

# Inspection of National Horseracing College

Inspection dates:

6 to 9 December 2022 and 10  
January 2023**Overall effectiveness****Good**

The quality of education

**Good**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Good**

Education programmes for young people

**Good**

Apprenticeships

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

**Information about this provider**

National Horseracing College (NHC), formerly the Northern Racing College, is a specialist independent learning provider located in Doncaster. It is a charitable organisation and one of two dedicated horseracing schools approved by the British Horseracing Authority (BHA). NHC recruits learners nationally and delivers training for the racing and equine sectors through education programmes for young people and apprenticeships. At the time of the inspection, NHC had 62 learners on a twelve-week residential foundation programme and 26 learners on Doncaster Equine College programmes working towards horse care and racing qualifications at levels 1 to 3. There were 126 apprentices on programmes at levels 2 and 3 in equine and senior equine groom. NHC currently has no subcontracted provision.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Learners and apprentices greatly enjoy their experience at NHC and at their racing yards. They are passionate about the horses in their care and motivated to be successful in a career in horseracing and wider equine sectors. They benefit from very high-quality facilities that replicate those in the sector, and they gain essential practical skills using racehorse and dressage simulators.

Learners and apprentices quickly develop a professional work ethic. They demonstrate high levels of respect for each other, staff and employers, and their behaviour and attendance are exemplary. They build the confidence, character and resilience that they need for sustained employment and are well prepared for the early mornings, outdoor work and residential commitments required of them.

Learners frequently participate in shows, often outside of their curriculum hours, to practise and extend their skills and competencies. Apprentices work effectively alongside experienced staff in the yards and quickly progress to become valued members of the team. Apprentices know how to conduct themselves in a professional manner when representing trainers at public races.

Learners who demonstrate consistent effort and achievement are recognised with an 'on track to achieve' branded gilet. Foundation learners graduate at an awards ceremony that celebrates their achievement as they progress to work experience and apprenticeships. Learners are rightly proud of their achievement and are motivated by their peers and by former learners who have won awards.

Learners and apprentices feel safe at college, when working at their riding yards and in their residential accommodation. They understand the risks when working with horses and consistently adopt safe working practices to ensure that they keep themselves and others safe.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders collaborate highly effectively with employers and national sector organisations to design an ambitious curriculum that provides trained staff for the horseracing and broader equine sectors, locally and nationally. The vast majority of learners and apprentices, including those with additional support needs and from disadvantaged backgrounds, successfully secure sustained employment in the sector.

Leaders and managers plan and sequence the curriculum effectively to enable learners and apprentices to gain a secure understanding of the basic knowledge and skills that they need to care for and ride horses before they move on to more advanced skills, such as safely riding on the gallops. Roving tutors work well with employers to provide coaching that is aligned to workplace needs. When an employer is involved with stud-work, apprentices bring forward their learning

modules related to breeding so that they can apply their learning in a practical context.

Most instructors provide well-planned and interesting sessions and use a range of effective teaching strategies to help learners practise what they have learned. When learners are attempting to lunge horses for the first time, the instructor demonstrates lunging and explains how positive body language is the key to controlling horses. Learners are resilient; they do not give up and keep practising until they have perfected the technique.

Apprentices thrive in the demanding and fast-paced environment of the racing yards and gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their training. Employers ensure that apprentices develop high levels of competence and take on increasing levels of responsibility. Apprentices are encouraged to achieve the highest standards when preparing themselves and the horses for racing, such as ensuring horses are correctly loaded and unloaded from vehicles used for transport to and from races and events. They progress well and achieve at their end-point assessment, with most gaining distinction grades.

Learners and apprentices make rapid progress and quickly master new techniques as a result of the extensive experience and specialist subject knowledge of their teachers. Instructors and tutors use their expertise well to teach learners and apprentices the skills that they need to care professionally for horses and ride safely. Instructors coach learners to ride more expertly, using earpieces and radios to relay helpful information and advice when they are on the gallops.

Tutors ensure that apprentices develop and extend their skills in English and mathematics and successfully apply these skills in their work. Apprentices use specialist terminology with confidence and fluency and calculate measurements for feeding and medication. However, instructors do not consistently correct the spelling and grammatical errors that learners make so that they avoid repeating these errors.

Most instructors and tutors use information from initial assessments well to plan and teach an individualised curriculum. However, tutors do not take account of the prior learning of the few apprentices who have achieved equine qualifications at level 3. Instructors on level 2 programmes do not assess the starting points for the few learners who have already achieved GCSE English and mathematics. There is insufficient adaptation of learning plans for these learners and apprentices to build on and improve the skills that they have already acquired.

Leaders do not assure themselves that apprentices benefit fully from their off-the-job training. Apprentices do not routinely record their off-the-job training and, in a few cases, include activities that are inappropriate. Tutors do not plan off-the-job activities effectively enough to extend and reinforce apprentices' learning.

Learners and apprentices achieve very high levels of participation in work, leading to additional qualifications and activities that extend their skills, knowledge and behaviours. Learners complete courses in emergency first aid, transporting horses

on short journeys and basic knowledge of the horseracing industry. Learners and apprentices complete certificated BHA programmes covering a very wide range of topics.

Staff skilfully support the health and well-being of learners and apprentices through a carefully planned package of pastoral and specialist support that is tailored to individual needs. Learners and apprentices frequently access the services provided by dedicated specialist college staff and sector-wide services provided by Racing Welfare. Staff encourage learners and apprentices to eat healthily and maintain weight levels that enable them to access the careers to which they aspire.

Staff create an inclusive learning environment that promotes respect for difference and equality of opportunity and prepares learners and apprentices well for life in modern Britain. Learners and apprentices complete modules of learning that are regulated and used in the industry, such as autism awareness, diversity and cultural awareness.

Staff prepare learners and apprentices very well for the world of work and provide highly effective advice and guidance on next steps. They ensure that learners know about the wider opportunities in general equine and related sectors if they find racing is not for them. Learners gain insights from experienced professional jockeys and visits to show jumping yards and horse rehabilitation centres.

Learners benefit from carefully planned and extensive work experience that prepares them extremely well for their apprenticeship and for work. Work placements are carefully matched to learners' skills and career aspirations. Learners who complete the foundation programme successfully progress on to the level 2 apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers ensure that teaching staff understand current developments in the racing industry and frequently update their specialist skills. However, tutors do not use the most effective and up-to-date research into teaching approaches to reflect on their teaching practice and develop their expertise. As a result, learners and apprentices do not benefit from consistently high-quality teaching.

Trustees bring a wealth of expertise and sector knowledge that enables them to provide clear strategic direction and rigorous challenge for leaders. They are well informed of the college's performance and use their individual expertise well. They have established an equality and diversity committee to promote wider cultural awareness and contribute to sector-wide developments.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders promote a strong culture of safeguarding in which the safety and well-being of learners and apprentices are prioritised. They have established an appropriate range of safeguarding, 'Prevent' duty and health and safety risk assessments,

policies and procedures. Managers ensure that rigorous arrangements are in place for the recruitment and suitability checks for all staff employed.

Leaders are highly effective in influencing the horseracing sector to set very high standards of safeguarding. In collaboration with the BHA, they have developed safeguarding training, which is now mandatory for employees in licenced racing yards. There are also modules related to sexual harassment and abuse that are integrated into training for staff, learners and apprentices.

Leaders ensure that learners and apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe. Almost all learners and apprentices have a sound understanding of the risks in their local areas and in the horseracing industry, such as gambling, county lines, knife crime, drugs and online safety.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Ensure that instructors and tutors receive continuous professional development to develop expertise in their teaching practice so that learners and apprentices benefit from consistently high-quality teaching.
- Improve the oversight of apprenticeship provision to ensure that apprentices record and benefit from effective off-the-job learning activities.
- Ensure that instructors and tutors use initial assessment effectively so that all learners and apprentices build on and improve from their starting points.
- Ensure that instructors consistently correct learners' spelling and grammatical errors so that learners avoid repeating these errors.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	54505
<b>Address</b>	The Stables Great North Road Rossington Doncaster DN11 0HN
<b>Contact number</b>	01302 861000
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thenhc.co.uk">www.thenhc.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Stephen Padgett OBE
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 to 24 June 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

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