

Pioneering pupils succeed in workplace tests

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Ten school pupils are celebrating passing the first stage of a pioneering programme that gives them a chance to start their careers.

The 14 to 16-year-olds from Lilian Baylis Technology School, Kennington, have received National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in skills for the hospitality industry as part of pilot Apprenticeships for school pupils.

Parents, employers, teachers and trainers joined the pupils at a certificate-giving ceremony on July 6, at St Giles Hotel, Bedford Avenue, just off Oxford Street.

The pilot Young Apprenticeships aim to broaden pupils' pathways into careers by offering them high quality, vocational skills and work experience as well as academic courses.

Adele Oxberry of the training provider, HIT Training, commented: "The pupils deserve congratulations for what they've achieved and I'm sure that their parents can be proud of them.

"Employers and teachers are saying how this programme has made a big difference to their attitudes and maturity in comparison with other pupils. And the pupils themselves are saying how much they've benefited from it."

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) teamed up with HIT Training and Westminster Kingsway College, to bring about the innovative programme.

The pupils spend two days a week doing vocational training and work experience at St Giles Hotel. They have just completed their first year and after their second year will complete NVQ Level 2 or diplomas in professional cookery, food hygiene, health and safety and other subjects.

They are among 350 pupils involved in the Young Apprenticeship programme managed by LSC in London's inner city boroughs. It is in its third year and the LSC is working towards rolling it out across the country in the future.

Sean McMahon, 14-19 Director at London LSC said: "We're pleased with the pilot and with what's happening here because it will help change the notion that vocational study can't be for high ability pupils.

"We want schools to be able to offer pupils with high ability Young Apprenticeship programmes as well as traditional academic subjects. These programmes will give pupils the choice to either continue academic study or go into work. And it's been shown that people who start at a company as an apprentice often end up as senior managers there.

"So, not only will this training help young people gain more control over their future, it will also help businesses and organisation become more productive and help the growth of London's economy. It's a win-win-win situation."

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For further information and attendance requests please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

Pilot Young Apprenticeship programme

From 2004, the LSC in London has been financially supporting a two-year, pilot Young Apprenticeship programme for 14 to 16-year-olds. The aim is to develop vocational courses in schools that would attract pupils who are academically able. The Apprenticeship programme is delivered by Westminster Kingsway College and HIT Training. Pupils graduate with an NVQ Level 2 giving them professional skills in cookery, cleaning, health and safety, reception and administration duties. A Level 2 qualification is equivalent to gaining 5 good GCSEs. Five schools are currently involved in the programme and this is likely to increase in the future.

Westminster Kingsway College and HIT Training

The LSC commissioned Westminster Kingsway College to offer Young Apprenticeship programmes in Hospitality & Catering. The college has worked with HIT Training to offer a wider range of professional cookery courses and to involve more schools. HIT selected pupils from Lilian Baylis Technology School and also selected St Giles Hotel as a work placement. The pupils have gained NVQ Multi-skilled Level 1 and will go on to do Level 2. For further details for Westminster Kingsway College, telephone 0870 060 9800 or email courseinfo@westking.ac.uk.

HIT Training works nationally as a specialist hospitality training provider. They offer training to young apprentices within all 33 boroughs in London as well as adult training through the LSC service, Train to Gain. HIT Training's website is www.hittraining.co.uk and telephone is 020 7953 3842.

LSC

The Learning and Skills Council exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.