

**Merton Local Authority (LA).**

**Alternative Education Quality Assurance (QA) Report.**

**SILC Training.**

**Date- 20th January 2022.**

**Introduction**

In line with the procedures regarding the cross borough quality assurance of alternative education providers, LA officers from Croydon, Merton and Wandsworth Councils carried out a QA visit to SILC Training.

Activities included: reviews of health and safety and safeguarding procedures, discussions with senior members of staff regarding the key areas in the quality assurance framework, observations of teaching sessions (which included discussions with pupils and a tutor), reviewing pupils’ work.

SILC Training offers provision for pupils in a range of construction-based courses. Some courses are accredited e.g. City and Guilds; some courses are internally accredited. Currently, there are 10 pupils per session who access this provision.

**Summary of findings**

**Safeguarding**

* Leaders have established robust safeguarding procedures. An experienced DSL ensures that all pupils receive tuition in a safe environment.
* The site is safe and secure, and access to the site is managed very effectively.
* The provider has clear and appropriate safer recruitment process. This ensures that all staff undergo thorough checks before they are employed.
* Safeguarding training for staff is updated regularly. All staff are kept up to date with changes to current guidance.
* There are effective communication lines between the provider and parents/carers. In addition, the provider contacts home schools, on a daily basis, to update them about their pupils who attend SILC Training.

**Health and safety**

* Appropriate insurance policies are in place, for example, public liability insurance cover is in place, and key policy certificates are on display.
* Risk assessments are clear, and cover working in a construction environment and working with hazardous materials. Fire extinguishers are checked at appropriate time-intervals.
* All pupils complete a health and safety questionnaire, to ensure that they understand the nature of the provision and any associated risks.
* The learning environment is very clean and pleasant. There are posters around the site providing access details relating to safeguarding and wellbeing.
* Pupils are aware of who they should go to if they are concerned about each other or themselves. They are also aware of who they should go to if they have a first aid need.
* Fire exit routes are not always clearly marked e.g. some signage is missing information about key internal and external exit points.

**Quality of education**

* Pupils with an SEND are well supported by staff. Each pupil is assessed for their ability, with courses assigned accordingly and in close communication with the home school.
* Tutoring sessions are well planned, with activities that enable all pupils to develop appropriate skills and knowledge in lessons. However, there are not regular opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
* Pupils are assessed regularly through their course in the form of practicals and written assessments.
* Tutors provide clear and on-going support to pupils in lessons. This helps pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.
* Pupils can explain the skills they are developing e.g. in plastering, and how they use their prior knowledge to complete current learning tasks. They discuss, with confidence, the skills and knowledge they are acquiring.
* Pupils have the opportunity to undertake accredited courses e.g. City and Guilds Awards. In 2021, all pupils left with some form of an accredited qualification, and still remain on courses in a range of FE colleges.
* Pupils progress to sustained post-16 destinations. The provider also ensures they monitor the progress of former pupils, who are now at local FE colleges.

**Personal development and behaviour**

* There is a policy which contains some guidelines regarding the expected behaviour of pupils; the policy is not always clear about any relevant sanctions and rewards. There have been no pupil suspensions this academic year.
* The attendance of pupils is good, with only 2 pupils being absent on the day of the visit, for legitimate reasons. Pupils are punctual to lessons, keen to start completing their daily tasks.
* In observing lessons, pupils are engaged and focused on completing their work to a high standard. Pupils work with well in pairs, supporting each other’s learning.
* Pupils are supported with their next steps in education and employment. This includes visits to colleges, and support in completing relevant application forms.
* Pupils can explain the support they receive on how they know how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

**Leadership and management**

* There is a DSL and a deputy DSL, who provide support for tutors who need to raise any concerns.
* An effective induction process is in place for all staff.
* Lessons delivered by tutors are monitored by managers on a continuous basis.
* There is a self-assessment process which identifies the strengths and some key areas of development for the provision.
* Feedback from home schools is very positive. One school stated “we have worked with SILC Training for many years and have been more than happy with them as an alternative provider. They are consistent and professional and have a huge positive impact on the pupils’ development”.
* There are a number of appropriate policies in place. Some of these are in need of a review and updating.
* Currently, there is no system in place which provides an overview of the progress and personal development/behaviour of pupils.

**Student entitlement and post-16 engagement**

* There is a routine process for induction of new pupils. This includes information about policies and procedures.
* Pupils are well supported in making informed choices about their next steps in education and employment.

**Conclusion**

As a result of the QA process, SILC Training will now be placed on the approved lists of alternative education providers at Croydon, Merton and Wandsworth Councils until January 2024 (subject to the guidelines specified in the QA handbook). This information may also be shared with other relevant colleagues in local authorities.