



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER  
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

**BRITISH RACING SCHOOL**

**(REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1161555)**

Full Name	<b>British Racing School</b>
Address	Snailwell Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 7NU
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Email Address	duncan.gregory@brs.org.uk
Website	www.brs.org.uk
Principal	Mr Grant Harris
Proprietor	Trustees of the British Racing School
Age Range	14+
Total number of students	241
Numbers by age and type of study	16 – 18: 182 18+: 59 FE only: 241
Inspection dates	<b>29 June – 01 July 2021</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges and, by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3 THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS</b>	<b>4</b>
(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival	4
(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum	4
(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning	5
(d) Attainment and progress	6
<b>4 STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	<b>7</b>
(a) Health, safety and security of the premises	7
(b) Student registration and attendance records	7
(c) Pastoral support for students	8
(d) Safeguarding for under 18s	8
(e) Residential accommodation	9
<b>5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
(a) Ownership and oversight	10
(b) Management structures and responsibilities	10
(c) Quality assurance including student feedback	11
(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks	11
(e) Provision of information	11
<b>6 ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>INSPECTION EVIDENCE</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 The British Racing School (BRS) is a registered charity overseen by a board of trustees. It was established in 1983 in Newmarket, Suffolk to provide training to promote and encourage young people to ride as professional jockeys. The school's aim is to provide a range of training of the highest standard to meet the needs of the racing industry, and to meet the needs of its learners.
- 1.2 The main provision of the school is foundation training. Under the rules of racing it is mandatory that young people under the age of 19 complete pre-employment training. BRS provides this as a 6, 12 or 18-week residential foundation course depending on students' experience and capability. Intermediate and advanced apprenticeship courses in Racehorse Care and Management are also provided. In addition a 6-week ground based yard staff course is offered for those wishing to work in yards but not in a riding capacity.
- 1.3 The school also provides a range of specialised programmes for the racing industry, professional and amateur jockey courses, courses for prospective trainers, racing secretaries and supervisory management training. In association with local schools BRS offers a flexible learning programme for students aged 14–16.
- 1.4 The school in conjunction with Hartpury University, has developed a Foundation Degree in Racing, to be delivered jointly from September 2021.
- 1.5 At the time of inspection there were 241 students registered and all are from the United Kingdom. The majority are female. The school has identified 50 students with language and learning difficulties or disabilities. Students are recruited throughout the year and are selected on the basis of meeting published entry requirements.
- 1.6 The British Racing School was last inspected in March 2019, when it met all Key Standards and the quality of education was judged to exceed expectations.

## 2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The school exceeds expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is excellent.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. The curriculum is very well designed to meet the needs of trainees and the horseracing industry. The courses on offer to trainees on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance. Pre-course assessment of applicants' fitness, horse riding experience and aptitude is effective in placing trainees on the most suitable course. Instructors use this assessment information well to identify trainees' needs and to make appropriate provision for support. However, a few trainees with limited schooling prior to starting the course are in need of additional tuition in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are excellent. Instructors are well qualified including those responsible for trainees with learning difficulties or disabilities. Almost all trainees complete their course successfully and progress onto employment in the horseracing industry. Instructors monitor trainees' progress carefully and provide rapid and constructive feedback to help them improve.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is excellent. Highly effective arrangements are in place to ensure the safety of trainees and staff. Staff undertake thorough risk assessments and place significant emphasis on developing safe working practices. Premises are of a very high quality and provide a professional environment within, which trainees can learn to safely ride and care for racehorses. The school maintains an accurate admission register and an accurate attendance register. The school has appropriate arrangements for reporting to the Home Office when required. Pastoral care, support and guidance for trainees are of a very high quality. Arrangements for safeguarding are excellent. Residential accommodation for trainees is of a high quality.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is excellent. The trustees have a good working knowledge of the school and provide thorough oversight through their committee structure. They monitor the school's performance effectively and provide excellent support and challenge for managers. Leadership and management are excellent. Leaders are highly effective in meeting the demands of the horseracing industry and the needs of the trainees in line with the aims of the school. Leaders and managers are very successful in securing highly qualified staff with good horseracing experience who are suitable to work with students under the age of 18. Quality assurance is excellent. Managers are very successful in identifying and implementing areas for improvement. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are excellent.

### **3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS**

#### **3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival**

- 3.1 Assessment of trainees prior to or on arrival is excellent. Accurate information, advice and guidance on the career opportunities and the demands of the horseracing industry are provided through the website and during an interview day. Trainees have a very good understanding of the practical challenges of being responsible for the welfare of a horse.
- 3.2 The school undertakes an accurate assessment of trainees' fitness, horse riding experience and aptitude for the racehorse industry to ensure that trainees are placed on the most appropriate course. Applicants with limited or no equestrian background or experience follow the 18-week programme with alternative options for those with more experience undertaking a 6 or 12-week course. Instructors use this assessment information effectively in lesson planning and in practical instruction to ensure that students ride safely with the most suitable horses.
- 3.3 The school conducts effective assessment of trainees' English and mathematics skills that identifies any additional support needs. In addition, an assessment is undertaken to help identify a trainee's learning strengths and weaknesses. When an area of need is identified, a support plan is drawn up and reasonable adjustments are made for the trainee to help ensure their success. A few trainees, with limited formal education prior to starting their course, would benefit from more time devoted to improving their English and mathematics.
- 3.4 Trainees make self-declaration of any learning needs or disabilities, which are used effectively by instructors and managers to plan appropriate support.

#### **3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum**

- 3.5 The school's course provision and curriculum are excellent. The school has a very clear statement of educational purpose supported by well-planned schemes of work, which are used effectively and consistently by instructors. The curriculum is appropriately informed by the requirements of the horseracing industry. It is designed effectively and successfully ensures that trainees are able to develop the skills and knowledge required to achieve their goals of embarking on a career in horseracing.
- 3.6 The range of courses available is good and closely matched to the trainees' horse riding skills and horse care experience. Trainees thrive and grow in confidence quickly in working with horses due to the close attention paid to their individual capabilities and the support provided for them. As a result, almost all trainees successfully complete their course and progress into employment in racing yards.
- 3.7 Courses are very clearly and accurately described on the school's website and in discussion at interview. Trainees are fully aware of the nature of the course and the

way in which a typical day at the school has been designed to align with the demands of a racing yard. The courses on offer to trainees on Student visas meet the definition of an approved qualification as set out in the Home Office guidance.

### **3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning**

- 3.8 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning are excellent. Instructors have outstanding subject knowledge and a very wide range of experiences of the horseracing industry. They use this knowledge effectively to enliven the training and add authenticity to their well-prepared lessons.
- 3.9 Instructors make good use of highly effective teaching methods to demonstrate techniques and coach trainees in riding and horse care. For example, while trainees are cantering, instructors keep in radio contact while driving alongside them and provide coaching input. Videos of the riding are taken and viewed to help further develop trainees' techniques. Instructors place a strong focus on guiding trainees to approach horses in a safe manner within a potentially hazardous environment.
- 3.10 Staff monitor closely trainees' behaviour, punctuality and practical skills in undertaking tasks such as tacking up, horse grooming, riding, yard work and mucking out. In doing so, instructors show a good understanding of the aptitudes, backgrounds, needs and prior attainment of the trainees. Instructors ensure that this understanding of their trainees is taken into account in planning the learning. Instructors quickly identify any trainees who fall behind, and work effectively to enable them to catch up.
- 3.11 Training takes place within an environment of mutual respect and tolerance. Trainees from a range of backgrounds learn well together in a supportive manner. The training does not undermine fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and does not discriminate against students in any way.
- 3.12 Instructors provide rapid and constructive feedback on all practical activities. As a result trainees make rapid progress developing the skills and attitudes needed to succeed within a racing yard. Staff use this awareness of the particular strengths of trainees linked with their knowledge of the requirements of different racing yards in order to guide trainees when seeking to arrange their job placement.
- 3.13 Instructors link the theory in the classroom to the practical skills developed in the stables and riding areas very well. As a result trainees develop a deep understanding and can apply their learning in the classroom to handling and riding horses.
- 3.14 Course are very well planned and monitored by managers to ensure consistency. Lesson observations and assessment of trainees' practical and written work demonstrate that trainees are working to a high standard that meets the requirements of the horseracing industry. Trainees are very enthusiastic about their learning and the progress that they are making.



**3.(d) Attainment and progress**

- 3.15 Attainment and progress are excellent. Trainees make very good progress from their starting points. Course achievement is outstanding. Almost all trainees complete and all completers pass their foundation course. A few have to stop their training due to injury. In the past two years all of the apprentices have passed their end point assessment. Progression into the industry is extremely high with almost all trainees progressing into employment within a racing yard.

## **4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises**

- 4.1 Health, safety and the security of the premises are excellent. Staff place significant emphasis on safety within the potentially hazardous industry of horseracing. Thorough risk assessments are undertaken for the yard, the hostel and offices and the activities undertaken. These are reviewed annually. The school has developed an ethos of safety first and trainees are encouraged to reflect on safe working practices.
- 4.2 Fire and emergency procedures are excellent. They are clear and well published with appropriate signage. Staff are well trained and supported by the rigorous policies and procedures to use safe working practices in stables, yards and riding areas. Fire protection equipment is up to date and well maintained and regularly checked by external contractors. Trainees are clear about the fire safety procedures and undertake a fire drill during their induction week.
- 4.3 Arrangements for first aid are excellent. All instructors are trained first aiders and their training is kept up to date. In addition, a nurse is based on the site with radio access to instructors so that she can respond rapidly in the event of a fall from a horse. Managers analyse accident data carefully and implement an accident mitigation plan.
- 4.4 Premises are of an extremely high quality and provide trainees with a safe and professional environment within which to learn to ride and care for racehorses. Teaching areas are accessible to students with restricted mobility. Classrooms are equipped with appropriate fittings and furniture for the age and needs of all trainees. The lighting, heating, ventilation and sound insulation are very good and create a comfortable environment for learning. Practical areas are very well designed and constructed to a high standard. All areas are clean and very well maintained. Food preparation and service areas are hygienic. Trainees help to maintain the stables as part of their training. An appropriate number of washrooms are available which are well maintained. Trainees are provided with free drinking water.
- 4.5 The school has effective security arrangements including the use of closed circuit television.

### **4.(b) Student registration and attendance records**

- 4.6 Registration and attendance records are excellent. Information recorded on registration records is accurate and conforms to data protection legislation. There are currently no trainees from overseas. However, the school staff are fully aware of the reporting procedures to notify the Home Office for trainees studying under the Student visa route who fail to enrol or whose attendance does not meet requirements. There are clear arrangements for the fair collection and refund of fees and deposits and bursary schemes are available to help those in need of financial support.

- 4.7 The school maintains highly accurate records of attendance. Procedures to monitor absentees on a day-to-day basis are highly effective. Staff know exactly where the trainees are at any given point. Levels of attendance are outstanding.

#### **4.(c) Pastoral support for students**

- 4.8 Pastoral support is excellent. Trainees receive a highly effective induction on entry to the school to ensure that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they should have any concerns. Trainees feel very well supported throughout the course. Learning takes place within an environment of mutual respect. For a few trainees this was the first time they had left home and the life skills they have developed while at the school prove invaluable.
- 4.9 Highly effective systems and well-trained staff provide outstanding support and guidance for trainees. Learning support needs are identified early on in the trainees' programme and high quality support is provided to help ensure success. Relationships between staff and students and amongst students are excellent.
- 4.10 Trainees receive excellent advice and guidance to help them progress into employment within a racing yard. High quality careers advice is provided throughout the course that includes carefully matching up trainees with the most appropriate racing yards for their future employment.

#### **4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s**

- 4.11 Arrangements for safeguarding are excellent. Safeguarding has an extremely high profile within management and the trustees. Trainees of all ages confirm that they feel safe and secure within the school. An effective safeguarding policy with appropriate procedures is implemented within the school. Safeguarding procedures are comprehensive and well understood by staff and trainees. The school has a designated safeguarding lead trained to the appropriate level. Training is provided for all staff and updated regularly. The school has thorough procedures for identifying and reporting incidents.
- 4.12 The school is the national lead on safeguarding within the horseracing industry and provides advice and guidance to the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), the governing body for racing. Staff are proactive in assessing risks and implementing procedures to mitigate risks.
- 4.13 Thorough arrangements are in place for checks to be carried out on all staff prior to confirmation of appointment. Appropriate details of checks are included on a single central record.
- 4.14 The school has a clear online safety policy. Trainees are clear about the need to adopt safe behaviours and good online safety practice when using digital technologies.

**4.(e) Residential accommodation**

- 4.15 Residential accommodation is excellent. All trainees are accommodated on site in secure, good quality facilities that meet statutory requirements. The accommodation is well managed and supported by resident wardens. The residential accommodation is very secure.
- 4.16 The accommodation plays a significant role in the trainees' education and personal development in promoting skills for independent living. This is important because most trainees aspire to work in racing yards away from home. Trainees are responsible for maintaining their own rooms in good order and for cleaning communal areas, which are inspected regularly. Trainees learn to cook and sew as part of their training.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **5.(a) Ownership and oversight**

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are excellent. The board of trustees are fully involved in their governance role and provide excellent oversight of the school. They have a good understanding of the working of the school and help shape its strategic direction.
- 5.2 Trustees' involvement with the school is excellent. Through the active role of the board's committee structure the board members monitor educational standards, safeguarding arrangements and financial planning. Trustees are successful in securing funding from a variety of sources to invest in the training environment, ensuring it is equipped to a very high standard. The board members include those with considerable experience in the horseracing industry and are able to use this knowledge to provide support and challenge for managers. The former chair of the board, who is now a patron, follows one cohort of learners each year to check on the quality of their experience from induction to graduation.
- 5.3 The trustees are effective in ensuring that the school complies fully with requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and welfare. This includes fulfilling their statutory requirements for students under the age of 18. The trustees ensure that the school has in place all legal permissions.

### **5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities**

- 5.4 Management structures and responsibilities are excellent. An effective management structure, led by a senior management team has a constructive relationship with the board of trustees. Leaders and managers are very ambitious for their trainees and are successful in pursuing excellence. They are effective in motivating staff and trainees to achieve excellent results. Trainees as a result, are keen to achieve and are very successful in meeting their goals and progressing into the horseracing industry.
- 5.5 Leaders have close links with the horseracing industry and are effective in meeting its demands. The Chief Executive meets regularly with employers, often visiting their yards to better understand their needs and what the school can improve on. Leadership and management are analytical and self-critical in their self-evaluation. They identify areas for development and set targets for improvement in their quality improvement plan that they monitor carefully.
- 5.6 Leaders and managers are very successful in securing well-qualified staff with very good experience of working in horseracing. Staff have clear job descriptions and a good understanding of the aims and ethos of the school. Staff receive good support to ensure that they are appropriately trained to meet the needs of trainees to a high standard in welfare, health and safety and safeguarding. All new instructors shadow the complete training of a cohort before they start training.

**5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback**

- 5.7 Quality management is excellent. It is very successful in identifying areas for improvement through effective performance management. Performance is effectively tracked through monthly management meetings, quarterly quality improvement meetings and during trustee meetings.
- 5.8 The school makes very good use of the regular collection and analysis of trainee feedback to contribute to action planning. Trainees speak very highly about the school and the support that they receive. Trainee achievement data is recorded, analysed and reported on.
- 5.9 The school uses an excellent staff appraisal strategy that is informed by information derived from lesson observation, trainees' feedback and self-evaluation. Staff value the annual appraisal that is used well to identify staff development needs and opportunities for career development.
- 5.10 The school has an appropriate complaints policy. The procedure provides for written records to be kept and allows for external arbitration should internal resolution not be achieved. There is no provision for a fee protection scheme.

**5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks**

- 5.11 Staff recruitment is excellent. The school attracts highly qualified staff with very good experience of the horseracing industry. Staff retention is high. The appointments process is thorough. All appropriate checks are made to confirm the identity of staff, their qualifications and experience prior to confirmation of appointment. Details of all checks are recorded accurately and retained securely in accordance with Data Protection legislation.

**5.(e) Provision of information**

- 5.12 The provision of information is excellent. Detailed information is available through the School's website to describe accurately the courses available and the careers that they can lead onto. The website includes a professionally produced video tour of the school and its facilities to help inform prospective trainees and their parents of the suitability of the school. All standards for the provision of information are met. The school provided all of the information requested by the inspectors in a timely manner.

## 6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations for further improvement

In order to further improve the excellent quality provided, the school should:

- Ensure that trainees with limited prior schooling are provided with additional support in English and mathematics.

## INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of the board of trustees. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

### Inspectors

Mr Roger Pilgrim	Lead Inspector
Ms Margaret Arokiasamy	Team Inspector