

## Design experts launch competition for students at Salendine Nook High School

Lesley Gulliver and Darren Evans from The Engine Room go back to school



Darren Evans, founder of The Engine Room in Mirfield, with Salendine Nook High School pupils after he set them a design challenge.

Design experts from a Mirfield brand consultancy went back to school to help inspire the next generation.

Lesley Gulliver and Darren Evans – from The Engine Room – visited students at Salendine Nook High School in Huddersfield.

The aim of their talk and presentation was to promote design as part of the UK school curriculum.

Around 280 year eight students gathered to hear the challenge set by the local design experts – four weeks to design something that will help people live a healthier lifestyle in 2019.

Whether it's an app, a cookery book, wearable tech or a promotional video, the design and technology (D&T) students have been urged to think big and not be held back by the misconception that it might not be possible.

The challenge marks a new collaboration between The Engine Room and the secondary school's D&T teaching cohort, who are equally passionate about preserving the imagination and creative problem-solving skills of young people.

They're big believers in the fact that while design was once a 'top of the pile' subject, it is increasingly being dropped in favour of seemingly more 'academic' subjects, in schools.

The challenge therefore marks the start of a drive to get students, parents, teachers and employers thinking about the power of design.



Darren Evans, founder of The Engine Room in Mirfield, with Salendine Nook High School pupils after he set them a design challenge.

Darren, the founder of The Engine Room, said: "We're not saying everyone needs to grow up aspiring to be a designer, by job title.

"But design thinking fits in everywhere. It encourages a collaborative, iterative and human-centred approach to tackling challenges that simply isn't taught in other subjects.

"So, while I applaud the country's commitment to raising STEM subject performance, I desperately don't want this to be to the detriment of students being able to study design too.

"So, what better way to hopefully inspire them, than explaining the opportunities that design can create for them, just before they're due to make their GCSE subject choices."

D&T head of department Andy Loadman said he was excited at the project and added: "We've a challenge on our hands to banish misconceptions.



Darren Evans, founder of The Engine Room in Mirfield, gives a presentation at Salendine Nook High School.

"D&T is not 'woodworking' or home economics anymore.

"It's a subject that centres on teamwork. There's never a wrong answer. We encourage our students to conceptualise, create, test, learn, and re-think, together. This will see them learn life skills that apply to varied careers ranging from engineering through to the public health service.

"We've got some uber-bright students within the school and having only spoken to them briefly about this challenge before The Engine Room's visit, it was such a joy to see how excited they were by the prospect of experimenting with their creativity.

"This is exactly why I became a teacher in this subject."

Darren and school principal Darren Christian will decide on the winner of the challenge in four weeks' time.

The victor will go on to receive a bespoke purple pencil, which mimics the prize awarded to winners of the UK's iconic D&AD (Design and Art Direction) awards – only in Salendine Nook colours rather than the infamous yellow!