

# South Yorkshire Training Trust (Northern Racing College)

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 54505

**Name of lead inspector:** Phil Romain HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 15 October 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** The Stables  
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## Information about the provider

1. The South Yorkshire Training Trust is a charitable organisation limited by guarantee and established in 1984. The Northern Racing College (NRC) is the training arm of the Trust and is one of only two dedicated horse racing schools in the country. Set in the grounds of Rossington Hall between Bawtry and Doncaster, NRC is a fully equipped training centre with a purpose-built residential unit which can accommodate up to 42 people.
2. NRC offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in racehorse care. These programmes are funded by the Skills Funding Agency and the Young People’s Funding Agency. Most learners start on a twelve-week full-time residential course before moving into employment in the horse racing industry and starting an apprenticeship. NRC provides a wide range of specialist courses for the racing industry. Government-funded provision accounts for about two-thirds of the provider’s business. NRC was last inspected in May 2006.
3. NRC recruits learners nationally. Work placements are mostly in rural areas where unemployment rates are lower than the national average. Only 18% of learners start their training having achieved five or more subjects at grade C or above in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). This is significantly lower than the national average of over 50%.

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10</b>
<b>Provision for young learners:</b> Further education (16 to 18)	98 full-time learners
<b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Further education (19+)	19 full-time learners
<b>Employer provision:</b> Apprenticeships	224 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Subject Areas</b>	
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	2

## Overall effectiveness

4. The overall effectiveness of NRC's provision is good. Directors and managers have a clear focus on the success of the organisation and monitor its performance well. The governance of the programme is good. Success rates, with the exception of advanced apprentices in 2009/10, are high and above national average. Learners develop a thorough understanding of how to work safely around horses and feel safe. In the workplace they take good advantage of the wide range of opportunities to develop their competence, confidence and skills, and are highly valued by their employers.
5. Learners enjoy their training and speak highly of their experiences. They are well trained by experienced and knowledgeable trainers in a wide range of high-quality racing environments. NRC's programmes meet the needs and interests of employers and their learners very well.
6. Arrangements to safeguard learners are good. The well-being of learners is a high priority for NRC and it actively promotes healthy living and safety both at work and beyond. Equality and diversity are promoted well and NRC is very successful in recruiting and supporting learners from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities.

## **Main findings**

- Outcomes for learners are good. A high proportion of learners successfully complete their apprenticeship or advanced apprenticeship. Success rates for the full-time course are also high, as are those for key skills. Progression into employment is good.
- Learners develop good practical and work-related skills. In the workplace they take good advantage of the wide range of opportunities to develop their competence, confidence and skills, and they are highly valued by their employers. Learners develop a good range of skills and knowledge which enable them to make healthy dietary choices and maintain fitness, in addition to helping them to live independently.
- Teaching and learning are good on the full-time residential course. Teachers develop an excellent rapport with learners and make good use of their wide experience of the industry. Practical teaching is particularly effective. However, training and assessment in the workplace are less effective.
- Learners receive very effective assessment of their additional learning needs. However, they get insufficient support in the workplace to improve their literacy skills. Too often learners struggle to produce written evidence because assessors do not always provide alternative methods of assessment.
- Programmes meet the needs and interests of both learners and employers exceptionally well. NRC has carefully planned its programmes to equip learners with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the industry. NRC provides a good range of additional short courses which ensure there are good opportunities for progression within the industry.
- NRC makes excellent use of its partnerships with employers and its knowledge of the industry to ensure that learners train in a wide range of high-quality racing environments and are supported well. However, employers are insufficiently involved in planning individual training and often they are only superficially involved in progress reviews.
- Learners receive excellent care, guidance and support. NRC pays particularly close attention to ensuring that learners make a smooth transition into work and independent living. Staff, in particular wardens and the welfare officer, excel in providing comprehensive and effective support.
- Leadership and management are good. Trustees, managers and staff share a strong commitment to raising standards for learners and improving performance. Trustees provide good oversight and direction; they have a good range of experience in business and the horse-racing industry. Opportunities for staff development are good and closely matched to the needs of learners.
- NRC's arrangements for safeguarding are good. Health and safety has a high priority and learners feel safe. Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for staff are in place. Arrangements to safeguard learners in residential accommodation are particularly good but arrangements to check the welfare of learners in work are under-developed.

- NRC's approach to equality and diversity is good. It is very effective in widening participation, providing good opportunities for non-riders and those with little or no experience with horses. Staff receive regular training and data are used well to monitor and inform planning. Revised arrangements to extend learners' knowledge during progress reviews have yet to have an impact.
- NRC's approach to quality assurance and improving performance is good. NRC has a well-planned programme of observations and data from these activities are monitored to assure conformity. However, these activities do not always result in sufficiently detailed feedback to staff to help them to improve further. NRC's use of data to track and monitor learners' progress is outstanding.
- NRC provides good value for money. Outcomes are good and learners are well-prepared for employment in the industry. Facilities are good and used well, although some are in need of refurbishment. Learners work in good, and often excellent, work placements. Financial management is strong.

### **What does NRC need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the planning and quality of training in the workplace by better involving employers, clearer target setting and providing more detailed feedback to learners on their performance and how they can improve.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of assessment in the workplace by using a wider range of assessment methods and evidence of performance.
- Better help for learners in the workplace to help them improve their literacy skills by correcting mistakes in their writing, providing feedback on how they can improve and encouraging a better standard of writing and presentation in their written work.
- Continue to improve the safeguarding of learners in the workplace by closer monitoring of employers' commitment and learners' working conditions through the regular progress reviews.
- Improve learners' knowledge of equality and diversity by fully implementing revised systems to monitor and develop their knowledge during progress reviews in the workplace.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and assessment by providing teachers and assessors with more detailed feedback on how they can improve and by sharing good practice.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the really good teaching from friendly and helpful teachers
- the friendly, supportive and very experienced staff
- the full-time programme that prepares them well for employment in the industry
- being taught the skills they need to live independently

- being very well supported and that help is just a 'phone call away at any time of day or night
- riding the horses.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- understanding more about what goes on at the races during the full-time course
- the planning and organisation so they are clearer about what they are supposed to be doing
- having more feedback on their performance, particularly their riding skills
- more time on the simulators
- more time riding
- riding sessions being split according to ability so that more advanced riders can progress quicker.

**Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors**

**What employers like:**

- NRC's positive response to requests and suggestions for improvement
- the skills and knowledge that learners gain
- the very flexible and supportive programme
- the extra training provided for learners when they need it
- learners' commitment and knowledge when they start in the yards.

**What employers would like to see improved:**

- more involvement in discussing learners' progress rather than just completing paperwork.

## **Main inspection report**

### **Capacity to make and sustain improvement**

**Grade 2**

7. NRC's capacity to make and sustain improvement is good. The provision is good, with a few aspects that are outstanding. Success rates are high and improving, although there has been a sharp fall in performance for advanced apprenticeships in 2009/10. NRC has comprehensive systems and procedures to monitor the quality of provision but it does not always make sufficient use of these activities to promote and foster improvements in teaching and learning and in workplace assessment. NRC listens carefully to its users and responds positively to suggestions for improvement. Staff development is targeted at improving learners' experiences and many staff are developing advanced teaching skills. NRC has maintained the majority of the key strengths identified at the last inspection although a few of the weaknesses remain.
8. NRC has an effective and inclusive self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is honest and evaluative and leads to a clear action plan. Data to inform self-assessment are comprehensive, accurate and used well to form judgements. The self-assessment report accurately identifies most of the areas for improvement.
9. NRC monitors business performance carefully and makes very good use of data on learners' performance. The quality improvement plan, which contains relevant areas for improvement, is effectively monitored and its implementation is progressing well.

### **Outcomes for learners**

**Grade 2**

10. Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates for apprentices have been high and improving during the three years 2006/07 to 2008/09 and are well above the national average. Timely success rates have also improved during this period and are ten percentage points above the national average. However, provisional data for 2009/10 indicate that while success rates for apprentices have continued to improve, the overall and timely success rates for advanced apprentices have fallen significantly and are now low. Over 90% of learners achieve their key skills during the residential course and the first-time pass rate is high. Progression to an apprenticeship from the full-time course is good, as is progression into employment.
11. Overall success rates for men and women are similar. However, significantly fewer men, who typically start with much lower GCSE results, complete on time. Learners with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities perform slightly less well than the total cohort.
12. Learners develop good practical and work-related skills. They develop a thorough understanding of how to work safely around horses and feel safe. Learners, including those who start with no previous experience of horses,

quickly develop the ability to ride a thoroughbred at speed. In the workplace they take good advantage of the wide range of opportunities to develop their competence, confidence and skills which employers value highly. Learners develop a good range of skills and knowledge which enable them to make healthy dietary choices and maintain fitness, in addition to helping them to live independently.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

13. Teaching and learning are good on the residential course. Trainers develop an excellent rapport with learners and make good use of their wide experience of the racing industry in their teaching. Learners enjoy learning and make good individual progress. Practical teaching in both riding and stable management is particularly effective. Resources to support teaching and learning are excellent.
14. Training and assessment in the workplace are satisfactory. Assessment meets the requirements of the qualification but learners are not always aware when assessment is to take place and they receive insufficient feedback about the quality of their work. Assessors in the workplace do not routinely correct written work and do not clearly indicate how learners can improve their literacy and communication skills. Too often learners struggle to produce written evidence and assessors do not always consider alternative methods of assessment.
15. NRC staff review learners' progress regularly. Reviews for learners on the residential course are thorough and trainers make good use of opportunities to check and reinforce learners' well-being. Progress reviews in the workplace are less effective. They do not always involve the employer and learners are not always clear about what they need to do to meet targets.
16. NRC's programmes meet the needs and interests of learners and employers exceptionally well. NRC has carefully planned its programmes to equip learners with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the industry and to work safely with horses. It provides a good range of additional short courses which ensures there are good opportunities for progression within the industry.
17. NRC makes excellent use of its partnerships to benefit learners. NRC's knowledge of the industry ensures that learners train in a wide range of high-quality racing environments and receive good support. Good partnership working with industry bodies helps to ensure that learners acquire a wide and effective range of skills and knowledge during the residential course, in addition to helping them establish links with welfare organisations. However, employers are insufficiently involved in planning training to meet the needs of the national vocational qualification.
18. Learners receive outstanding care, guidance and support. Staff, in particular wardens and the welfare officer, excel in providing comprehensive and effective support. Learners' individual needs are sensitively and effectively met. NRC staff pay particular attention to ensuring that learners make a smooth transition into work and independent living. NRC provides good careers advice and guidance.



Learners are encouraged to progress and staff have a good understanding of opportunities available in the industry.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

19. Leadership and management are good. Trustees, managers and staff share a strong commitment to raising standards and improving performance. NRC has developed its training programmes well to match both national and local priorities. Operational management is good. Opportunities for staff development are good and are closely matched to the needs of learners. Management of resources is good and in many cases these resources are excellent.
20. Governance of the programme is good. Trustees provide good and effective oversight, and support managers well. They have rightly concentrated on refocusing the college on the core business of training staff for the industry, following an unsuccessful venture by the previous directors into developing a visitor centre. Trustees have a good range of experience in business and the horse-racing industry and are well informed.
21. NRC's arrangements for safeguarding are good. Health and safety has a high priority and full-time learners have a good understanding of safe working practices. NRC has ensured that staff have had enhanced CRB checks which are recorded in a single central record. Arrangements to safeguard learners in residential accommodation are good. Staff identify with, and respond very effectively to, learners' welfare concerns. They work very well with external agencies and professionals to safeguard learners. NRC equips learners successfully for the transition to independent living through a comprehensive programme of education, including personal finance, cooking and nutrition, drug and alcohol awareness, and sexual health. Arrangements for checking the welfare of learners in work and employers' commitment to safeguarding are under-developed and do not yet adequately monitor some aspects of learners' working and living conditions.
22. NRC's approach to equality and diversity is good. It is effective in recruiting learners from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities, including non-riders, learners from inner cities and travellers. The full-time course is effective in enabling those with little or no previous experience to gain employment in the industry. Disadvantaged learners are given every opportunity to succeed through thoughtful and effective adjustments to working practices and extended programmes. Staff receive regular training in equality and diversity. Learners receive appropriate training in, and comprehensive information about, equality and diversity. NRC uses data well to monitor and manage its recruitment programmes and the performance of different groups. Despite tremendous efforts to encourage more applicants from minority ethnic groups, these groups remain under-represented. New arrangements have been introduced to improve the monitoring and extending of learners' knowledge during progress reviews but these have yet to have an impact. Currently, a few learners have a poor understanding of equality and diversity.

23. NRC engages effectively with its users. Learners' representatives are selected from each full-time course and meet regularly with staff. They report that staff are receptive to their ideas and changes are made in response to their feedback. Regular and frequent feedback is sought from learners and employers and has led to significant improvements in the programmes.
24. NRC's approach to quality assurance and improving performance is good. NRC's tracking of learners' progress is outstanding. Very comprehensive records of learners' achievement and employment enable NRC to track learners' progress very accurately. NRC has a well-planned programme for observing teaching, learning, assessment and other interactions with learners. Data from these activities are analysed to assure conformity. However, most observations and checking of learners' portfolios do not result in sufficiently detailed feedback to staff which would help them to improve further. Standardisation meetings among staff effectively improve teaching. However, they do not adequately cover workplace assessment.
25. NRC provides good value for money. Outcomes for learners are good and success rates are high. Learners are successfully prepared for employment. Facilities are good, although some are in need of refurbishment. Learners work in good, and often excellent, work placements. Financial management is strong.

## **Information about the inspection**

26. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's quality manager as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.
27. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**

**South Yorkshire Training Trust (Northern Racing College)**

**Learning types: 14 – 16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>				
Full-time learners	124	28	5	91
Part-time learners	0	0	0	0
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	2			
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2			
How well do learners progress?	2			
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1			
How safe do learners feel?	2			
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?*</i>	2			
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2			
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1			
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2			
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1			
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>			
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2			
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2			
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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