

# Access to the Victoria and Albert Museum

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL  
HC 238 Session 2000-2001: 22 February 2001



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*John Bourn* National Audit Office  
Comptroller and Auditor General 8 February 2001

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National Audit Office  
Press Office  
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road  
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SW1W 9SP

Tel: 020 7798 7400

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# executive summary

- 1 The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is the National Museum of Art and Design. The four million objects it holds include costumes, furniture, books, watercolours, metalwork, sculptures and ceramics. They also include the collections of the National Art Library and the three branch museums that, in addition to the South Kensington Museum, the V&A administers - the Theatre Museum, the National Museum of Childhood and the Wellington Museum. In 1999-2000, the V&A received grant-in-aid from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (the Department) amounting to £30 million.

“The promotion of access for the many, not just for the few”

*Source: The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 1998*



- 2 This report looks at the V&A's work to meet its aims of increasing access to, and understanding of, the collections; developing and extending knowledge of the collections; and sharing its expertise. These aims contribute to the Government's aim of extending access in the Culture, Media and Sport sector.
- 3 Specifically, we examined the V&A's achievements against its targets for broadening access, and how the Museum is responding to the challenge of broadening access. The V&A recognises that a key challenge is to improve its image:

“The V&A was perceived as a dusty and old fashioned place, ..... many people had no idea of what it exhibited”

*Source: a quote from the Chairman of the V&A Trustees as reported in a national newspaper*

## The V&A's achievements against its targets for broadening access

- 4 We looked at how successful the V&A has been in achieving key access-related performance targets set out in its 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2002 Funding Agreements with the Department:

- visitors to V&A sites;
- visitor satisfaction levels;
- the proportion of the collections accessible;
- visitors in educational groups.

In examining the V&A's achievements we looked at changes to performance measurement being considered following a sector-wide Efficiency Review commissioned by the Department.

### Visitors to V&A sites

- 5 Our analysis of V&A visitor numbers since 1992-93 shows that while numbers increased in the early part of the period, since 1994-95 there has been a downward trend. The V&A's target, over the three years up to and including 2001-02, was to achieve a 16 per cent increase in visitors. There were 1.27 million visitors to the V&A in 1999-2000 - the first of the three years - but this was some 320,000 lower than the target and 200,000 (13 per cent) fewer than in the previous year. The V&A and the Department have agreed to revise the target which means the V&A is no longer required to achieve an increase in visitor numbers over the period 1999-2002. There are financial implications. Fewer visitors means less visitor income, and less money for new acquisitions (paragraphs 2.2, 2.4 to 2.5 and 2.8 to 2.9).



- 6 The V&A has not undertaken any detailed work to identify the reasons for the drop in visitor numbers. We found that year on year percentage changes in visitor numbers to the V&A and to a basket of six other national museums and galleries in London had fluctuated in the period 1993-94 to 1999-2000. However, the percentage reduction experienced by the V&A in 1999-2000 was particularly marked. In the first six months of 1999-2000 visitor numbers fell at 20 out of 37 leading visitor attractions, both publicly and privately funded, for which we obtained data (paragraphs 2.11 to 2.12).



### Visitor satisfaction levels

- 7 Over the last three years the South Kensington Museum has achieved visitor satisfaction rates of 96 per cent or higher, but in 1997-98 and 1998-99 fell short of its 99 per cent target. The lower target of 97 per cent was exceeded in 1999-2000. The Department is currently considering with the V&A and the other national museums and galleries how measurement of visitor satisfaction can be strengthened, for example to cover satisfaction with the level of service and to include in-depth peer evaluation. We identified some possible technical enhancements to the measurement of visitor satisfaction that the Department could use in developing guidance for the museums and galleries, for example, making a quantitative assessment of satisfaction by asking visitors to award points out of ten (paragraphs 2.13 to 2.16).





## Proportion of collections accessible

- 8 As the V&A defines as accessible any object that is on display or can be viewed by appointment, it regards virtually all of its collections as accessible. However, the Museum does not publicise the nature and availability of those items held in its reference collections or in store - for the South Kensington Museum, this represents about two thirds of its main collections. Following the Efficiency Review the Department is considering a new performance measure to provide a more meaningful assessment of accessibility - 'the percentage of the V&A's collections that are on display and accessible to all without having to make special appointments' (paragraphs 2.17 to 2.18).

## Visitors in educational groups

- 9 As one of the V&A's objectives is to promote lifelong learning, its key access-related performance targets include the number of visitors in booked educational groups at the South Kensington Museum. Over the last three years the V&A's target has varied between 80,000 and 100,000 visitors in such groups. The V&A fell short of the target in 1997-98 but exceeded it in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 - the 111,000 visitors in booked education groups last year represented almost 9 per cent of all visitors to the Museum. However, in 1999-2000 the V&A had, following guidance issued by the Department in February 2000, included in its definition for the first time, all visitors in educational groups not just those in formal education. The target for 1999-2000 was not adjusted to reflect this expanded definition of educational visitors (paragraph 2.19).

## The V&A's performance measurement arrangements

- 10 A key aim of the sector-wide Efficiency Review (paragraph 4) was to meet the Department's requirements for an agreed basis against which the performance of government sponsored museums and galleries could be measured. The results of the review were published in September 1999 and 22 core performance indicators were identified. In February 2000 the Department circulated definitions and guidance for all 22 performance indicators to the national museums and galleries. The Department now considers that not all 22 performance indicators will be appropriate to each of the museums and galleries, and it has developed a smaller set of core performance indicators and associated targets for incorporation into the Funding Agreements of individual museums and galleries. A selection of indicators and sub-indicators were incorporated into the Funding Agreement with the V&A from 2000-01.
- 11 Our examination of the V&A's access-related performance measures - three of which are being retained under the new arrangements - identified some concerns about scope, definition, measurement and reporting (paragraphs 2.21 to 2.28). These include:
- some measures cover only the South Kensington Museum, not the other three V&A sites. The cost of measurement is a factor;
  - although the Committee of Public Accounts has stated that independent validation is essential to the credibility of performance reporting, the V&A's performance, which is reported to Parliament, is not independently validated. To obtain assurance for itself, the V&A has asked its internal auditors to validate its performance data;
  - there were inconsistencies in the way targets were set and performance measured. For example, in 1998-99 a one-off change in how visitor numbers were calculated meant that the target was achieved when otherwise it would have been missed.



## How the V&A is responding to the challenge of broadening access

- 12** In promoting access and attracting new visitors, the V&A has to try to meet the sometimes conflicting needs and tastes of its existing and potential visitors. While the V&A has a good understanding of the types of people who currently visit the Museum, and their likes and dislikes, it has yet to undertake any specific research amongst non-visitors to find out why they do not visit, although it plans to do so (paragraph 3.4).

## Projecting the right image

- 13** The V&A recognises that it has an image problem, and that potential visitors might be put off by its highbrow reputation. However, some visitors, particularly enthusiasts of art and design, see the V&A as a 'highly prestigious' institution. One difficulty is that the V&A's name does not indicate the nature of its collections. The Museum is working with consultants to examine the options for increasing 'brand awareness'; is implementing a new marketing plan; and has put in place a programme to encourage younger visitors, attract first time visitors and present its collections in new ways (paragraphs 3.6 to 3.8).



- 14** One way that the V&A plans to strengthen its image is through improvements to the fabric of the South Kensington Museum. The Museum has embarked on a major project, costing £31 million, to redevelop the British Galleries. The project, which covers some ten per cent of the gallery space at the South Kensington Museum, is due to be completed in late 2001 and is seen as the first major step to revitalise the Museum. In the longer term, another project - the Spiral (see photograph opposite) - is designed to give the outward appearance of the Museum a more contemporary look. As well as providing a contemporary exterior, the Spiral will give the Museum a new entrance and will be the centre for contemporary art and culture. This project is scheduled to be completed by 2005, at the earliest, at an estimated cost of £80 million (paragraph 3.12).

## Making objects accessible

- 15** To make its collections accessible in the most literal sense, the V&A has been experimenting with longer opening hours. But one of the challenges the V&A faces is presenting its collections in ways which are appropriate, while appealing to a broad range of visitors with different tastes and requirements, and within financial constraints. Some visitors like what they see as an 'old school' and 'purist' approach. Others find the displays tired and old fashioned, and would like greater use of interactive technology, though in a subtle way. The V&A has set up a 'test bed' for the new display and presentation techniques it proposes to adopt in the new British Galleries, and visitor reaction has been positive (paragraphs 3.14 to 3.15 and 3.18 to 3.22).



## Targeting different types of visitors

- 16 The V&A runs specific activities which are designed to increase the number and range of visitors as well as meeting the needs of its existing audience. An example is the Shamiana project, the aim of which was to encourage women and children of South Asian origin in Britain to explore their cultural heritage through the V&A's Indian collection. The project was identified as an example of good practice in the Department's Efficiency Review. More generally, the V&A was identified as following good practice in introducing new approaches to learning (paragraphs 3.30 to 3.31 and 3.39 to 3.40).
- 17 In a typical year, the V&A stages two or three major exhibitions, and visitor numbers tend to increase by more than 20 per cent during these periods. But the exhibitions are not just about attracting large numbers of visitors. The V&A aims to provide a mixed diet aimed at different audiences. Some are designed to have mass appeal and others to be of more specialist interest. The Museum also targets exhibitions on particular communities, for example 'The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms'. The V&A recognised that while this exhibition might not have a mass appeal, it was contributing to the aim of broadening the range of visitors (paragraphs 3.32 to 3.34).
- 18 The V&A has difficulty attracting children and families - in 1999 just 14 per cent of visitors were under the age of 18. The Museum has developed a Family Programme to encourage children and families to visit, but while the activities are popular awareness of the Programme is low (paragraphs 3.35 to 3.38).

## Embracing the electronic age

- 19 The Internet provides a powerful opportunity for museums and galleries to increase public access through remote connections to their collections and expertise. The V&A website (<http://www.vam.ac.uk>) was first launched in 1995 and was updated in 1999. The current website has received a number of awards, but the V&A recognises the need for continuing development. Our review pointed to scope to improve the links to other websites, and there are gaps in the information provided - for example there is no information on the V&A's programme of courses. One aim of the website is to encourage users to visit the Museum, but a survey of visitors in December 1999 showed that only two per cent had been influenced by the website (paragraphs 3.41 to 3.44).



# Conclusions and recommendations

20 The V&A is doing much to broaden access to its collections. It is working to create a more positive and clearer image, and uses its special exhibitions and visitor programmes to achieve wider appeal and provide quality learning opportunities. It is also taking action to make the Museum a more visitor-friendly place. But there is still much to do to improve public understanding of the nature of the V&A's collections, and improve the way they are presented. While work is in hand to do this, the V&A has to grapple with the diverse and sometimes conflicting needs and tastes of the visitors it is seeking to attract. The need to do so is clear. While the V&A's aim was to achieve a 16 per cent increase in visitor numbers over the three years up to and including 2001-02, the reality is that its numbers have been on the decline since the early 1990s and took a sharp fall in 1999-2000. The V&A and the Department have agreed to revise the visitor numbers targets for 2000-01 and 2000-02 to the level achieved (1.5 million) in 1998-99.

21 In the light of our examination our main recommendations are:

**The V&A should:**

- i undertake a thorough analysis of the reasons for the continuing reduction in its visitor numbers and, in particular, the sharp fall in 1999-2000;
- ii press ahead with plans to carry out research among non-visitors to find out why they do not visit. The V&A's plans for increasing 'brand awareness' and tackling its image problem are important in this regard;
- iii give particular attention to stimulating public awareness of its two major projects - the British Galleries and the Spiral. The Museum is setting great store by these projects and effective marketing will be crucial if they are to have the desired effect in raising the Museum's profile and drawing in new visitors;
- iv be alert to the possibility that other parts of the Museum could suffer from the contrast with the modernised British Galleries. The Museum will need a clear plan for dealing with this, and for applying (within resource constraints) to its other galleries the lessons from its research into the British Galleries, for example on new display techniques;
- v improve communication about the activities it offers. Implementing the ten-point marketing plan should help, and there may be scope to make more use of its website to encourage visits. There are good things going on at the V&A that not enough people know about.

**The Department should:**

- vi push forward with the further work it recognises needs to be undertaken on some of the 22 core performance indicators produced by the Efficiency Review and, where appropriate, incorporate these into the Funding Agreements of the individual national museums and galleries;
- vii work with the individual national museums and galleries to ensure that the new performance indicators are underpinned by good quality performance data and accurate, reliable and informative performance reporting.





# Part 1

## Introduction

- 1.1 The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) is the National Museum of Art and Design. The Museum was established in 1852, shortly after the Great Exhibition of 1851, to inspire and educate British manufacturers, designers and consumers. The V&A's four million objects span diverse cultures over more than two millennia and include examples of today's art and design. The objects include costumes, furniture, books, watercolours, metalwork, sculptures and ceramics. They also include the collections of the National Art Library and the three branch museums that, in addition to the South Kensington Museum, the V&A administers - the Theatre Museum (National Museum of the Performing Arts), the National Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green and the Wellington Museum at Apsley House. This report focuses mainly on the South Kensington Museum.

### The V&A's Purpose

**“To increase the understanding and enjoyment of art, craft and design through its collections”**

*Source: V&A Mission Statement*

- 1.2 The V&A aims to fulfil its purpose by increasing access to, and understanding of, the collections; developing and extending knowledge of the collections; and sharing its expertise. In this way the V&A contributes to the Government's aim of extending access in the Culture, Media and Sport sector. Access is the central theme of this report.

**“The promotion of access for the many, not just for the few”**

*Source: The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review 1998*

- 1.3 The V&A has two major capital projects that aim to support directly the V&A's purpose and promote access:

- **The British Galleries** - this project involves completely renovating and re-presenting the 15 British Galleries at South Kensington by November 2001.
- **The Spiral** - this project will provide the V&A with a striking new building and a new entrance to the Museum. The project is scheduled to be completed, at the earliest, in 2005.

## How the V&A is organised

- 1.4 The V&A is a Non-Departmental Public Body. The sponsor department is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (the Department). **Figure 1 overleaf** shows the accountability arrangements and how the V&A is structured. Key points are:

### The Board of Trustees

**The Board** is appointed by the Prime Minister and consists of the Chairman and between 12 and 20 Trustees. The Board's functions as defined in the National Heritage Act 1983 are to:

- care for, preserve and add to the objects in their collections;
- ensure that the objects are exhibited to the public;
- ensure that the objects are available to persons seeking to inspect them in connection with study or research;
- generally promote the public's enjoyment and understanding of art, craft and design, both by means of the Board's collections and by such other means as they consider appropriate.

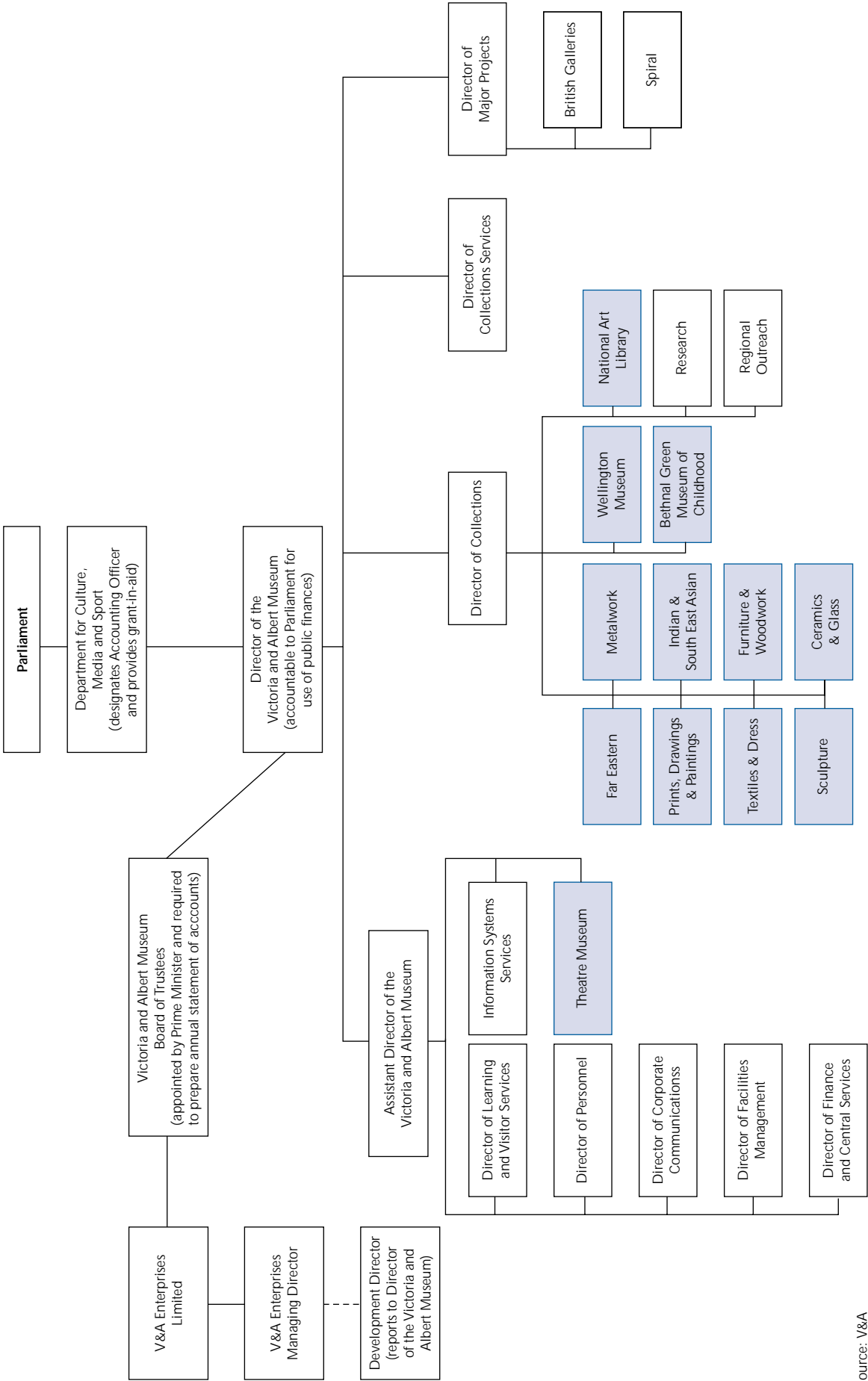
The Board may, subject to the provisions of the Act, provide education, instruction and advice and carry out research. The Board is required to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis determined by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

### The Director

The Board of Trustees appoints **the Director** of the V&A and the appointment is approved by the Prime Minister. The Department has designated the Director of the V&A as the Accounting Officer for the Museum and as such he, along with the Permanent Secretary of the Department, is accountable to Parliament for the use of public finances.

1 The accountability arrangements and how the V&A is structured

The V&A is responsible for 12 collections (highlighted). Objects from these collections are either displayed or stored at one of the four museums (South Kensington Museum, Museum of Childhood, Theatre Museum or the Wellington Museum), or held in store at one of two off-site stores elsewhere in London. This Figure reflects the V&A's organisation as at April 2000.



Source: V&A

Note 1: V&A Enterprises Limited carries out trading operations on behalf of the Museum and is wholly owned by the V&A

## How the V&A is funded

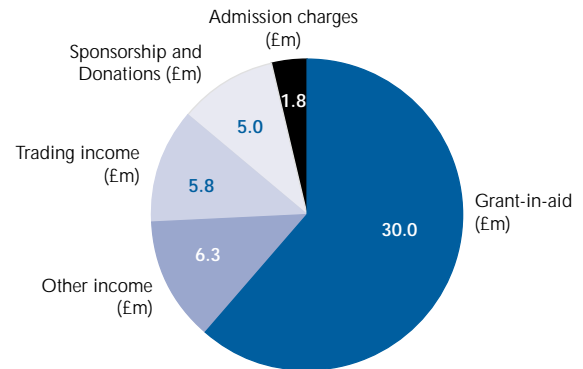
- 1.5 The V&A is funded by grant-in-aid from the Department and by receipts from admission charges, sponsorship and donations, trading income, and other income - for example, investment income and grants from the National Lottery (**Figure 2**). The V&A owns 100 per cent of the issued share capital of V&A Enterprises Limited which carries out trading operations on behalf of the Museum. Total income in 1999-2000 was £48.9 million and total running costs were £43.7 million. Net income for the year, following accounting adjustments, was just over £1 million and the V&A carried this surplus forward to help balance its budget for 2000-01. The V&A and its trading company employ some 860 staff.
- 1.6 The V&A introduced admission charges in 1996 and these replaced the voluntary donation scheme that had been in operation since 1985. **Figure 3** sets out the admission charges at the four V&A museums.
- 1.7 The Trustees of the V&A agreed to introduce free admission for children at the Theatre Museum and the Wellington Museum from April 1999 - children up to 18 already had free admission to the South Kensington Museum and the Museum of Childhood (which is free to everyone). From April 2000, people aged 60 and over have had free admission to all four V&A museums. The Trustees are considering proposals from the Government about its 'Quids in' policy to introduce a £1 adult entry price to national museums and galleries from September 2001. They are keen to embrace this policy, but have deferred a final decision until the position regarding VAT recovery has been clarified.
- 1.8 Funding Agreements between the Department and the V&A set out the level of grant-in-aid and what the V&A is expected to deliver. The Funding Agreement for 1999-2002 includes a wide range of performance measures and targets covering the V&A's activities. Performance against key targets is published in the V&A's Annual Accounts, which are presented to Parliament.

## The Department's review of the sector

- 1.9 Prior to 1999-2000 the performance measurement arrangements in place at the V&A and the other national museums and galleries were largely for each institution's own monitoring purposes and there was limited guidance on the definition of each performance measure. In late 1998 the Department commissioned consultants Deloitte & Touche and Lord Cultural Resources Planning & Management Limited to undertake an Efficiency Review of the national museums and galleries. A key aim of the Review was to meet the Department's requirement for an agreed basis against which the performance of government sponsored museums and galleries could be measured.

### 2 Sources of V&A income in 1999-2000

*Grant-in-aid from the Department represented 61 per cent of the V&A's total income (£48.9 million) in 1999-2000*



- Notes: 1. The figure for total income (£48.9 million) excludes the one-off entry (£177.1 million) in the accounts relating to the transfer of ownership of the South Kensington Museum from the Secretary of State for the Environment to the Board of Trustees. Figures for sources of income relate to all four museums.
2. Trading income is not profit - costs have to be covered before the profit is available to spend on museum activities.

Source: V&A Accounts 1999-2000

### 3 Admission charges at the four V&A museums

Museum	Admission Charges	
South Kensington Museum	Adults	£5.00
	Senior citizens	Free
	Under 18s, full time students, season ticket holders, V&A Friends etc	Free
	All	Free between 16:30 and 17:45
Museum of Childhood	All	Free
Theatre Museum	Adults	£4.50
	Concessions	£2.50
	Under 16s and senior citizens	Free
Wellington Museum	Adults	£4.50
	Concessions	£3.00
	Under 18s and senior citizens	Free

Note: Special rates apply for pre-booked groups

Source: V&A Museum





1.10 The results of the review were published in September 1999 and 22 core performance indicators (Appendix 3) were identified. In February 2000 the Department circulated definitions and guidance for all 22 performance indicators to the national museums and galleries, although it recognised that further work was required on two of the performance indicators. The Department now considers that not all 22 performance indicators will be appropriate to each of the museums and galleries, and it has developed a smaller set of core performance indicators and associated targets for incorporation into the Funding Agreements of individual museums and galleries. These amended the targets in the 1999-2002 Funding Agreements and provided a more rigorous approach to target setting. The last year (2001-02) of the current Funding Agreements will now form the first year of the next three year agreements, reflecting spending settlements from the Government's Spending Review 2000.

1.11 The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport asked the Department's Quality, Efficiency and Standards Team to review the Funding Agreement arrangements that operate between the Department and all the bodies it funds, to propose new cross-sectoral performance measures, and to make recommendations for using Funding Agreements as a planning and budgeting tool to evaluate performance. The Team's report on 'A New Approach to Funding Agreements' was published in September 2000 and its recommendations were incorporated into guidance issued by the Department to all funded bodies in November 2000.

## What we did and how we did it

### 1.12 Our examination covered:

- the V&A's achievements against its targets for broadening access. In this context we also considered the quality of the performance measurement arrangements (Part 2);
- how the V&A is responding to the challenge of broadening access (Part 3).

In looking at the general question of access to the Museum by the public, the way the Museum responds to visitor needs, the Museum's performance and performance measures, and the Museum's use of the Internet, the report addresses key features of the *Modernising Government agenda*.

### 1.13 In preparing this report we have, following discussions with the V&A, defined and considered 'access' as:

- physical access to the V&A and its collections, including visitor numbers and types;
- the accessibility of the collections, including those objects not on display, and the way objects on display are presented and information about them provided;
- access in terms of specific education initiatives;
- electronic access, primarily through the V&A's website (<http://www.vam.ac.uk>).

### 1.14 The main strands of our work are outlined opposite and explained in more detail at Appendix 1. While our findings are specific to the V&A, they are likely to be of interest to the other national museums and galleries, and the museums and galleries sector more generally.

#### Performance measurement

We reviewed the V&A's reported achievements against the key performance targets relating to access - visitor numbers, visitor satisfaction, access to the collections and education. Using criteria agreed with the V&A (Appendix 1), we examined the way the V&A measures and reports its performance. We also examined the likely effect of the changes in the performance measurement arrangements resulting from the Department's Efficiency Review.

#### Survey work

We commissioned NOP to evaluate the way the V&A collects information on customer satisfaction and to undertake a qualitative survey of visitors to the V&A. The qualitative survey work involved in-depth interviews with a range of visitors on site and telephone interviews with V&A visitors selected when leaving the Museum. The qualitative survey was designed to complement visitor satisfaction surveys commissioned by the V&A.

#### Group interviews

We held seven group interviews consisting of key V&A staff to understand the aims and objectives of the various initiatives and programmes that the V&A has in place to increase access.

#### Visits to other museums

We visited five other museums: the Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (part of the National Museums of Scotland); the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff (part of the National Museums & Galleries of Wales); the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Musée du Louvre, Paris; and the Nordiska museet, Stockholm. At each visit we identified programmes and initiatives which are relevant to the V&A's work to promote access and understanding.









# Part 2

## The V&A's achievements against its targets for broadening access

- 2.1 This Part looks at how successful the V&A has been in achieving the key access-related performance targets set out in the 1997-98, 1998-99 and 1999-2002 Funding Agreements between the Department and the V&A (paragraph 1.8).

The performance targets we focused on:

- Visitors to V&A sites
- Visitor satisfaction levels
- Proportion of collections accessible
- Visitors in educational groups

### Visitors to V&A sites

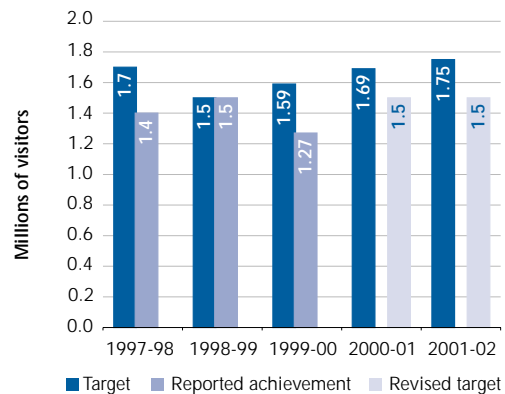
A measure of the annual number of visitors to the Museum's four sites - the South Kensington Museum, the Theatre Museum, the National Museum of Childhood and the Wellington Museum

- 2.2 **Figure 4** sets out the V&A's targets and achievements for visitor numbers. The V&A reported that its target for visitor numbers was missed in 1997-98 and 1999-2000 and met in 1998-99. The 1998-99 target was 12 per cent lower than the previous year to reflect the closure of the British Galleries at the South Kensington Museum during the renovation work.

- 2.3 The V&A changed the basis for calculating visitor numbers in 1998-99 by including, for the first time, 'other' visitors in its definition. The term 'other' covered visitors who attended the Museum for meetings with the Museum's staff. While the number of such visitors was relatively small (some 23,000, or two per cent, in 1998-99), if they had not been included, the V&A's reported achievement would have been lower and the target would have been missed (**Figure 5 overleaf**). However, the issue of definitions has now been resolved. Following the Efficiency Review the Department has defined the categories of visitor that should, from April 2000, be included in the visitor numbers performance measure at each national museum and gallery. Contractors, suppliers and corporate visitors are to be excluded.

#### 4 Reported achievements against visitor numbers targets for all four V&A museums

*The V&A met the target in 1998-99 but fell significantly short of the targets for 1997-98 and 1999-2000*



- Notes:
1. Targets and achievements for 1997-98 and 1998-99 rounded to the nearest 100,000 as in the Funding Agreement. From 1999-2000 targets have been expressed to two decimal places, which means that performance is now measured to the nearest 10,000 - i.e. about one per cent of the target.
  2. Starting in 1998-99 the targets take account of the closure of the British Galleries (for renovation) at the South Kensington Museum.
  3. The actual visitor numbers in the three years 1997-98 to 1999-2000 were 1,435,351; 1,459,915; and 1,265,123.
  4. The V&A and the Department have agreed to reduce the targets for both 2000-01 and 2001-02 to 1.5 million.

Source: V&A Annual Accounts, Funding Agreements and V&A visitor data

- 2.4 In the 1999-2002 Funding Agreement the V&A's target, over the three years up to and including 2001-02, was to achieve a 16 per cent increase in visitor numbers. However, in 1999-2000 there were 1.27 million visitors to the V&A - almost 200,000 (13 per cent) fewer than in the previous year and some 320,000 lower than the target. The V&A and the Department have, therefore, agreed to revise the targets for 2000-01 and 2001-02 to 1.5 million for each year, which means the V&A is no longer required to achieve an increase in visitor numbers over the period of the current Funding Agreement. A new set of visitor targets for the next funding Agreement is currently being discussed.

2.5 Reductions in visitors number have financial implications. With fewer visitors in 1999-2000, the V&A experienced a drop of some £0.7 million in the proceeds from admission charges and a drop of some £0.5 million in trading profit from activities such as the V&A shop and restaurant. This was partly offset by other categories of income being above budget and the V&A was able to absorb some of the reduction from contingency funds, but there was nevertheless an adverse affect on the acquisitions budget.

2.6 One effect of a reduction in visitor numbers is an increase in the cost per visitor. The Efficiency Review suggested a performance indicator - 'grant-in-aid per visitor' - that places visitor numbers firmly in the context of a museum or gallery's grant from the Department. The Department and the national museums and galleries are having discussions about this indicator and it has not yet been incorporated into Funding Agreements. But for illustrative purposes we calculated the level of 'grant-in-aid per visitor' for the V&A and seven other London based national museums and galleries (Figure 6). At around £30 million a year, the V&A receives the second highest grant-in-aid of all the national museums and galleries, and has one of the highest levels of grant-in-aid per visitor. As this indicator depends upon the number of visitors, it will fluctuate each year where changes in visitor numbers occur. The marked increase in grant-in-aid per visitor in 1999-2000 for the V&A reflects the significant reduction in visitor numbers that year.

2.7 Although the likelihood of a marked drop in visitor numbers for 1999-2000 was apparent six months into the year (visitor numbers were down 15 per cent at this point compared with the first six months of 1998-99) the V&A did not undertake any detailed analysis to identify reasons at that stage, and as at July 2000 had still not done so. To put the year into context, we analysed:

- the longer term trends in visitor numbers at the V&A;
- visitors to the V&A from the United Kingdom and overseas;
- visitor numbers at other London museums and galleries and at other large United Kingdom visitor attractions.

## 5 The effect of including 'other' visitors in the total visitor numbers reported in 1998-99

*If 'other' visitors had not been included in the total visitor figure for 1998-99, the V&A would not have achieved its target.*

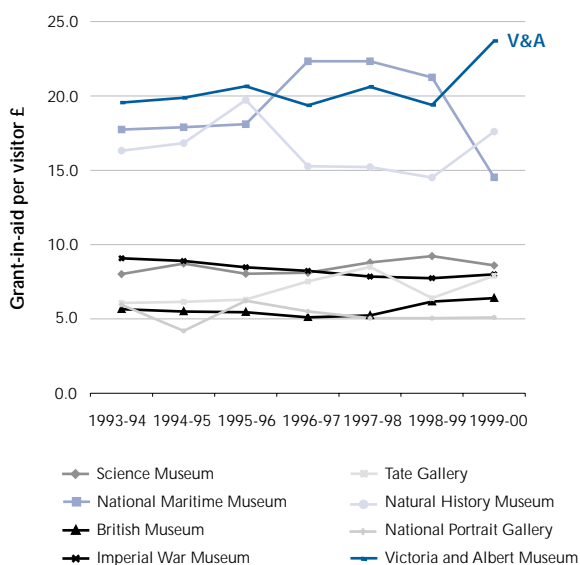
<b>Target 1998-99</b>	1.5 million
<b>Reported achievement 1998-99</b>	Achieved
<b>Actual achievement 1998-99</b>	1,459,915 (1.5 million rounded)
<b>'Other' visitors included in actual achievement</b>	23,230
<b>Actual achievement less 'other' visitors</b>	1,436,685 (1.4 million rounded)

Note 1: Figures rounded to nearest 100,000

Source: V&A Museum

## 6 Grant-in-aid per visitor at London museums and galleries, 1993-94 to 1999-2000

*The level of grant-in-aid per visitor at the V&A in 1999-2000 increased to almost £25 as a result of the significant reduction in visitor numbers.*



Source: Department for Culture, Media and Sport Annual Reports 1999 and 2000

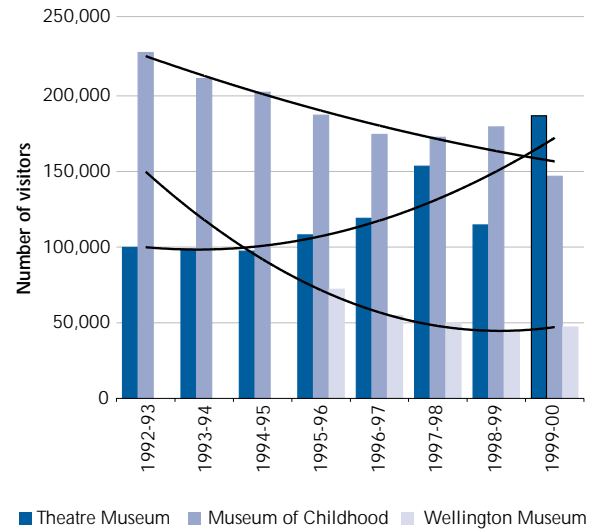
## Longer term trends in the V&A's visitor numbers

2.8 We analysed the changes in visitor numbers across all four V&A museums over the period 1992-93 to 1999-2000 and observed that, while numbers were increasing in the early part of this period, since 1994-95 there has been a downward trend (**Figure 7A**). Numbers peaked in 1994-95 at about 1.63 million and dropped to 1.27 million in 1999-2000. Analysis of visitor numbers to the South Kensington Museum (**Figure 7B**) shows a similar pattern. Numbers peaked in 1994-95 at about 1.3 million and dropped to 0.88 million in 1999-2000.

2.9 Our analysis of visitor numbers at the three branch museums (**Figure 8**) shows a different picture for each. The Theatre Museum has experienced an upward trend in visitor numbers and in 1999-2000 recorded its highest number of visitors to date. The Museum of Childhood has experienced a downward trend and visitor numbers were at their lowest in 1999-2000. The Wellington Museum has experienced a fall in visitor numbers in each of the three years since its re-opening, following refurbishment, in 1995-96. However, visitor numbers in 1999-2000 were slightly higher than the previous year.

### 8 Visitors to the three branch museums in the period 1992-93 to 1999-2000

*Underlying trends in visitor numbers at the V&A's three branch museums have been mixed, with the Museum of Childhood and the Wellington Museum experiencing downward trends and the Theatre Museum experiencing an upward trend.*



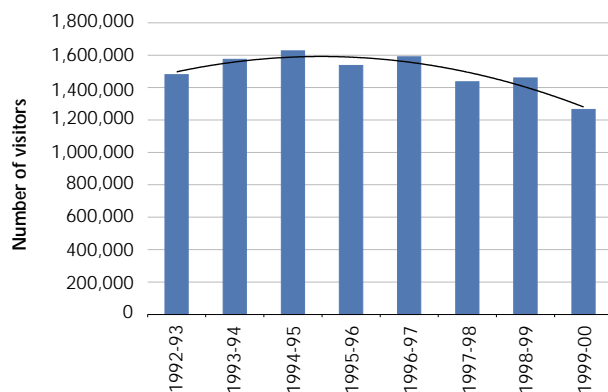
Notes: 1. These figures are the actual visitor numbers and have not been rounded to the nearest 100,000 as in Figure 4  
2. The Wellington Museum was closed in the period 1992-93 to 1994-95

Source: V&A Triennial Reports 1992-95 and 1995-98 and V&A visitor data

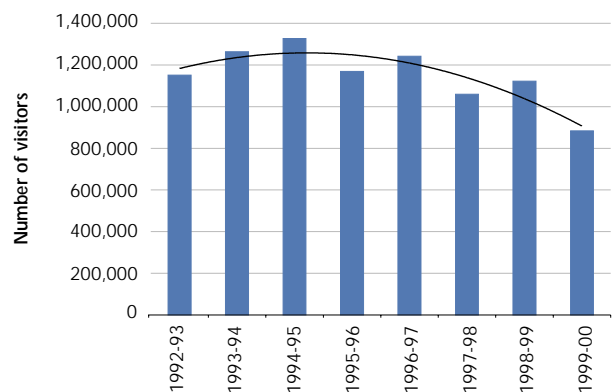
### 7 Visitors to all four V&A museums in the period 1992-93 to 1999-2000

*Visitor numbers overall, and at the South Kensington Museum, peaked in 1994-95. This has been followed by a downward trend.*

A: Visitors to all four V&A museums in the period 1992-93 to 1999-2000



B: Visitors to the South Kensington Museum in the period 1992-93 to 1999-2000



Note: 1. These figures are the actual visitor numbers and have not been rounded to the nearest 100,000 as in Figure 4

Source: V&A Triennial Reports 1992-95 and 1995-98 and V&A visitor data

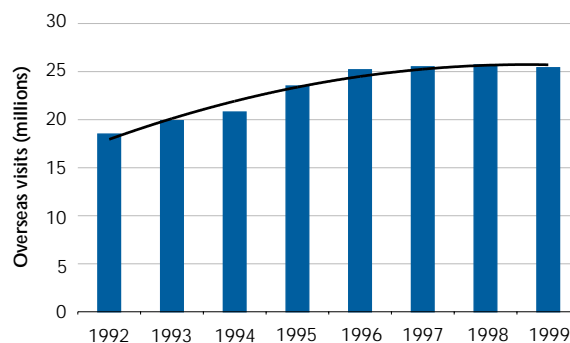


## Visitors from the United Kingdom and overseas

2.10 In exploring the possible reasons for the sharp fall in visitor numbers in 1999-2000, we looked at trends in overseas visits to the United Kingdom, and trends in the proportion of both United Kingdom and overseas visitors to the V&A. **Figure 9** shows that the overall numbers of visits to the United Kingdom has levelled off over the last four years with a slight reduction in 1999. We were unable to establish the impact of this reduction on the V&A, as it does not collect data on the *actual number* of overseas visitors to the Museum. The V&A does identify the *proportion* of visitors from the United Kingdom and overseas, using data collected through its visitor surveys which are undertaken three times a year. However, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from this data - as **Figure 10** shows, the proportions fluctuate. In the light of the overall reduction in visitor numbers in 1999-2000, it may be significant that there was a sharp drop in the proportion of visitors from the United Kingdom in the autumn of 1999. The V&A considers that this is probably explained by the fact that the survey coincided with 'A *Grand Design*' exhibition which ran from October 1999 to January 2000. The V&A had recognised that this exhibition, which had lower attendances than forecast, might not attract regular United Kingdom visitors. The spring 2000 survey, which coincided with the 'Art *Nouveau 1890-1914*' exhibition, showed that the proportion of United Kingdom visitors was around 70 per cent, higher than in previous years. The

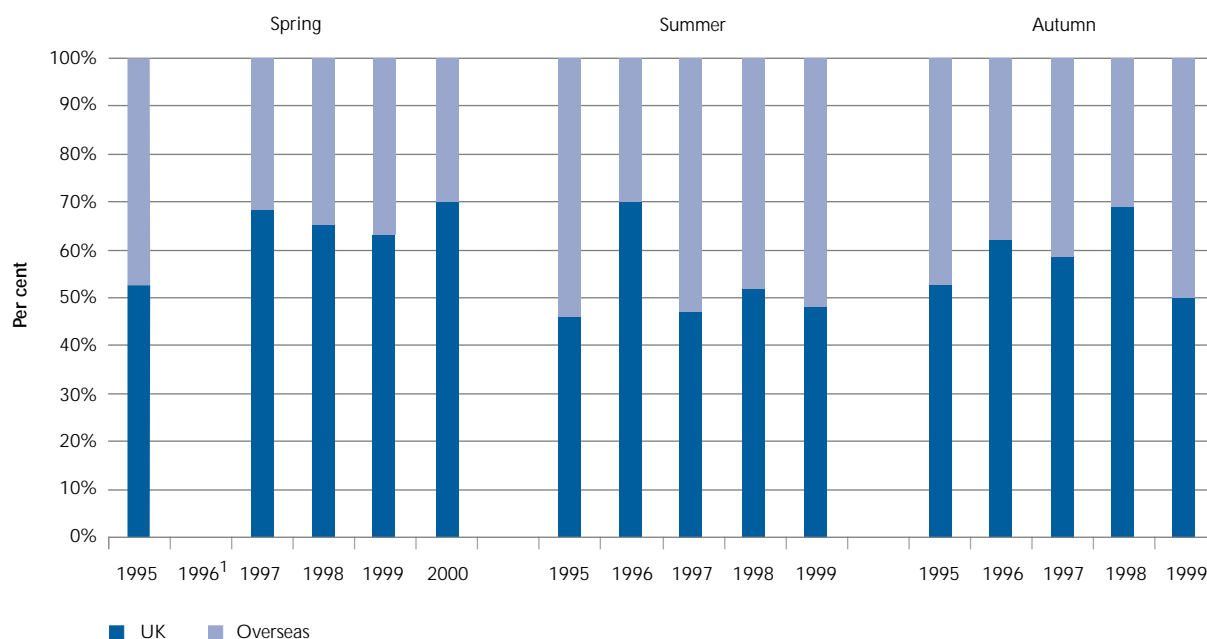
Department confirmed that the way the V&A collect data on overseas visitors is in line with other national museums and galleries which rely on responses to visitor surveys which cannot provide a wholly accurate picture.

**9** Overseas visits to the United Kingdom 1992 to 1999



Source: British Tourist Authority

**10** Proportion of visitors to the V&A from the United Kingdom and overseas in the period 1995 to 1999



Note 1: No visitor survey was undertaken in spring 1996

Source: V&A visitor surveys

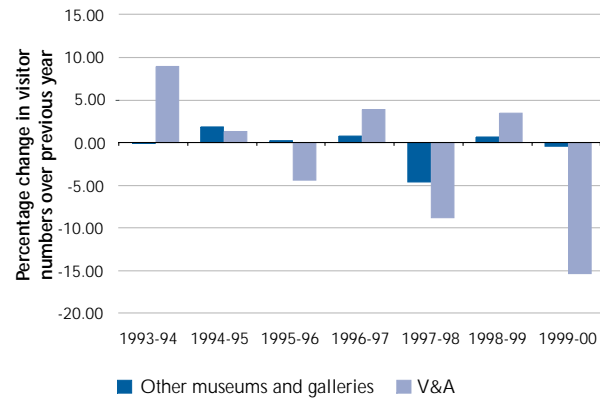
## Visitor numbers at other national museums and galleries in London and at other large United Kingdom visitor attractions

2.11 We analysed the year on year percentage changes in visitor numbers experienced by the V&A and a basket of six other national museums and galleries in London over the period 1993-94 to 1999-2000 (Figure 11). This shows that year on year percentage changes in visitor numbers have fluctuated in the period. However, the percentage reduction experienced by the V&A in 1999-2000 was particularly sharp.

2.12 We also looked at what had happened to visitor numbers at other large visitor attractions. The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, of which the V&A is a member, collects information on visitor numbers and trends from its member organisations, which include publicly and privately funded attractions. We analysed the data for 37 attractions, including the V&A, covered by the Association's survey for the first six months of 1999-2000. Fifteen had experienced an increase, twenty had experienced a decrease, and two had seen no change in visitor numbers, compared to the first six months of 1998-99. The average change was a 1.5 per cent reduction, with individual changes ranging from a 26 per cent increase to a 20 per cent reduction. The V&A experienced the third highest percentage reduction.

### 11 Year on year percentage changes in visitor numbers from 1993-94 to 1999-2000 at the V&A and at six other national museums and galleries in London

*Year on year percentage changes in visitor numbers to both the V&A and a basket of six other national museums and galleries in London have fluctuated. The percentage reduction experienced by the V&A in 1999-2000 was particularly marked.*



- Notes: 1. The six other museums and galleries included in the analysis are the British Museum, the Imperial War Museum, the National Portrait Gallery, the Natural History Museum, the Science Museum and the Tate Gallery. Data on visitor numbers to these museums and galleries are provided in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Annual Reports.
2. The analysis is based on visitor numbers data provided in the Department's Annual Reports, which are rounded to two decimal places. The percentage reduction in visitor numbers experienced by the V&A in 1999-2000 based on actual visitor numbers is 13.3 per cent.

Source: Department for Culture, Media and Sport Annual Reports



## Visitor satisfaction levels

A measure of the extent to which visitors to the South Kensington Museum enjoyed their visit overall

2.13 **Figure 12** sets out the V&A's targets and achievements for visitor satisfaction. The V&A reported that the target, then set at 99 per cent, was missed in 1997-98 and 1998-99. The V&A exceeded the target in 1999-2000, which was slightly reduced at 97 per cent but still higher than the level achieved the previous year.

2.14 We looked at the approach used by the V&A to assess visitor satisfaction and engaged a firm of market research consultants (NOP) to assist us. The V&A commissions a market research company (MORI) to undertake three visitor surveys a year. As part of the surveys, visitors are asked to say how enjoyable they found their visit by selecting one of the five responses shown at **Figure 13**.

2.15 The sector-wide Efficiency Review suggested a new performance measure relating to visitor satisfaction. The Review recommended that performance should be assessed in the following categories:

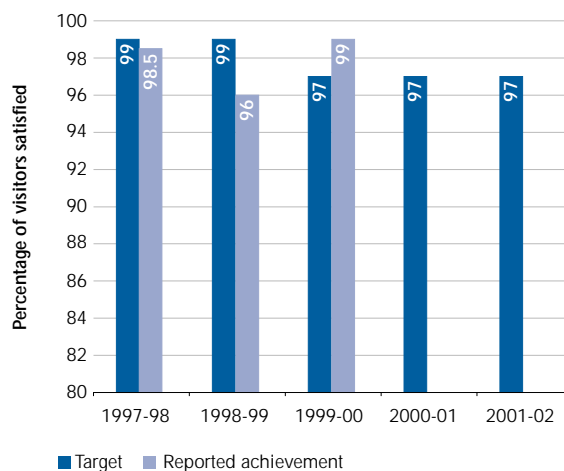
- overall satisfaction, including enjoyment;
- motivational impact;
- satisfaction with visitor facilities;
- satisfaction with level of service.

However, the Review noted that this will not be sufficient to establish whether national museums and galleries are meeting their aims and objectives. The Review stated that to ensure this is done, the above measures should be complemented by more in-depth local and peer evaluation, and there should be a report on the results of the evaluation of education users. The Department is currently considering with the V&A and the other national museums and galleries how performance should be assessed before the performance measure on visitor satisfaction is incorporated into Funding Agreements.

2.16 Our consultants identified some possible technical enhancements to the V&A's current measurement arrangements which would provide further understanding of visitor satisfaction (**Figure 14**), and we suggest that the Department considers these in developing its guidance for national museums and galleries.

### 12 Reported achievements against visitor satisfaction targets for the South Kensington Museum

*The V&A exceeded the target in 1999-2000 but fell short of the target in 1997-98 and 1998-99.*



Note: 1. 96 per cent is stated in the Annex to the Annual Accounts as the achievement against the 1998-99 target. However, it is stated in the foreword to the accounts that "visitor satisfaction levels, measured through on-going visitor research, were maintained at over 97%". We confirmed that 96 per cent is the correct figure derived from visitor surveys.

Source: V&A Annual Accounts and Funding Agreements

### 13 Responses to the MORI surveys in 1999

Response	Percentage of respondents	
	%	
Very enjoyable	69	} = 99 per cent visitor satisfaction
Fairly enjoyable	30	
Neither enjoyable nor unenjoyable	1	
Not very enjoyable	0	
Not at all enjoyable	0	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100</b>	

Source: MORI surveys 1999



## 14 Possible enhancements to the way visitor satisfaction levels are assessed

### Possible enhancements to the visitor satisfaction question

- Positioning the overall visitor satisfaction question early in the survey rather than towards the end can reduce the risk of any potential small bias in responses towards the positive. This can arise because respondents reminded by earlier questions of good experiences will tend to be reluctant to criticise overall.
- The use of an extended scale of responses to the existing question would allow easier discrimination between greater and lesser levels of enjoyment. 'Completely enjoyable' or 'extremely enjoyable' might be added to the top of the scale and would allow more headroom for discrimination.
- Visitors might be asked whether there was anything about their visit that was less than completely satisfactory. A scaled question involving different options could be developed involving choices such as 'nothing at all - everything was completely satisfactory / one or two minor things could be improved / several things could be improved / a great number of things could have been better'. This suggestion links closely to the qualitative research that was undertaken by NOP as part of our work. This research revealed that visitors are largely satisfied at the 'macro' level and find the V&A overwhelmingly impressive. However, satisfaction at the 'macro' level can inhibit criticisms made at the 'micro' level.
- Respondents might be asked a further question to elicit information on shortcomings, or on suggested areas for improvement.

### Possible enhancements to the way the level of visitor satisfaction is calculated

- Schoolchildren, currently excluded from the visitor surveys, could be included to provide useful feedback from a category of visitor that the V&A is keen to encourage. The inclusion of children in visitor surveys needs to be undertaken carefully and sensitively and following relevant market research guidance.
- Points out of ten might be collected instead of verbal ratings for a range of different aspects of the visit, as well as for overall enjoyment. The use of such a system would allow for a wider, and potentially more informative, distribution of responses.
- The current five responses could be given a numeric scoring. For example, five points for 'very enjoyable' and zero points for 'not at all enjoyable'. The score for each response would be multiplied by the number of interviewees who had selected it and an overall score calculated. This overall score could be expressed as a percentage of the total possible score (i.e. all respondents selecting 'very enjoyable') or as an average score. This system provides an alternative method of calculating visitor satisfaction that gives more weighting to the most positive response.

### Experience of other museums

Like the V&A, the other museums we visited carry out visitor satisfaction surveys, although in varying ways.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, for example, undertakes three types of visitor surveys - general visitor surveys, specialist exhibition surveys and education related surveys. Through the special exhibition surveys the Museum seeks to identify a visitor's enjoyment of the exhibition and to gauge how much has been learned. The V&A has yet to attempt to gauge what has been learned from its exhibitions and displays. However, the new performance measure being considered (paragraph 2.15) includes an evaluation of educational users.

## Proportion of collections accessible

A measure of what percentage of the V&A's collections at all four museums are accessible to the public

2.17 The V&A holds over four million objects in the collections of its four museums (**Figure 15**) and almost three-quarters of these objects are located at the South Kensington Museum. Of the three million objects held at South Kensington, 1.5 million are held in the National Art Library and anyone wishing to gain access to this collection can apply for a reader's card. A further 1.2 million objects are held in the Prints, Drawings and Paintings collection and access to these objects is freely available on request. Of the remaining 377,300 objects held at the South Kensington Museum, around a third are on display. The remainder are held in reference collections or are in store and can be seen by appointment, although the Museum does not publicise externally the availability and content of these collections.

2.18 One of the Museum's key access-related performance measures is the proportion of the collections accessible to members of the public. The targets for the five years 1997-98 to 2001-02 have remained the same at 90 per cent. The V&A reported that the target was exceeded in 1997-98 (99 per cent achieved) and 1999-2000 (98 per cent achieved) and met in 1998-99. However:

- the V&A defines as accessible any object that is either on display in galleries, can be viewed in study facilities, or can be made available from storage - the latter usually by appointment. By this definition, the V&A considers that all objects in its collections are accessible with the exception of a very small number that are in conservation or in transit;

## 15 Numbers of objects held in the collections of all V&A museums

Collection	Number of objects (Approximate)
<b>South Kensington Museum</b>	
Main collections <sup>1</sup>	377,300
Prints, Drawings, Paintings	1,200,000
National Art Library	1,500,000
<b>Theatre Museum</b>	1,000,000
<b>Museum of Childhood</b>	96,600
<b>Wellington Museum</b>	4,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,178,500</b>

Note 1: The number of objects includes those of the following collections - Ceramics and Glass, Far Eastern, Furniture and Woodwork, Indian and South East Asian, Metalwork, Sculpture and Textiles and Dress.

Source: V&A Museum

- the target for 1997-98 and subsequent years has been reduced from 99 per cent to 90 per cent to reflect the closure of the British Galleries and the impact the refurbishment would have on adjacent galleries. But while the closure was postponed until summer 1998, the target for 1997-98 was not changed. Also, the number of objects displaced by the British Galleries work (some 6,000) represented only about 0.1 per cent of the Museum's total collections which indicates the impact was over-estimated.

Following the sector-wide Efficiency Review the Department is currently considering with the V&A and the other national museums and galleries how to take forward a new performance measure - 'the percentage of the V&A's collections that are on display and accessible to all without having to make special appointments' - to provide a more meaningful assessment of accessibility.

#### Experience of other museums

All of the other museums we visited also held significant numbers of objects in store and not on open display.

## Visitors in educational groups

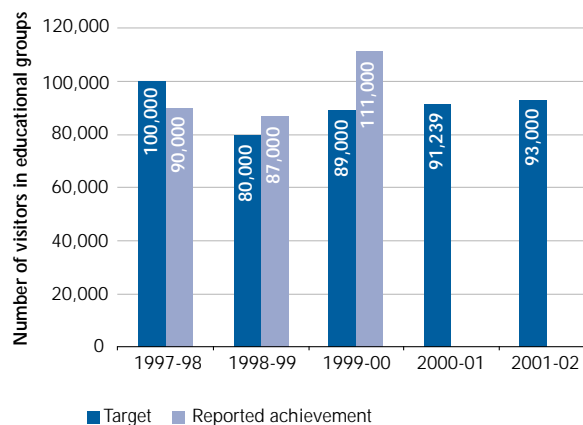
### A measure of the annual number of visitors in booked educational groups at the South Kensington museum

2.19 One of the V&A's objectives is to promote lifelong learning and it seeks to provide this through a range of learning opportunities. Accordingly, one of the Museum's key access-related performance measures is the number of visitors in booked educational groups, the majority of which are pupils in schools groups. **Figure 16** sets out the V&A's targets and achievements. The targets for the three years 1999-2002 reflect the requirement in the current Funding Agreement for a 16 per cent increase over that period - in line with the target for overall visitor numbers (paragraph 2.4). The V&A reported that the target was missed in 1997-98 and exceeded in 1998-99 (the target was 20 per cent lower than the previous year to reflect the closure of the British Galleries for renovation) and 1999-2000. The large increase in 1999-2000 was due to the V&A, following guidance issued by the Department in February 2000, including in its definition for the first time, all visitors in educational groups, not just those in formal education. We note that the target for 1999-2000 was not adjusted to reflect this expanded definition of educational visitors.

2.20 The visitors in educational groups performance measure is being subsumed within a new performance measure which covers the number of learners participating in on-site educational programmes and the number of learners being reached by off-site educational outreach programmes.

### 16 Reported achievements against visitors in educational groups targets for the South Kensington Museum

*The V&A fell short of the target in 1997-98 but exceeded the reduced targets for 1998-99 and 1999-2000.*



- Notes: 1. Starting in 1998-99 the targets take account of the closure of the British Galleries (for renovation) at the South Kensington Museum.
2. The above targets and achievements only relate to the South Kensington Museum. In the current Funding Agreement targets have also been set for the number of visitors in booked educational groups at the three branch museums.

Source: V&A Annual Accounts and Funding Agreements

## Our assessment of the performance measurement arrangements

2.21 Throughout this Part of the Report we have referred to the changes in performance measurement made in April 2000 following the Department's Efficiency Review of the museums and galleries sector. A full list of the 22 core performance indicators produced by the Efficiency Review is at Appendix 2. From these 22 performance indicators the Department has developed a smaller set of core performance indicators and associated targets for incorporation into the Funding Agreements of individual museums and galleries (paragraph 1.10). Three of the V&A's four key access-related performance measures examined earlier in this Part have been retained under the new arrangements - the visitors in educational groups measure is being subsumed in a new measure. These, and other access-related measures, are being improved in important ways:

- there will be a stronger link between the V&A's performance measures and its overall objectives. For example, the V&A's overall access-related objective is to increase the range and number of people who engage with the museum, and to promote lifelong learning. The new performance indicator on user numbers addresses visitor types (not just numbers). Work on a new performance indicator covering user satisfaction is continuing and is likely to address the quality of the learning experience;

- discussions are continuing between the Department and the national museums and galleries on a performance indicator which places visitor numbers firmly in the context of a museum or gallery's grant-in-aid;
- the new arrangements mean that there will be a clearer basis than in the past for comparing the performance of the national museums and galleries.

2.22 While the new performance indicators should provide more meaningful performance information to allow more informed decision making and strengthen accountability, they need to be underpinned by clear definitions of targets and how performance will be measured; good quality performance data; and accurate, reliable and informative performance reporting. From our work we have identified below a number of factors that the V&A, the Department and the other national museums and galleries need to consider if they are to derive maximum benefit from the new performance measurement arrangements.

## Measures and targets

2.23 Performance measures and targets should cover all the major components of the V&A's activities relating to access, be consistent in the way they are described and defined, be precise and be meaningful. At the time of our examination we found that:

- while the V&A's access objectives relate to the whole Museum (all four sites), eight of the performance measures and targets in the Funding Agreement only covered the South Kensington Museum. These included the performance measures for visitor satisfaction and first time visits. The V&A considers that, in relation to these two measures, it does not have sufficient resources to enable branches to carry out the research required to provide the data;
- in 1998-99, the V&A's definition of visitor numbers changed (paragraph 2.3), resulting in the target being met when as previously defined it would have been missed;
- target levels had been reduced to reflect the closure of the British Galleries for renovation but for the access to the collections target, the scale of the reduction significantly over-estimated the impact the closure would have (paragraph 2.18).

2.24 Given the new arrangements introduced following the Efficiency Review, we did not look in detail at the Department's role in setting targets and reviewing performance under the earlier performance measurement arrangements. However, these findings underline the need for the Department to be rigorous in its review of the measures and targets. The guidance now produced by the Department should help ensure greater consistency. It also highlights the need for careful interpretation by the Department of each performance indicator.

## Data Quality

2.25 Performance information should be of a sufficient quality to support decision making and to form a sound basis for reporting achievements against targets. Cabinet Office guidance makes it clear that "all performance information must be correctly calculated and reliable" and that the reporting body is responsible for ensuring reliability. In their report on *Good Practice in Performance Reporting in Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies* (HC 272 of Session 1999-2000) the National Audit Office identified a series of steps which may assist bodies to collect reliable data. These steps include establishing accountability for collecting and reporting performance data, ensuring that managers are active in obtaining good quality performance data, and considering the benefits of validating performance data.

2.26 Independent validation of performance data can provide the following benefits:

- assuring an organisation's senior management that the controls over the collection and analysis of data are operating effectively and that the data are reliable;
- helping to identify areas for strengthening an organisation's systems and improving the quality of performance data;
- demonstrating to users that the performance recorded against key targets in the annual report is reliable and fairly presented.

We note that the V&A's reported performance is not independently validated.

2.27 The Committee of Public Accounts has stated that independent validation is essential to the credibility of performance reporting. The Committee has recommended that the Comptroller and Auditor General should carry out this work unless there are particular circumstances in which Parliament agreed that another, equally independent body, would be appropriate. The Committee's most recent statement was made in their Ninth Report Session 1999-2000 (HC 159) in the context of their examination of the Government Resources and Accounts Bill. To obtain assurance for itself, the V&A has asked its internal auditors to validate its performance data.



## Reporting performance

2.28 Performance information in annual reports should present information clearly; provide readers with sufficient information to enable them to make informed comparisons of performance achieved in different years; provide readers with explanations of the activity being reported; and describe the quality of the performance information. The V&A's achievements against the four key access-related targets covered in this Part were published, for the first time, as an Annex to the V&A's 1998-99 Accounts. We consider that the reporting of performance information could in future be improved by:

- providing details of the previous year's performance to provide a basis for comparison;

*In their 1999-2000 Accounts the V&A provided details of the previous year's performance.*

- providing a consistent level of detail on the performance achieved against the targets. In the 1998-99 Accounts, the actual numbers achieved for visitor satisfaction levels and visitors in educational groups were provided, but for visitors to V&A sites and the percentage of collections accessible, there was no quantitative detail about performance, just a comment that the target was achieved;

*In their 1999-2000 Accounts the V&A provided quantitative detail of the performance achieved for all performance targets.*

- providing definitions for each performance measure where it is not obvious, for example a definition of what 'accessible' means;

*In their 1999-2000 Accounts the V&A refers to the performance measure 'Percentage of objects available' - previously described as 'Percentage of collections accessible'. A definition of what 'available' means would improve the clarity of this performance measure.*

- providing an explanation of any changes in the basis of measurement. In the 1998-99 Accounts a note stated that, for visitor satisfaction, the basis of measurement changed in the year. However, no detail was provided on the nature of the change or its impact.



# Part 3

## How the V&A is responding to the challenge of broadening access

- 3.1 The size and nature of the V&A's collections, and the knowledge and expertise of its staff, make the Museum a significant national resource. Like other national museums and galleries, the V&A is looking to improve access to its collections.

**“The underlying objective for all museums and galleries should be to strive to offer the widest possible access to their collections and to the knowledge and expertise of their staff”**

*Source: 'Museums for the many' - Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999*

**“Increasing the range and number of people who engage with the museum, as visitors, through the V&A web site, and through outreach programmes”**

*Source: One of the strategic objectives in the V&A's Funding Agreement for 1999-2002*

- 3.2 But the V&A recognises that it faces significant challenges in achieving these objectives.

**“The V&A was perceived as a dusty and old fashioned place... many people had no idea of what it exhibited”**

*Source: a quote from the Chairman of the V&A Trustees as reported in a national newspaper*

- 3.3 This Part, which focuses on the Museum's main site in South Kensington, looks at what the V&A is doing to promote access and attract new visitors, and covers the following key aspects:

- understanding what visitors want;
- projecting the right image;
- making objects accessible;
- targeting different types of visitors;
- embracing the electronic age.

A recurring theme in this Part is the difficulty the V&A faces in meeting the sometimes conflicting needs and tastes of its existing and potential visitors.

## Understanding what visitors want

- 3.4 There is no single or simple solution to broadening the Museum's appeal. What makes people want to visit museums is bound up with social, cultural, educational and economic issues. Through visitor surveys the V&A has a good understanding of the types of people who currently visit the Museum, and their likes and dislikes. But, for the V&A to attract new visitors, it needs a clear appreciation of what potential visitors might want - it has yet to carry out research amongst non-visitors to find out why they do not visit the Museum, but plans to do so.

- 3.5 The complexities involved in meeting visitors' needs are illustrated from our analysis of current visitor types and the reasons they give for visiting the V&A. Our consultants identified six types of visitor, who all have different requirements and expectations (**Figures 17 and 18 overleaf**). Some visitors might be looking for 'a calm retreat from the city'. Others might be seeking 'mental stimulation'. Some, for example students of art and design, may wish to carry out academic research, or may be seeking inspiration. And the needs of new visitors (especially young people) might be very different from the experience sought by the Museum's loyal visitors. The extent to which the V&A is successful in achieving greater access to the Museum will depend on how well it manages these differing requirements.

## Projecting the right image

- 3.6 The V&A recognises that it has an image problem, and that potential visitors might be put off by its highbrow reputation. This was confirmed by our consultants who found that some visitors considered the Museum to be *'academic and stuffy, and unattractive for younger visitors'*. Yet others, particularly enthusiasts of art and design, see the V&A as a *'highly prestigious'* institution.
- 3.7 The V&A is currently implementing a ten-point marketing plan and also, in 1999, initiated a *'Contemporary'* programme to encourage younger visitors, attract first time visitors, and present the V&A's collections in new ways. The V&A's visitor survey undertaken in autumn 1999 showed that the proportion of younger visitors had increased from ten to 25 per cent and that 35 per cent of visitors considered that the V&A had changed over the year.

## 17 The different types of visitor to the V&A

Type of visitor	Key attributes
<b>Tourists</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit London from within UK or from overseas</li> <li>Often have a pre-allocated time slot in a full itinerary</li> <li>Looking to see the 'best bits' of the Museum</li> </ul>
<b>Day trippers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-Londoners (usually UK residents)</li> <li>Often set aside a pre-allocated time slot to visit</li> <li>Visit is planned to educate and stimulate</li> <li>Visit can often be a leisure experience and used as an opportunity to socialise, for example, to meet friends in the café</li> </ul>
<b>Inspiration seekers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually live in London or the South East</li> <li>Regularly visit museums and galleries in London and know the V&amp;A well</li> <li>Seeking inspiration from their visit on a specific subject or looking for a particular object</li> </ul>
<b>Group trips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include school pupils, students and special interest groups</li> <li>Trip is pre-planned with specific plans and goals set and, as a result, time is of the essence</li> </ul>
<b>Bee-liners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually live closer to the museum (London or South East)</li> <li>Not looking for an overview of the whole Museum or the 'best bits'</li> <li>Visit driven by desire to see a specific exhibit and is consequently more focused</li> <li>Expectations from the visit can be high</li> <li>Bee-liners always plan to return</li> </ul>
<b>Loyal visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequently visit museums and galleries in London</li> <li>Consider they are knowledgeable about the V&amp;A and its collections</li> <li>Hope to have a pleasurable experience coupled with education and cultural learning</li> <li>Visit satisfies their cravings for self-development and, at the same time, provides a venue to meet with friends</li> <li>Visit focuses on manageable chunks of the Museum to avoid overload</li> </ul>

Source: NOP

## 18 What makes people visit museums



Source: NOP

## The nature of the V&A's collections

3.8 The V&A is well aware that at present there are misconceptions about the nature of its collections. The Museum was founded in 1852 as the Museum of Manufacturers, was renamed the Museum of Ornamental Art in 1853 and opened as the South Kensington Museum in 1857. Renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899, it is now 'the National Museum of Art and Design'. The V&A recognises that its name does not indicate the nature of its collections - in December 1999 a customer survey by the V&A showed that 55 per cent of first time visitors agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition that *"I didn't know what was in the Museum before I visited"*. However, the V&A has concluded that it is possible to increase 'brand awareness' without a change of name - the Musée du Louvre, for example, has achieved this. The V&A is working with consultants to examine the options for increasing brand awareness.

3.9 The sector-wide Efficiency Review (paragraphs 1.9 to 1.10) suggested a new performance measure to focus on the 'public image' of museums and galleries. The purpose of this new measure would be to assist each museum or gallery to make an assessment of the degree to which the general public, including both visitors and non-visitors, are aware of the particular institution and its programmes and collections. The Department is progressing work on this new measure with a view to it being adopted by all the national museums and galleries.

## Marketing and advertising

3.10 To attract visitors to the Museum, the V&A targets a wide range of groups and the mass market through its advertising and marketing activities. The V&A is currently implementing a new ten-point marketing plan, the key features of which are:

- **corporate identity** - development of a strong brand position for the Museum and the launch of a corporate identity programme for all marketing communications;
- **advertising agency** - appointment of a new advertising agency;
- **quarterly campaigns** - marketing activity to be integrated into four seasonal campaigns each year with programming decisions reflecting these campaigns;
- **promotional partnerships** - development of promotional partnerships with external organisations and media groups to help communicate the Museum to a wider audience;



- **audience based programming** - development of an audience based plan to reflect the Museum's visitor targets and ensuring that all programming and marketing decisions reflect this;
- **new media** - integration of new media into the marketing mix and developing the role the Museum's web site plays in marketing communications;
- **audience research** - marketing and advertising decisions to be based on an in-depth understanding of visitor and market trends;
- **non-UK marketing** - continuing the programme of marketing activity on the continent and development of this to cover the United States and Japan;
- **soft targets** - development of marketing campaigns targeting soft audiences - local area, overseas visitors, existing visitors and the travel trade;
- **evaluation** - development of a more effective system of evaluation for marketing activity with particular focus on advertising campaigns.

3.11 The V&A's surveys have shown that once inside the Museum relatively few visitors attend the various events and activities taking place although for some events and activities the number of visitors who can participate at any one time is limited - for example, there are only 36 activity backpacks available. In 1999 the daily free gallery talks were the most frequently used activity - by five per cent of visitors. In an attempt to increase the number of participants in the Museum's programmes, the V&A proposes to build on the results of a trial period in 1999 when a daily events list was handed to visitors. Visitors found the leaflet useful, but only a third had received it. The Museum also proposes to place a 'what's new' notice board in the Museum foyer, and distribute leaflets and information on forthcoming events as visitors leave.

## The nature of the building

3.12 Attention to the fabric of the Museum itself is central to the V&A's efforts to strengthen the image of the South Kensington Museum. In 1987 the V&A began to implement a master plan for the Museum. There were no target dates but the main aims were to make the best use of the wide range of different spaces and locations available to the Museum, and adapt the wide range of courts, galleries and promenades for the modern display of objects. The V&A revised the master plan in 1995 to include the renovation of the British Galleries. This master plan also included another project - the 'Spiral' - which is designed, in the longer term, to give the outward appearance of the Museum a more contemporary look.

### The British Galleries

The British Galleries at the South Kensington Museum house the collection of objects produced or used in Britain between 1500 and 1900. The Galleries have not been updated since the 1940s and the environmental conditions were considered to be damaging to the objects on display. The 15 Galleries were closed in the summer of 1998 and the V&A has embarked on a major redevelopment project. The aim of the project, which will cover some ten per cent of the gallery space at the South Kensington Museum, is to do much more than update the Galleries - it is seen as a major step in revitalising the Museum. The specific aims of the project are to:

- show the nation's outstanding collections in visually striking galleries;
- provide an environment in which the full range of objects can be displayed and preserved;
- develop new methods of interpretation and approaches to learning;
- meet the needs of a wide range of audiences and inspire designers of the future, from all cultures and backgrounds;
- show how British design interacted with that of other countries.

The V&A estimates that the British Galleries project will cost £31 million and the project is being partly funded by £15.8 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project is scheduled to be completed by November 2001.

### The Spiral

The 'Spiral' has been designed in direct contrast to the existing building and will form both the entrance to the Museum and its centre for contemporary art and culture. The aims of the project are to provide:

- a learning centre, acting as a forum for new methods of display and interpretation to encourage the practice of art, craft and design;
- a showcase for the contemporary with a focus on fashion and lifestyle;
- an interactive demonstration of design;
- a museum without walls, using information technology to take the V&A's collections out across the UK and beyond;
- a social arts space for South Kensington.



The V&A estimates that the 'Spiral' will cost £80 million and plans to raise £40 million before approaching lottery distributors for the balance. The Spiral is scheduled to be completed, at the earliest, in 2005.

### Experience of other museums

At the Musée du Louvre in Paris we were told that a factor in increasing visitor numbers in recent years has been the completion of a 15 year modernisation programme financed by the French government.

As a contrast to the existing building, the V&A's Spiral project is similar in concept to the 'Pyramid' at the Musée du Louvre in Paris. At the Louvre we were told that visitor numbers in 1999 were double those of 1988 and that the Pyramid, which opened in 1989, had contributed significantly to this increase.





## Making objects accessible

- 3.13 A significant part of broadening the Museum's appeal and giving visitors a rewarding experience is making the Museum's collections accessible in terms of both physical access and the way objects are presented.

### The V&A's opening hours

- 3.14 To make its collections accessible in the most literal sense, and to meet the needs of potential visitors, the V&A has been experimenting with longer opening hours. In addition to being open seven days a week (with the exception of three days over Christmas), the V&A holds Late View sessions to attract visitors during the evening. Prior to January 2000 there were some 35 such sessions a year which took place on a Wednesday evening. On these days, the Museum closed as normal at 17:45 and re-opened from 18:30 until 21:30. A selection of galleries were open and the admission charge was £3. The V&A has made no analysis of how many of those who attended were new visitors, but the average attendance was some 520 visitors in 1999.

- 3.15 Since the start of the year 2000, the V&A has been experimenting with different arrangements for late opening. Up to the end of April 2000 the Museum was open every Wednesday evening from 18:30 to 21:30, and from the start of May 2000 has been open without a break to 22:00, with free admission after 16:30. From the end of June 2000 there have been additional Late View sessions on one Friday a month. The aim of the Friday sessions is to provide a more contemporary atmosphere to attract a younger audience - lectures, films and other events are offered for which there is a charge.

#### Experience of other museums

Some of the other museums we visited also had late opening.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York stays open until 21:00 on Friday and Saturday evenings. The Museum considers that this has attracted more working people and parents and has contributed significantly to the rise in visitor numbers throughout the 1990s. Saturdays now rival Sundays as the most popular day for visitors.

The National Museums of Scotland introduced late evening opening in 1995. The Royal Museum and Museum of Scotland remain open until 20:00 on a Tuesday evening and admission is free after 16:30. Attendance has been built up through advertising events and 'word of mouth'. For the first three months of 2000, the average number of visitors was 294 per late opening session.

### Getting around the Museum

- 3.16 Visitors to the V&A have difficulty finding their way around. The Museum, which opened nearly 150 years ago, was built in phases - there is no level access across the Museum as different wings were built to different height-levels. The result is a building in which one of the V&A's own visitor surveys, conducted in 1995, found

that 58 per cent of visitors agreed with the proposition '*it is difficult to find the way around the V&A*'. However, the V&A's research shows that visitors have differing tastes in this regard:

"Finding your way around, although it isn't exactly simple, that is part of the fun really"

"I have the map in my hand if I really want to find something, but it's too much hard work to follow the map. It is a sense of discovery"

But:

"I wasn't quite sure whether I had a good comprehensive look at what was on view"

"I never found my way to the second floor"

"Only the last of seven people we asked really knew where it was"

- 3.17 Over recent years new maps and signposting have been introduced, but our consultants' interviews with visitors in January 2000 confirm that orientation remains a problem. Visitors were concerned that:

- too much time is spent finding one's way around the Museum, even for regular visitors;
- mastering the Museum layout is difficult, which can be particularly frustrating for 'time keepers';
- there need to be more signs, particularly in the reception area;
- there need to be clearer or more user friendly maps (the colour coding is confusing and it is difficult to distinguish different levels);
- tourists and day trippers (generally 'time limited' visitors) would like to see routes directing them to the best bits or more popular exhibits.

A key element of the British Galleries project is to improve circulation around the Museum.

#### Experience of other museums

At the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York there is a large display board in the entrance area that links to the Museum map. Specific icons on the display board help visitors identify the collections and their location. The Museum has also introduced a 'Director's Selections' personal audio guide and landmark objects are now flagged up.

The V&A is considering how best to improve visitor orientation and information about objects and services. Signage, printed material, and interactions with visitors in the entrance area are being reviewed. The V&A is introducing an initiative to highlight key objects whereby a curator will be available to talk and answer questions about an object for half an hour each day. The highlighted object will be changed every two weeks.

## The way objects are displayed

3.18 One of the V&A's challenges is presenting its collections in ways which are appropriate, while appealing to a broad range of visitors with differing tastes and requirements, and within financial constraints. Over the last ten years or so several of the V&A's galleries have been substantially modernised, including the TT Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art, the Nehru Gallery of Indian Art, the Glass Gallery (see photograph on the left) and the Silver Galleries. But with a heavy dependence on sponsorship and private donations, many of the 145 galleries at the V&A have remained largely unchanged for nearly 100 years (see photograph on the right). Visitors interviewed by our consultants commented that *"it was all sort of dusty" and "some of the older galleries can be a little dry"*.



3.19 As seen in paragraph 3.12, the British Galleries and Spiral projects are very much about improving the way objects are displayed, and in preparing the British Galleries scheme the V&A carried out extensive research to identify visitors' preferences. While the research underlined the need for changes, it also highlighted the tensions facing the V&A in the change process:

- the V&A needs to design an environment which educates its 'general interest' visitors, *but* without appearing to patronise;
- the design of the galleries needs to do more to bring exhibits to life, for all visitors, *but* without altering the peaceful adult atmosphere;
- the V&A should be clear as to what it wants to communicate and should design its exhibits to make their point;
- the V&A needs to bring in the social and historical context of objects and give a clear chronological siting for collections;
- visitors require text information at two levels - quick, to the point, and easy to assimilate the main story, with follow up detail for people particularly interested in a subject.

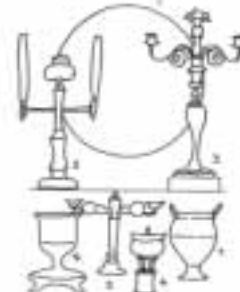
3.20 The V&A has set up a 'test bed' for the new display and presentation techniques it proposes to adopt in the new British Galleries, and visitor reaction has been positive. The V&A plans to disseminate across the museums and galleries sector the lessons learned from its research.

3.21 Although various audio and visual aids are available at the V&A, much of the information that visitors receive comes from the labels alongside objects on display. The

V&A does not have a common approach to labelling, and there are significant variations around the Museum - presentation ranges from the clear and modern to faded typescript, and the content ranges from little more than the name of the creator and a date to a comprehensive description of the object. Although visitors interviewed by our consultants considered that their information requirements were usually met, some commented that the labels used to explain displays appear tired and look old fashioned. Some visitors would also appreciate more historical context and an outline of the significance of the objects on display. Better and more consistent labelling is a feature of the British Galleries project.

PLATE  
Steel, chiselled and inlaid with gold  
IRAN, second half of the 19th century  
J&J-1880

**case 8: GRAND DISPLAY PLATE, 1800-30**



Many of these objects are from one of the most influential silverware-making firms of the period, the royal goldsmiths Rundell, Bridge and Rundell. A partnership set up by John Bridge and Philip Rundell, it dominated the market for the first 30 years of the century. Neither Bridge nor Rundell were silversmiths themselves. All the business was conducted out to a network of suppliers. The partners kept close control of design, and the financial and client base. Known as 'Old' and 'Younger' by their workforce because of their opposing personalities, their output was perfectly suited to the prevailing taste for high-quality, massive Neo-classical plate for grand display in the dining room, for those who could afford it.

3.22 Getting the right balance in displaying objects is not straightforward. On the one hand most visitors interviewed by our consultants liked what they perceived to be an 'old school' and 'purist' approach by the V&A. On the other hand our consultants' work, in line with findings from the V&A's own research, showed that many visitors, especially parents and children, would like to see more modern interactive displays within the Museum. However, the message from those interviewed was that interactive technology should be employed in a subtle way and that it should be used to increase the provision of information, and to stimulate thought, rather than just to simplify messages. The V&A's visitor research has identified a positive shift in attitudes towards interactive displays once visitors have had experience of them. Again, greater interaction is an important feature of the British Galleries project.

### Experience of other museums

The Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, makes use of multimedia technology across its galleries. The Museum also has a separate room of computer terminals giving visitors the chance to use multimedia resources associated with the collections, websites and Museum.

At the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff, a new gallery has been opened where visitors are encouraged to handle objects. Curators, acting as facilitators, are on hand to assist and to answer questions.

## Objects in store

3.23 In looking at the accessibility of the V&A's collections an important aspect is the extent to which it is possible physically to see individual objects. Access to the 2.7 million objects held in the Prints, Drawings and Paintings collection and the National Art Library is freely available, on request or on production of a reader's ticket (paragraph 2.17). **Figure 19** below shows that of the remaining 377,000 objects in the V&A's South Kensington collections, space limitations mean that only 35 per cent are on display at any one time.

3.24 The V&A, in common with most other museums, does not consider that simply putting more objects on display is necessarily a good solution. The Museum has to consider, for example, different learning styles - some people learn by looking at objects and reading labels, and others by doing things. Indeed, some of the Museum's ideas for more activities in galleries may result in fewer objects being on display. Individual curators are responsible for deciding which objects to display, but the Museum's policy is that they should be guided by such issues as an object's beauty or aesthetic significance; its contribution to the history of the arts, crafts and design; and its suitability for display.

3.25 One way of increasing the number of objects on display is to use 'visible storage'. As this approach means displaying large numbers of objects to a much higher density than usual, and without individual labelling, visible storage is not appropriate for all types of objects. However, it gives visitors the opportunity to view objects that they might not otherwise see, and the V&A adopted this approach when redesigning the Glass Gallery in 1994. The numbers of objects on display increased by over 200 per cent.

### Experience of other museums

At the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York visitors can view 10,000 objects from the American fine art and decorative art collection, which are not currently on display in the main galleries, in a visible storage centre. The objects are displayed in cabinets and, whilst labelling is minimal, computer terminals in the centre allow visitors to access information about an object. The Egyptian Galleries at the Metropolitan Museum of Art have also been designed to allow every object in the Egyptian collection to be viewed by visitors. These approaches are similar to the Glass Gallery at the V&A.

3.26 The V&A has arrangements to help visitors who ask to view objects that are not on display. These take account of the requirements of individual visitors and the cost to the Museum of making objects available. If it is not possible to satisfy visitors' requirements by directing them to similar objects that are on display, arrangements are made for the visitor to view the object by appointment, although the Museum will seek to accommodate requests without advance notice. In 1998-99 the V&A made 1,500 stored objects available for viewing.

### Experience of other museums

Like the V&A, some of the other museums we visited, for example the Nordiska museet in Stockholm, make arrangements for visitors to see objects not on display. At the Musée du Louvre in Paris there is no provision for visitors to view objects not on display, except for drawings which can be viewed on special request.

3.27 The V&A has explored other ways in which it can make objects available to a wider audience. Lending objects to other museums and institutions, such as English Heritage and individual historic houses, enables more objects to be displayed and also widens the Museum's geographical coverage. A prime example is the Furniture and Woodwork collection, from which almost 900 objects (four per cent of the collection) were on long-term loan in 1998-99. In total the V&A had some 1,500 objects on long-term loan in 1998-99.

## Providing expert advice and opinions

3.28 As an acknowledged centre of expertise in the field of art and design, the V&A receives many enquiries. For example, in 1998-99 the curatorial departments at the South Kensington Museum received just over 49,000 enquires - some 55 per cent were from members of the public, 24 per cent from within the museums sector and 21 per cent from the education, media and commercial sectors. The V&A also provides advice to the Department and other government bodies on a range of issues, including the granting of export licences and potential acquisitions - the Museum responded to some 4,500 requests for advice in 1998-99. Where possible, curators send out 'standard' replies to enquiries - for example, prepared bibliographies on a particular subject or artist, although many enquiries require research, as illustrated in

**19** Accessibility to the other collections, by curatorial area, as at September 1999

	Ceramics & Glass	Far Eastern	Furniture & Woodwork	Indian & South-East Asian	Metalwork	Sculpture	Textiles & Dress	Total
Objects in the collection	76,000	80,000	23,000	51,000	49,000	19,000	79,000	377,000
Objects on display	45,800	12,500	4,300	900	15,500	3,700	49,900	132,600
Percentage of objects on display	60%	16%	19%	2%	32%	19%	63%	35%

Source: V&A Museum (figures are based on computerised inventory records plus estimated numbers from manual records)

**Figure 20.** The Museum does not charge for responding to enquiries because this might deter people from seeking advice, which in turn might affect the Museum's standing in the field of art and design.

## 20 Examples of enquiries received by the V&A

"I am enclosing copies of four photographs of some of my ancestors and I should be extremely grateful if you could possibly date these for me from the costumes."

"..... .. City Art Gallery and Museum is planning a new exhibition ... which will highlight some of the unique and previously unseen items from our collection. One of the objects ... is a 17th century embroidered casket. We know very little about the object and wondered if you could supply us with information concerning its approximate date, materials and techniques, and the symbolism of the embroidered image. Also, any publications or archives to pursue."

"I am reupholstering various English chairs which date from William and Mary through to Victorian times. What I would ideally like to do is upholster these items in the sort of material in which ... they were originally made. Are you perhaps able to recommend reference books which would give me information, and preferably illustrations, of the fabrics I should use?"

Source: V&A Museum

3.29 Another way the Museum makes its curatorial expertise available to members of the public is by providing an 'opinions' service. Once a month, visitors to the Museum can obtain an opinion (but not a valuation) on objects they take in. In 1998-99, the V&A provided opinions on some 2,200 objects belonging to some 1,100 visitors.

## Targeting different types of visitors

3.30 Earlier paragraphs in this Part show how visitors' requirements and expectations vary and what the V&A is doing to modernise its image. This section focuses on some specific activities designed to increase the number and range of visitors - as well as meeting the needs of the Museum's existing audience. The V&A is in discussion with the Department with the aim of setting a baseline for the social mix of visitors.

## Special projects and exhibitions

3.31 The following examples illustrate the broad range of the V&A's initiatives:

### 'Shamiana: the Mughal Tent'

The aim of this project (see photograph opposite), which commenced in 1992, was to encourage women and children of South Asian origin in Britain to explore their cultural heritage through art, using the V&A's Indian and South East Asian collections as inspiration. The initial project attracted 800 women and children and led to an exhibition in 1997 at the V&A, and later around the UK and Asia, that has attracted over 570,000 visitors. The project will continue to tour until May 2001 and, following this, will feature on the V&A's website. The

project was identified as an example of good practice in the Department's Efficiency Review.

### 'Inspired by the V&A Collections'

This project, which was in the form of a competition, took place during Adult Learners Week in May 1999. The competition attracted some 160 entrants and objects created as a result of the event were exhibited at various locations throughout the Museum. The competition was repeated in May 2000 and attracted some 300 entrants.

### The Disabilities Programme

Monthly talks and tours are organised for the visually impaired and the deaf. Courses have been run, including photography and raised drawing (an art form designed for the visually impaired) and the V&A has also held touch and handling sessions. A sound system has been developed for those with impaired hearing.

### Experience of other museums

The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York draws on aspects of its collections (for example, its Chinese collection) to reflect the history, identity and culture of minority ethnic groups. The V&A has also targeted particular communities using specific collections, for example, 'The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' exhibition.

In January 2000, the National Museum & Gallery, Cardiff, developed a photographic project with a local community of people who had not previously visited the Museum. The results of the project have been displayed in the Museum. The project generated considerable local interest and has resulted in further museum visits from people in the community. The Museum identified important lessons for the success of such a project: local interest, the involvement of the whole community, and a link between the Museum and an established member of the community. The V&A's 'Going Graphic' project also involved photography and local communities.





3.32 In a typical year the V&A stages two or three major exhibitions, each lasting between two and four months, and several small scale temporary displays. The major exhibitions have a significant impact on visitor numbers, with average weekly attendance rising by over 20 per cent during an exhibition (Figure 21). To attract sponsors for exhibitions and decide whether to charge for admission, the V&A estimates in advance the number of visitors. Figure 22 shows that eight of the Museum's last nine exhibitions had exceeded their estimates, the exception being 'A Grand Design'. The V&A expects 'Brand.New' which focuses on the power of brands and advertising to be popular.

21 Average weekly visitor numbers at the V&A

	No exhibition	During an exhibition	Difference (%)
1997	16,940	21,304	26
1998	16,873	23,164	37
1999	15,775	19,324	22

Source: V&A Museum

3.33 Exhibitions are not just about attracting large numbers of visitors, and the V&A aims to provide a mixed diet aimed at different audiences. For example, while 'The Power of the Poster' in 1998 was designed to have mass appeal, the 'Aubrey Beardsley' exhibition was intended to be of more specialist interest. The V&A also targets particular communities, for example 'The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' exhibition in 1999. The V&A considers

that one of the reasons for the reduction in overall visitor numbers in 1999-2000 (paragraph 2.4) was that it did not have any exhibitions with as much popular appeal as in earlier years. 'The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' and 'A Grand Design' (which featured some of the V&A's more significant objects) were chosen mainly for timing reasons - the first because 1999 was a significant anniversary for Sikhs, and the second because 1999 was also the centenary year of the naming of the V&A.

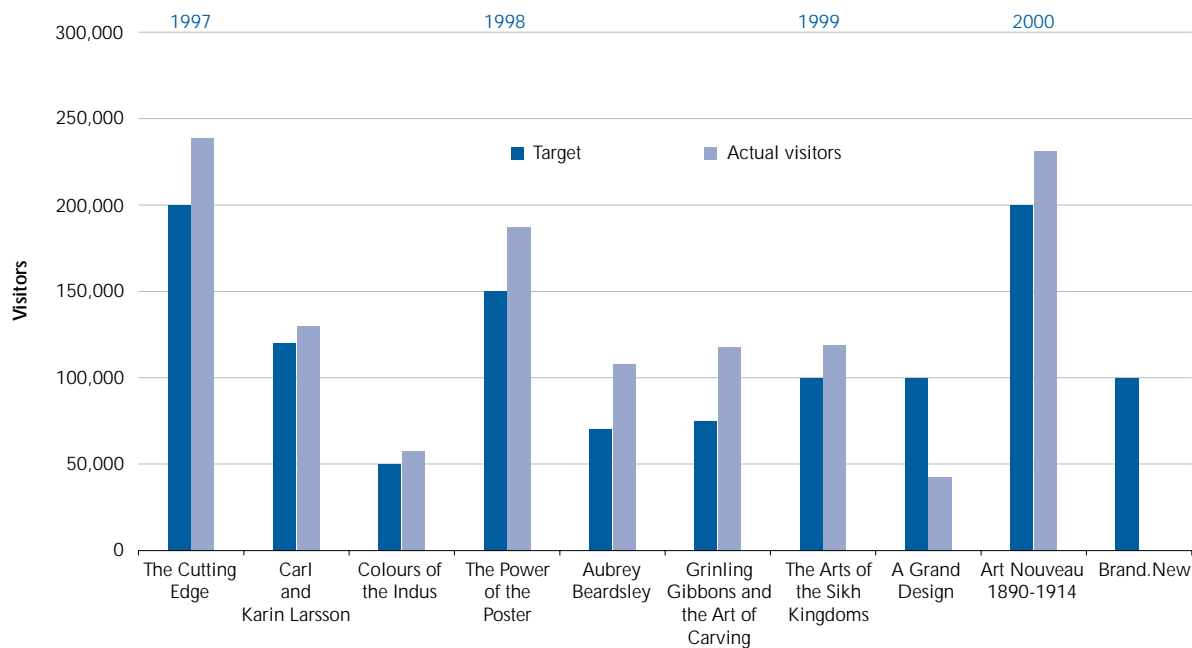
3.34 In the case of 'The Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms' the V&A had recognised that while the exhibition would not have mass appeal, it would contribute to the Museum's aim of broadening the range of visitors and attracting different audiences. The exhibition attracted almost 119,000 visitors, of whom 63 per cent were from the Sikh community. Of these, 41 per cent were first time visitors to any museum, and 73 per cent were first time visitors to the V&A. However, while exhibitions can be successful in attracting new visitors it does not follow that visitor numbers in the target group will be sustained. In December 1999 the V&A obtained a grant of £90,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop strategies for sustaining the participation of audiences attracted to the Museum through special exhibitions and to encourage participation of other under-represented communities.

Experience of other museums

At the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York exhibitions are designed for specific academic interests and 'artistic merit', as well as to attract additional visitors.

At the Nordiska museet in Stockholm, the temporary exhibitions are generally designed to have a popular appeal. Those held in 1999 included 'The Spy', 'Facing the Future' and a celebration of the music of Abba. The Museum tends to stage frequent short duration exhibitions.

22 Temporary exhibitions - actual and estimated visitor numbers



Source: V&A Museum

## Programmes for children and families

3.35 The V&A has difficulty attracting children and families - in 1999 just 14 per cent of visitors were under the age of 18. The V&A considers that the nature of its collections is a key reason for the difficulty - "no dinosaurs". It also faces a conflict between retaining the 'adult atmosphere' that some visitors appreciate and introducing changes to encourage family visitors. The V&A is also aware of the need to take account of the vulnerability of its objects, which can make open display as distinct from display cases problematic. However, one aim of the 'Contemporary' programme (paragraph 3.7) is to encourage younger visitors to the Museum. The V&A has also developed a Family Programme (Figure 23) to encourage children and families to visit the Museum.

3.36 In October and November 1999, the V&A held Sunday Extra - comprising the children's activities in Figure 23 plus special live events, including jazz - to encourage families to visit for the whole day. The average attendance on these days was 2,823 compared with 2,644 in the preceding six months. Ninety per cent of visitors' comments were positive - 81 per cent said they had learnt something from the event they attended and over 18 per cent have made repeat visits. However, some visitors commented on the lack of advance information - only five per cent of visitors heard about the Sunday Extra programme through publicity sources outside the Museum.

### 23 The activities comprising the V&A's Family Programme

**Activity backpacks:** The packs are aimed at 5 to 11 year olds and are designed to encourage families to move around the Museum to explore themes or aspects of the collections. There are 36 packs in total and they are available on Saturday afternoons and some days during school holidays, although there are plans to increase this in line with demand. In 1999 the backpacks received the Gulbenkian award 'Best in UK Museums' for the most imaginative education work. Some 7,400 visitors used the backpacks in 1998-99.

**Family activity cart:** The cart contains six separate activities and enables families to explore the Museum's collections through drawing and making things. Activities are suitable for children aged 3 to 12 years. The activities offered are tailored to the theme of a particular collection - when the cart is in the TT Tsui Gallery of Chinese Art, one of the activities is to make a dragon's mask. The cart is available on Sundays and every day during school holidays. Some 14,500 visitors used the activity cart in 1998-99.

**Trails:** Trails around the Museum, which are available at all times from the information desks, have been designed to highlight special objects and attempt to increase enjoyment through quizzes, stories and activities. Trail themes include Chinese animals, tapestries and life in Korea and India.

**Special activities for families:** These include performances or workshops, storytelling, and art and craft activities. The aim is to encourage families to use the collections to inspire their own art and craft work.

Source: V&A Museum



3.37 Independent research commissioned by the V&A and published in January 2000 showed that the activities for children and families are very popular. It also identified a number of areas where there is scope for the V&A to do more, particularly in communicating with children and families. Awareness of the Family Programme among all types of visitors was extremely low. None of the 'non-users' of the programme had heard about it before taking part in the research and considered that they were unlikely to have discovered the activities by themselves. Those visitors who knew of the programme had been made aware as a result of recommendations from friends and through their own interest in the Museum, rather than through publicity material. The research also found the distribution of information on family activities to be inconsistent. Some families had not been offered activities like the trails, while others commented that they had stumbled on activities, such as the backpacks, as they were walking around.

3.38 As a result of the research the V&A is now considering:

- establishing a single point of contact inside the Museum for all children's activities and ensuring that it is clearly signposted;
- producing clearer publicity material explaining the different activities, their content and age suitability;
- creating a child-friendly atmosphere by adapting facilities, the style of displays and the attitude of staff;
- creating new events designed for teenagers and older children;
- providing better links between activities and National Curriculum topics;
- developing a database to encourage repeat visits through direct mailings;
- using the Museum's website to encourage young people to visit, reflecting the popularity of the Internet for young people as a communication tool.

**Experience of other museums**

Some of the other museums we visited had introduced other ways of attracting and involving families and children.

At the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, all pupils visiting the Museum on school trips are given a family pass for a free return visit with their family. Take up of the pass is approximately four per cent.

At the Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, a Junior Board, comprising 12 children from across Scotland, meet five times a year to test ideas and give feedback. The Board's aim is to make the Museum attractive to young people and they contribute to label writing, planning displays, the shop, and the use of multimedia.

At the Nordiska museet in Stockholm, a children's play and discovery area gives children aged 3 to 12 years a 'hands on' experience of aspects of living in Sweden in the late nineteenth century.

## Education and learning

3.39 The V&A's founding principle was to inspire and educate British manufacturers, designers and consumers. The Museum today aims to provide a comprehensive and imaginative range of learning opportunities. In a sense it is artificial to regard the V&A's initiatives on education and learning as separate activities, since education is a pervasive element of the Museum's work - not least its work with children. The Museum does, however, have a range of additional programmes, formal and informal, designed to aid learning (examples in [Figure 24](#)).

3.40 The Education Excellence Study published by the Department as part of the sector-wide Efficiency Review identified the V&A as following good practice in introducing new approaches to learning. These have included setting up discovery areas in galleries, demonstrations by staff, and providing theatre within galleries. To compete in the leisure industry, the V&A is now putting greater emphasis on providing visitors with an educational and an entertaining leisure experience. Activities include performances (for example, by Indian dance groups and steel bands) and demonstrations (for example, by artists and designers on the making of their work). The V&A is currently developing a revised learning strategy.

## Embracing the electronic age

3.41 The growing importance of the Internet in the provision of public services is a key feature of the Modernising Government agenda. The Internet provides a powerful opportunity for museums and galleries to increase public access through remote connections to their collections and expertise. The V&A's website (<http://www.vam.ac.uk>) was first launched in 1995 and has since undergone two major iterations, most recently in October 1999. The vision for the new website is to reflect and enhance the institution and its services via a presence on the web and to build a virtual institution.

## 24 Some of the V&A's learning activities

**Formal education**

**Courses and study days:** these are run for adults and cover a wide range of subjects in the history of art and design and are often linked to exhibitions or other activities. They aim to provide increased understanding of different aspects of the collections.

**Lectures:** these cover a variety of subjects and often coincide with temporary exhibitions and other events.

**Conferences:** these are aimed at academics and students and usually complement an exhibition or special event taking place in the Museum. Speakers include curators from the V&A and academics. In June 2000, a five-day conference on 'Art Nouveau' was held to coincide with the V&A's exhibition.

**In-service training for teachers:** courses are run to enable teachers to make use of the V&A in their teaching of the National Curriculum and post-16 students.

**Informal learning**

**Introductory tours:** six tours each day give a general introduction to the Museum, including its history and a selection of objects. Two of these tours also introduce particular collections (for example, British, Eastern and European art and design).

**Gallery talks:** these are held daily and explore the wider context and history of the objects on display.

Source: V&A Museum

3.42 The website, which has received a number of awards, has six information areas: infodome; explorer; program; newsroom; shopping; and learning zone. Visitors to the website can obtain information relating to opening times, admission prices, the exhibition programme, as well as information on the three branch museums and the British Galleries and Spiral projects. It also provides access to the V&A's picture library and allows visitors to view on-line displays and participate in discussion forums. A recent improvement is the addition of the 'program' events diary. This highlights temporary exhibitions and displays, and special events occurring up to two months ahead. A free-text search also enables users to view events under their own defined interests such as artist name, period of time, design technique, or art medium.

3.43 We reviewed the V&A's website on two levels. We reviewed it against the ten generic criteria for 'an active website' identified in the National Audit Office report *Government on the Web* (Appendix 3). We also reviewed it against criteria for website information (for example, opening times) and services (for example, on-line publications) published in the *Information Technology Excellence Study* as part of the sector-wide Efficiency Review (Appendix 4). The V&A continues to develop its website. At the time of our review we identified the following areas which required specific attention:

- there were no links to partner organisations such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, other decorative arts institutions and lottery bodies. Those links which were available were dispersed around the site rather than on a central 'links' page, although the V&A was addressing this;
- there were gaps in the information and services covered by the website. For example it contained no information on the V&A's programme of courses and did not highlight the availability of the National Art Library and Print Room as centres of research. No information was provided about sessions for teachers or the community outreach programme and events. There were limited on-line facilities for searching the whole website. And there was no quick index system;
- although feedback from website users can highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the site and identify the user demographic profile, the V&A's website had no facility for capturing user feedback. However, the website did provide e-mail links for visitors who wished to contact the Museum with regard to any of the six information areas. The visitor services team accesses e-mails from the public and either responds directly where possible or forwards them to the most suitable member of staff such as curators.

3.44 One aim of the V&A's website is to encourage users to visit the Museum. The survey of visitors in December 1999 showed that only two per cent of visitors cited the website as an encouragement to visit the Museum.



# Appendix 1

- 1 We undertook four main exercises during our examination of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

## Exercise 1: Performance measurement

- 2 The purpose of this work was to examine how successful the V&A had been in achieving its key access-related performance targets and how the V&A measures and reports its achievements.

### Method

- 3 We examined the V&A's achievements against the targets for the four key access-related performance measures shown in Table 1 for the period 1997-98 to 1999-2000. As part of this work, we reviewed the V&A's assessment of achievements for 1998-99 and 1999-2000.

1

- Visitors to V&A sites
- Visitor satisfaction levels
- Proportion of collections accessible
- Visitors in educational groups

- 4 We also looked at how the V&A measures and reports its performance using criteria agreed with the V&A. These covered:

- **the setting of performance measures and targets:** performance measures should cover all the V&A's activities, be consistent in the way they are described and defined, be precise, and be meaningful;
- **the quality of performance data:** performance data should be correctly calculated, reliable and independently validated;
- **reporting performance:** performance information in annual reports should present information clearly, provide readers with sufficient information to enable them to make informed comparisons of performance achieved in different years, provide readers with explanations of the activity being reported, and describe the quality of the performance information.

- 5 In undertaking our work on performance measurement, we have reflected the likely effect of the changes in performance measurement resulting from the

## The methods we used

Department's Efficiency Review of the national museums and galleries. This Review produced 22 core performance indicators (Appendix 2). The Department has developed a smaller set of core performance indicators and associated targets for incorporation into the Funding Agreements of individual museums and galleries. A selection of indicators and sub-indicators were incorporated into the Funding Agreement with the V&A from 2000-01.

## Exercise 2: Survey work

- 6 The purpose of this work was to evaluate the way the V&A collects information on customer satisfaction and to provide fresh, qualitative information on visitor satisfaction.

### Method

#### *(i) Evaluating the way the V&A collects information on customer satisfaction*

- 7 We commissioned a firm of market research consultants (NOP) to assist us in evaluating the way the V&A collects information on customer satisfaction - the V&A commissions a market research company (MORI) to undertake three visitor surveys a year. As part of this work, our consultants examined:

- the question in the survey to gauge visitor satisfaction;
- the positioning of the question in the survey;
- the use of a five point scale;
- the way the data was analysed and presented;
- the sample of visitors included in the survey.

#### *(ii) Qualitative survey of V&A visitors*

- 8 We also commissioned NOP to undertake a qualitative survey of V&A visitors to provide fresh insights into visitor satisfaction. Within this work our consultants sought to:

- explore individual perceptions of the museums;
- explore the V&A experience for different types of visitors;
- identify individual preferences;
- explore ways in which visitor satisfaction might be improved.

- 9 The research method used by NOP is set out in Table 2. The number of people interviewed provided a robust qualitative representation of the types of visitors to the V&A. On-site interviewing and selection of interviewees for follow-up telephone interviews was conducted during weekdays and weekends in January 2000, and was spread throughout the day. The sample included males and females, a wide age range, ethnic minorities and overseas tourists.

2

First phase: on-site face-to-face interviews

- 2 mini-groups
- 8 'friendship paired' interviews
- 10 individual depth interviews

Second phase: in-depth telephone interviews

- 25 depth interviews with visitors selected on-site

## Exercise 3: Group interviews

- 10 The purpose of this work was to understand the aims and objectives of the various initiatives and programmes that the V&A has put in place to increase access, including future projects.

### Method

- 11 We held seven group interviews with key V&A staff. The seven group interviews and the specific subjects discussed are shown in Table 3. At each group, V&A staff provided presentations on specific initiatives, programmes and future projects. These were followed up with further discussions.

3

Group interviews	Subjects covered
<b>Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Loans of objects to other institutions</li> <li>■ Touring exhibitions</li> <li>■ Programmes to attract new audiences, including ethnic minorities and young people</li> <li>■ The V&amp;A's international role</li> </ul>
<b>Temporary Exhibitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The temporary exhibition programme</li> <li>■ Changing displays of objects within galleries</li> <li>■ Temporary displays</li> <li>■ The Canon Photography Gallery</li> </ul>
<b>Galleries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The different types of galleries</li> <li>■ Galleries refurbished in the last decade</li> <li>■ Access to stored objects</li> <li>■ Access to curatorial expertise</li> </ul>
<b>National Art Library, Archives and Study Rooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The National Art Library</li> <li>■ The Print Room</li> <li>■ V&amp;A archives</li> <li>■ The Textiles and Dress study room</li> </ul>
<b>Education and Public Programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The V&amp;A's educational role</li> <li>■ Education programmes</li> <li>■ Public programmes such as Late View</li> <li>■ Visitor services</li> </ul>
<b>Collections Information and the Website</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The V&amp;A's collections information systems</li> <li>■ New technology such as multimedia</li> <li>■ Information systems strategy</li> <li>■ The website</li> </ul>
<b>British Galleries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Objectives of the British Galleries project</li> <li>■ Research undertaken</li> <li>■ Programmes in the new galleries</li> </ul>

## Exercise 4: Visits to other museums

- 12 The purpose of this work was to identify programmes and initiatives to promote access and understanding at other museums which could be of use to the V&A.

## Method

- 13 In consultation with the V&A we selected five museums to visit - two in the United Kingdom and three overseas. Our selection ensured that we visited a range of museums - small and large; new and old buildings; similar and different collections. A brief description of the five museums we visited is at Table 4. On each of our visits a senior member of the V&A's staff accompanied us.

4

Institution	Overview
<b>Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York</b>	The Museum is one of the world's largest with collections of more than two million works of art spanning 5,000 years of the world's culture. The Museum was founded in 1870 and moved to its current building in 1880 which has gradually expanded to around two million square feet. Over the last three years, the Arts of Korea Gallery was opened to the public, a renovated Ancient Near Eastern Gallery reopened and a complete renovation and reinstallation of the Greek and Roman Galleries has been undertaken. In April 2000 the Cypriot Galleries were also reopened to the public. The Museum is a not-for-profit institution. In 1997-98, revenue and support for on-going operations was \$115 million (£75 million). Last year 5.2 million people visited the Museum.
<b>Musée du Louvre, Paris</b>	The Royal Collections were first opened to public view in 1747. Following the Revolution, a Commission was entrusted with making the collections more accessible to the public and organising the Museum central des Arts that opened in 1793. The Museum had many subsequent incarnations and was extended in 1857. The collection is divided into eleven subject areas and includes 300,000 objects from Egyptian Antiquities to prints and drawings. Since 1981 the Museum has undergone further transformation including renovations, the addition of new rooms, and the building of the Pyramid, which opened in 1989. The whole project will double the size of the Museum to 60,000 square metres and is due for completion in 2000. The Grand Louvre project has cost 6.9 billion FRF (£690 million) funded by the French government. The Museum had an operations budget of 527.8 million FRF (£52.8 million) in 1998 and was visited by 4.9 million people.
<b>Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh</b>	The National Museums of Scotland was formed in 1985, comprising some of Scotland's major museum collections of national importance, notably those of the National Museum of Antiquities (founded in 1780) and the Royal Museum of Scotland (founded in 1854). The National Museums of Scotland's aim is to 'show Scotland to the world and the world to Scotland' and reflects the national and international coverage of its collections, which include archaeology, decorative art, natural sciences, and social and technological history. In December 1998 the National Museums of Scotland opened the Museum of Scotland, adjacent to the Royal Museum in Edinburgh. The Museum of Scotland is a new building with galleries displaying over 10,000 items from the National Museum of Scotland's Scottish collections, presenting the story of Scotland from its geological beginnings to the twentieth century. In 1998-99 the National Museums of Scotland had income of £37.8 million (of which £24.4 million was devoted to the Museum of Scotland construction, fit-out and exhibition development). In 1998-99 the Museum of Scotland and the Royal Museum received 535,203 visits.
<b>Nordiska museet, Stockholm</b>	The Nordiska museet is the Swedish National Museum of Cultural History and was founded in 1873. The Museum moved to its current location in 1907, which encompasses 6,000 square metres of exhibition space. The Museum has a collection of 1.3 million items that present the cultural history of Sweden including furniture, toys and costumes from 1520 to the present. The Museum is a state foundation with an annual budget of 140 million kronor (£10.1 million).
<b>National Museum &amp; Gallery, Cardiff</b>	The Museum is one of nine museums that make up the National Museums & Galleries of Wales which were established by Royal Charter in 1907. Its aim is to further Welsh culture and heritage to improve the understanding of Wales as a nation. The Museums hold seven million objects of which one third are on display. The collections include the natural world to works of art. In 1998 the Oriel Celf yng Nghymru (Art in Wales Gallery) was opened which provides facilities for changing exhibitions. In 1998-99 the National Museums and Galleries of Wales had a combined income of £17.6 million and 208,063 people visited the National Museum & Gallery, one of its two largest sites.

# Appendix 2

## List of core Performance Indicators developed during the Efficiency Review

In late 1998 the Department commissioned consultants to undertake an Efficiency Review of the national museums and galleries. The Review, published in September 1999, produced 22 core performance indicators (reproduced below).

The Department now considers that not all 22 performance indicators will be appropriate to each of the national museums and galleries. It has used the 22 performance indicators to develop a smaller set of core performance indicators and associated targets for incorporation into the Funding Agreements of individual museums and galleries. A selection of indicators and sub-indicators (*highlighted in italics*) were incorporated into the Funding Agreement with the V&A from 2000-01 and others (for example that relating to visitor satisfaction) are being developed.

PI	Short name	Description / Purpose
1	User numbers	<p>User numbers per annum by the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>visitors</i> (broken down into the following types: adults, <i>children</i>, seniors, overseas visitors, UK visitors, local visitors, first time visitors, <i>repeat visitors</i>);</li> <li>■ <i>participants in off-site programmes</i> (including outreach events and travelling exhibitions but not, for example, a stand at a show);</li> <li>■ <i>website usage</i>;</li> <li>■ number of queries dealt with.</li> </ul> <p>Purpose of 'total visitor numbers': to measure the extent and targeting of visitor attraction and understand better who visits different national museums and galleries.</p> <p>Purpose of 'participants in off-site programmes': to measure the extent to which national museums and galleries are widening access to their collections by running or participating in off-site programmes.</p> <p>Purpose of 'website usage': to measure the extent to which access is being widened through the development and promotion of the national museum and gallery's website and the range of services offered.</p> <p>Purpose of 'number of queries dealt with': to measure the extent of the work done by national museums and galleries in answering queries.</p>
2	Loan venues	<p>Number of venues to which loans have been made during the year plus number of venues to which loans were in place at the beginning of the year. These should be split between loans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>venues in the UK</i>;</li> <li>■ <i>venues outside the UK</i>.</li> </ul> <p>Purpose: to measure the extent to which loans of pictures and artefacts are being made as a means of promoting public and professional access to collections.</p>



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 3 | <b>Quality of environment for collections/Condition of collections</b> | <p><i>'Quality of environment for collections' - the percentage of space in which collections are stored or displayed which meets appropriate standards (including the requisite environmental conditions).</i></p> <p>Purpose: to measure the extent of variations in the quality of the space for collections (in future this performance indicator may be modified to include other factors which reflect how effectively the space is being managed to provide a high quality of collection care).</p> <p>'Condition of collections' - estimated percentage of collections in stable condition based on a three yearly condition survey sample.</p> <p>Purpose: to measure improvements in the condition of collections, and thereby improvements in their stewardship.</p> |
| 4 | <b>Public image of national museum and gallery</b>                     | <p>Public understanding and awareness of national museum and gallery as measured through surveys of the general population, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ a national survey;</li> <li>■ national museum and gallery surveys.</li> </ul> <p>Purpose: to provide the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, other sponsoring departments and national museums and galleries with useful information about the views of the public (including non-users) on museums in general and national museums and galleries in particular.</p>  |
| 5 | <b>Quality of collection documentation</b>                             | <p>The percentage of collections documented to stated internationally accepted standards for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ inventory control;</li> <li>■ more detailed catalogue records.</li> </ul> <p>Purpose: to measure the extent of the proper documentation of collections. This is a key part of stewardship and, ultimately, access.</p>   |
| 6 | <b>Electronic access</b>   | <p><i>The percentage of collections that can be accessed through the Internet.</i></p> <p>Purpose: to measure progress in the development of access to collections.</p>   |
| 7 | <b>Rate of exhibition renewal</b>                                      | <p>The percentage of permanent and long-term exhibition space renewed during the year and in the last ten years. Also, the number of temporary exhibitions opened during the year.</p> <p>Purpose: to measure the rate of renewal of displays.</p>  |
| 8 | <b>Percentage of time open</b>   | <p><i>The percentage of time national museum and gallery is open. The percentage of time (averaged for all sites) national museum and gallery is 'open' out of 12 hours per day.</i></p> <p>Purpose: to measure changes in the amount of time for which museums are open.</p>   |
| 9 | <b>Publication output</b>  | <p>The number of publications over the year by the following types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ peer reviewed articles;</li> <li>■ other articles;</li> </ul>  |

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ peer reviewed professional books and monographs;</li> <li>■ other professional books and monographs (including popular works);</li> <li>■ other publications such as: reports and commissioned works (including consultancy reports); editorial works; electronic publications (for example CD ROMs); book reviews; bibliographic works.</li> </ul> <p>Purpose: to measure the extent of access through publication.</p>
10	<b>Display and accessibility</b>	<p>The percentage of collections that are on display and accessible to all (including those with disabilities) without having to make special arrangements.</p> <p>Purpose: to measure improvements in visual access to collections.</p>
11	<b>Evaluation of user satisfaction</b>	<p>Standardised evaluation of user satisfaction for general visitors. Evaluation should cover the following subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ overall satisfaction, including enjoyment;</li> <li>■ motivational impact;</li> <li>■ satisfaction with visitor facilities;</li> <li>■ satisfaction with level of service.</li> </ul> <p>This evaluation will not be sufficient on its own to establish whether national museums and galleries are meeting their aims and objectives. To ensure this is done, the above standardised evaluation should be complemented by more in-depth local evaluation and peer evaluation.</p> <p>There should also be a report on the results of the evaluation of education users.</p> <p>Purpose: to establish what general visitors and education users think of the quality of service they receive from museums and to what extent national museums and galleries are managing to meet motivational and educational objectives.</p>
12	<b>Uptake of educational programmes</b>	<p><i>Details of the numbers of learners visiting the national museum and gallery to participate in educational programmes and of the numbers of learners being reached by educational outreach programmes.</i></p> <p>Purpose: firstly to measure the extent of reach of educational programmes, and thereby encourage, educational programming; secondly, to understand better the provision different national museums and galleries offer.</p>
13	<b>Collaborative educational projects</b>	<p>Narrative description of each collaborative educational project.</p> <p>Purpose: to measure the extent of active partnerships with other organisations to deliver benefits that national museums and galleries could not deliver alone.</p>
14	<b>Social inclusion - impact and strategy</b>	<p>The proportion of users from each group that contains a disproportionate number of people who are considered 'socially excluded'. The following figures should be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <i>the proportion of general visitors from each 'socially excluded' group; [for ethnic minorities and social classes C2, D and E];</i></li> <li>■ the proportion of people taking up educational programmes from each 'socially excluded' group;</li> </ul>

- the proportion of participants in off-site programmes from each 'socially excluded' group.

These figures should be accompanied by a narrative outlining the museum's strategy to address social exclusion.

Purpose: to ascertain what national museums and galleries are doing to address issues of social exclusion and what the impact of this activity is in terms of reach among groups that contain a disproportionate number of socially excluded people.

15	<b>Grant-in-aid per visitor and per user</b>	Grant-in-aid compared with visitor numbers and total user numbers.  Purpose: a measure of Department for Culture, Media and Sport subsidy per visitor and per user.
16	<b>Proportion of spend on administration and corporate support</b>	Proportion of total operating spend on corporate support.  Purpose: to prompt questions about the level of spend on activities which support the core work of national museums and galleries (defined in the business model produced as part of the Efficiency Review as stewardship, access and communication).
17	<b>Proportion of spend on security and facilities management / buildings maintenance</b>	Proportion of total operating spend on security.  Purpose: to prompt questions about the level of spend on security.  Proportion of total operating spend, excluding depreciation, on facilities management / buildings maintenance and spend per square metre.  Purpose: to prompt questions about the level of spend on facilities management and buildings maintenance.
18	<b>Self-sufficiency indicator</b>	Net income from all internal revenue generating activities / total operating spend less expenditure associated with revenue generating activities.  Purpose: a measure of how independent the national museum and gallery is of public funds in relation to its total operating expenses.
19	<b>Annual savings achieved</b>	<i>Two types of savings, efficiency and economy, should be numerated and explained in a narrative.</i>  Purpose: to measure progress towards greater efficiency and economy.
20	<b>Grant-in-aid as a proportion of total operating spend</b>	<i>Grant-in-aid as a proportion of total operating spend. [using all grant]</i>  Purpose: to measure how independent the national museum and gallery is of baseline funding to meet its total operating costs.
21	<b>Average number of days lost through sickness</b>	<i>Average number of days lost, per employee, through sickness absence.</i>  Purpose: to measure changes in the level of sick leave among the workforce.
22	<b>Energy consumption</b>	Average energy consumption per cubic metre of heated building.  Purpose: to measure energy use with a view to observing changes in energy efficiency.

# Appendix 3

## The criteria for what counts as an active website - National Audit Office Report: Government on the Web (HC 87, Session 1999-2000)

The V&A's website  
meets these criteria

- |    |   |        |
|----|---|--------|
| 1  | All information provided is up to date, authoritative, accurate and reliable. It may safely be used by citizens and enterprises in guiding their own decision-making.   | ✓      |
| 2  | Static information, and the agency's home page, are regularly reviewed, revised and re-presented once every six months at least.  | ✓      |
| 3  | The site gives a good basic picture of the agency's work and scope of responsibilities. It communicates current government objectives and strategies for the agency's policy area.  | ✓      |
| 4  | The site provides a full central contact route for the agency (that is: phone, fax, e-mail and postal addresses). Behind the contact route there is an established procedure for logging, distributing and responding to each contact.  | ✓      |
| 5  | The site includes enhanced directory services in some form, to enable citizens or enterprises to find an appropriate phone, fax, and e-mail contact for specific enquiries.   | ✓      |
| 6  | The site provides an immediate e-mail route to the Webmaster for comments about the site itself. These comments or complaints are responded to on a daily or two-daily basis. Complaints about site features not working are tested on external access machines in a variety of configurations, and not just on internal systems.   | ✓      |
| 7  | <p>The site implements 'joined-up government' policies by providing links to related government agencies. The following links are always provided in full:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ who are we accountable to: the 'parent' department or agency;</li> <li>■ agencies we supervise: any 'children' agencies;</li> <li>■ our main partner agencies: other government agencies with which close working relations exist.</li> </ul>   | Partly |
| 8  | The site has reverse links on all the government sites which it itself links to.  | Partly |
| 9  | The site provides a links page to selected recognised non-governmental organisations or company partners with which the agency works closely, in accordance with a centrally set government policy on external links.   | Partly |
| 10 | The site address is included in all letters, correspondence, leaflets and publications of the agency. Agency staff know the site address and can give it accurately and reliably in response to telephone enquiries. Those dealing with enquiries are familiar with the site's layout and can answer questions by phone about the information provided on it. The site address is designed to be memorable or findable by someone who knows the agency's name. The agency takes all appropriate steps to broadcast and develop knowledge of its site address. | ✓      |



# Appendix 4

The V&A's compliance with the Information Technology Excellence Study's criteria for providing information and services on a museum website

Type of information	Explanation	Criteria met by the V&A Museum
About the museum	Background and general history of the museum.	✓
What's new	Recent press releases and information on upcoming events.	✓
Planning a visit	General information on the new, permanent and temporary collections.	✓
General visitor information	Information on museum and gallery hours, fees, tours, disability access, etc.	✓
Research	Information regarding research programmes and opportunities, membership of research centres, research publications, etc.	✗ No information on research programmes or research publications
Archive	Information regarding present archive facilities.	<b>Partly</b> - Only locatable through National Art Library site with no link to specific pages from V&A site. May not be obvious to all visitors.
Library	Information regarding library facilities.	✓
Education and outreach programme	Information regarding education programmes, development programmes for educators, events calendar, latest education and outreach news.	<b>Partly</b> - Information available on gallery education and schools visits. No general information about sessions for educators or community outreach programmes. Relevant events information inadequately linked. No general information on courses programme or cost and limited information on courses in events diary.
Publications	Publication information, such as name and author of publications, where available, etc.	✓
Production (TV and radio)	Information on TV and radio broadcasting, including name and brief description of programmes, when aired, etc.	✗ Museum is not a major producer of TV and radio media.
Public programmes	Information on public programmes such as films, performances, lectures, shows, workshops, demonstrations, etc.	✓
Support services	Information on various support services, such as accessibility service, museum studies (grants, fellowships, etc.), membership, public affairs, development and licensing, etc.	<b>Partly</b> - No information about museum studies courses (for example, V&A / RCA History of Design, RCA / V&A Conservation Programme) and associated grants, fellowships and other training opportunities (for example, internships, work placements).
Affiliation programmes	Information regarding the museum's different affiliations all over the globe.	✓
Online catalogue for shopping	Information regarding the museum's shops and their contents.	✓
Resources	Information regarding the museum's resources, including education, research, accessibility, staff information, etc.	<b>Partly</b> - No information about staff and expertise in different areas.

Type of Service	Explanation	Criteria met by the V&A Museum
What's new	Includes new online and virtual exhibitions, new online publications, new websites.	<b>X</b> No separate defined page although bulletin section gives five features (not necessarily new).
Research	Includes online research resources (articles and papers) and facilities for online submission of research papers.	<b>Partly</b> - No online submission of papers, but National Art Library site has limited online articles and papers.
Archive	Includes online archived collection, online research service on archived collections, online manuscripts, online publications, etc.	✓
Library	Includes online digital collections, electronic journals, internet reference tools, etc.	<b>Partly</b> - Images Online has 2000 images from the collections. No electronic journals or internet reference tools.
Education and outreach programmes	Includes interactive educational resources, online forms, etc.	<b>Partly</b> - Online teaching resources available, but no interactive educational programmes for children.
Online publications	Includes online publications and facility to subscribe to online publications.	<b>Partly</b> - Some on National Art Library site, but not substantial. No subscriptions to V&A journals or other publications.
Public programmes	Services provided by online entry and booking forms.	✓
Support services	Services provided via online membership application forms, job application forms, etc.	<b>X</b> V&A site has no online membership system or vacancy pages with downloadable application forms for current positions (latter is currently under development).
Online catalogue for shopping	Transaction facilities for online shopping.	✓
Resources	Includes online educational and general resources, including online staff phone directory, forms for grants, fellowships, researchers, etc.	<b>Partly</b> - Online teaching resources available. No online staff phone directory, just general contacts, and no forms for grants / fellowships.
Search	Online search facilities of the web site.	<b>X</b> No search facilities.
Navigation/encyclopaedia	Online links to resources from A to Z.	<b>X</b> No quick index system.
Links to other websites	Relevant links to other museums and government bodies.	<b>Partly</b> - Current links to 24-hour Museum and National Grid for Learning. There is a link from the V&A site to the National Art Library site but not vice versa. The National Art Library site contains some information links. The Canon Photography Gallery microsite has links to other museums and galleries and institutions. The 'Art Nouveau 1890-1914' exhibition site contains some relevant links relating to the exhibition.