Values**’, Years 1 and 2 teachers, **Amy Parlane**, **Pippa Brookes** and **Kerrie Ryles** are working with the children to deliver a term theme of ‘Learning all about Stoke-on-Trent’.

They say, “We had doubts at first about how the children would enjoy and understand the subject, and if we are honest, we as teachers had a lot to learn about the history of this area. From the start it has been an amazing success, and the learning curve has been amazing. We have all learnt so much!

“It has been enlightening for them to link the Pottery industry with things like Stoke City Football Club being called the ‘Potters’, and gain an understanding that the cups and plates that eat and drink from have been made in their area for years and years. Many of the children had no idea what the purpose of a bottle kiln was.

“Family members who have worked in the industry have joined us and explained to the children what their jobs were. There has been a real buzz in the classrooms as they learn more and more. They have discovered local pottery firms and they love **Emma Bridgewater**. Even though we have not had the resources to visit, they have carried research out on the internet, and built a model of the factory in a classroom and they role-play each of the processes. For example, they use Play-Doh to make things, and use a cardboard kiln to ‘heat’ the ware. They even have a sales department to sell ‘all over the world’ – a world they now have a greater understanding of in a geographical perspective.

“What have they got out of this theme? So much! For example, they are loving local heritage, geography and history. They have become so creative and really enjoy making things. They are developing technical skills and their English is being developed as they write CVs, posting mock job applications to Emma Bridgewater.”

Teacher **Amy** says, “I really enjoyed the pottery course the Ceramic Skills Academy arranged. It was extremely useful to receive Key Stage lesson plans and



practical advice on how to use clay and make things. The only problem is we do not have a budget to purchase clay, never mind a kiln.”

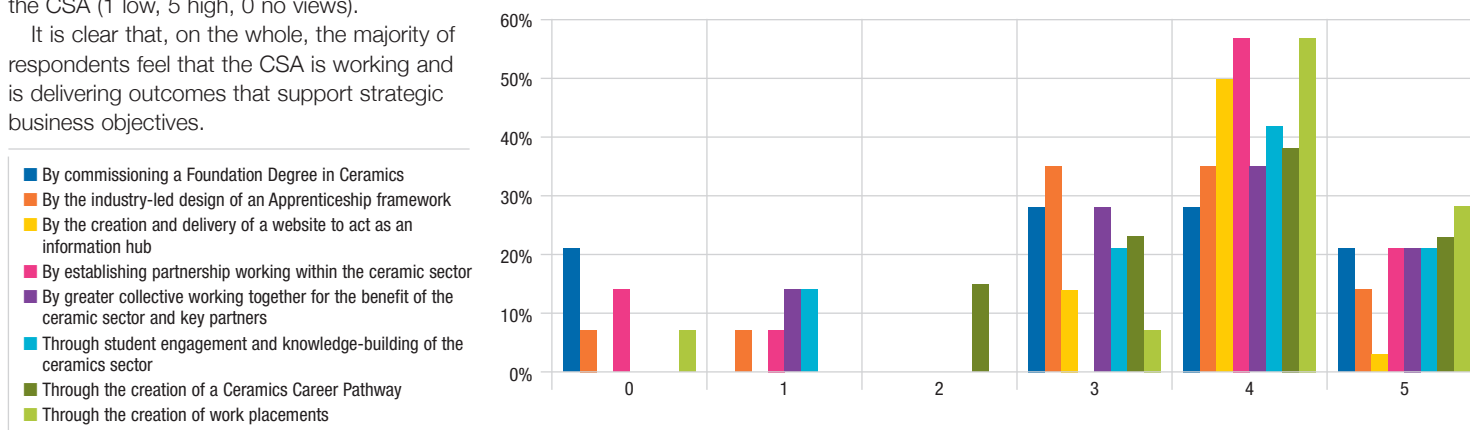
All the teachers agree that they would love to continue the Potteries theme in the whole school and see great value in having the resources to actually make things out of clay. They say, “This has been the most successful theme we have delivered. It is loved by us all, but it is frustrating not to have the resources to actually make things. If we did, we can see great value to the school and Stoke-on-Trent as a whole. The children are learning about their heritage, and are already developing aspirations to work in the ceramic industry – particularly Emma Bridgewater!”

Education support

This graph highlights positive justification for the CSA (1 low, 5 high, 0 no views).

It is clear that, on the whole, the majority of respondents feel that the CSA is working and is delivering outcomes that support strategic business objectives.

Why is the CSA working?



What education has to say

I can only commend the role of CSA and all those who have played such important strategic and delivery roles in making it work. It is traditionally problematic to be able to connect with the ceramic industry as a whole at Director and owner levels, and the CSA has made significant steps in improving this.

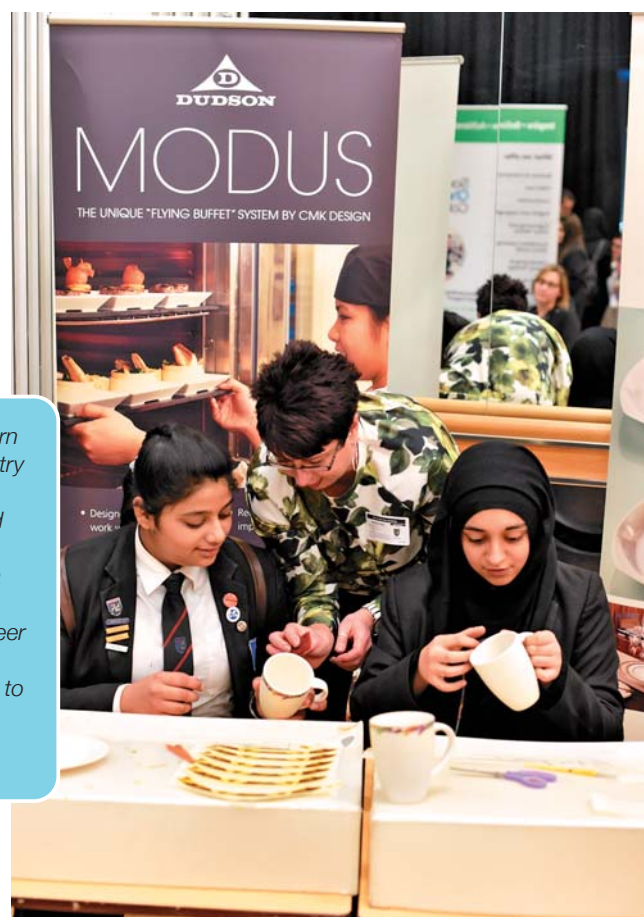
The CSA has also provided useful data and information about current and future training needs in the industry, which is assisting us to strategically plan ahead. Most significantly the CSA is opening the doors of the ceramic industry to many of our students, who previously had negative views and opinions, which were based on the views of their parents and grandparents, who suffered when the industry shrank during economic down turns.

We are finding that many of our students are more enlightened as a result of the CSA, and are being provided with the tools and information to make more informed decisions. It is essential that the role of the CSA continues if we are to build on current growth and employment opportunities; and we look forward to continuing to play a key role in its future.

Education Director

It is proving really useful to learn more about the ceramic industry and the jobs and careers that are on offer. I would never had believed it had I not had an opportunity to be involved in a site visit as part of A-level studies. I am looking for a career in HR, and will certainly be logging onto the CSA website to see what is on offer!

A-level student



Summary of findings

It is apparent that the Project has become a 'pilot project', which has played a **significant role** in understanding what works, good practice and opportunities to improve the way partners can come together to achieve aims and objectives linked to training and employment within the ceramic industry.

The CSA has achieved impressive outcomes, which will enable real jobs and employment opportunities. It also playing a key role in understanding what needs to be done, and the challenges that need to be tackled if long-term, sustainable employment aims and related objectives are to be achieved within the ceramic industry and the UK as a whole.

The way forward

Whilst the CSA is achieving impressive results, there is clearly lots to be done to support the on-going growth and prosperity of the ceramic industry. Recommendations include:

1. further commitment from senior managers/ Directors/owners of ceramic companies
2. consideration given to the role of the CSA being continued for the foreseeable future
3. consideration given to appropriately (externally/matched) funding its further development
4. Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce to continue to lead its development and delivery
5. elements of the project should include skills development projects on behalf, and for the benefit of the ceramic industry, in particular:

- a. further development of the Foundation Degree in Ceramics Technology (Whiteware), with the British Ceramic Confederation having a more active role so refractories, technical ceramics and materials science elements can be included
- b. development of the Ceramics Career Pathway.
- c. research and development of job descriptions
- d. consideration given to the development of ceramic lesson plans, enabling the education pathway to follow the ceramics career pathway
- e. an improvement to mentor training to develop employees consistently and encouraging employees to embrace change and innovation
- f. encouraging the sharing of best practice between larger companies and SMEs within the industry

Comments

The establishment of the CSA as a pilot has been instrumental in getting a strong partnership between the industry and education and also between partner organisations especially the British Ceramic Confederation and the Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.

Together we are using ceramic companies in the area to create excitement for the sector as a career opportunity for young people and to help these businesses generate greater success through skills development.

Sara Williams, CEO, Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce



It is to the credit of the Academy staff that as many of the UKCES targets have been achieved and two of the 'stand out' tangible benefits has been the development of the comprehensive training needs analysis and the establishment of effective links with schools, which is so vital if young

people are to view the industry as the attractive career opportunity it clearly is.

Government funding was always intended to establish an infrastructure from which to develop the programme further. In this regard the Academy is now in pole position to press on with the priorities identified by the industry particularly in the fields of higher apprenticeships and technical skills development.

Francis Morrall, Deputy CEO/ Employment Director, BCC

The Ceramic Skills Academy (CSA) has been at the heart of a major collaboration between Staffordshire ceramics businesses in an effort to drive change in the industry and address potential skills gaps caused by an ageing workforce.

I'm pleased that we have been able to drive forward the development of initiatives that will benefit the ceramics industry as a whole for many years to come. Initiatives such as the creation of career pathway to map routes into and through the ceramics industry and the commissioning of a foundation degree in Ceramics Technology amongst many others.

The lasting legacy of the CSA will be in the creation of sustainable long-term relationships between ceramics businesses, schools, colleges and universities that will inspire future generations of workers to enter and be part of the ceramics industry.

Linda McQuade, CSA Director



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