



TRAINING STANDARDS COUNCIL

INSPECTION REPORT JULY TO SEPTEMBER 1998

# The British Racing School

## SUMMARY

The British Racing School offers training in equine studies. Off-the-job training is excellent and is supported by outstanding resources. Trainee support at the school is good, but is not continued in the workplace. Induction is rigorous and well planned, giving trainees a good understanding of the requirements of the industry. All of the racing trainees are guaranteed employment. Management in the school is good, but does not extend to on-the-job training. Equal opportunities are promoted throughout the organisation. The excellent quality assurance procedures are easy to access and are used by all staff.

### GRADES

OCCUPATIONAL AREAS	GRADE
Agriculture	2

GENERIC AREAS	GRADE
Equal opportunities	2
Trainee support	2
Management of training	3
Quality assurance	1

### KEY STRENGTHS

- ◆ excellent off-the-job training programmes
- ◆ well-defined staff structures and responsibilities
- ◆ good use of innovative technology
- ◆ rigorous and well-planned off-the-job induction programmes
- ◆ outstanding quality procedures for off-the-job training
- ◆ good resources for off-the-job training

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no use made of training plans in the workplace
- ◆ weak supervision of trainees in the workplace
- ◆ guidance/information on training and assessment not disseminated to all staff
- ◆ lack of guidance and counselling in the workplace

## INTRODUCTION

1. The British Racing School is a registered charity. It is situated in Newmarket in Suffolk, on a purpose-built site established in 1983. The organisation is the main training provider for the racing industry. The focus of the business is to provide training for stable staff for the horse-racing industry. Training is also provided for flat apprentice and national hunt conditional jockeys, racehorse trainers and racecourse groundsmen. Since 1993, the horse-racing industry has had a mandatory training scheme for all those who enter the industry under the age of 19. Suffolk Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) provides 66 per cent of the school's funding, and the British Horse Racing Training board provides 30 per cent, the remainder being raised through self-funded activities.

2. The stewards of the Jockey Club direct that all stable employees under the age of 19 must join the industry's youth training programmes as trainees and must attend a course at either The British Racing School or the Northern Racing College. This requirement will be waived only in exceptional circumstances acceptable to the stewards of the Jockey Club. Of the 335 trainees who have commenced training at The British Racing School since January 1996, only 48 have been exempted from attending a course.

## INSPECTION FINDINGS

3. The self-assessment report was drawn up by three members of the senior team based at Newmarket. The content of the report exceeded the requirements laid down in *Raising the Standard*. It provided a very detailed view of the organisation and of training at the school, but made no mention of the subcontractor which provides training in stud breeding. Details provided on trainees and placements were comprehensive.

4. A team of three inspectors spent 18 days at the school during July, August and September. They visited 31 racing yards and three stud farms and interviewed 57 racing trainees and 12 trainees in stud breeding. They met managers, instructors, work-placement providers and visiting assessors. They observed 11 assessments, both at the school and in the workplace, including an assessment to establish exemption from the school. They examined company and awarding body documentation.

Grades awarded to instruction sessions

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3	GRADE 4	GRADE 5	TOTAL
Agriculture (equine studies)	3	7	4			14
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>

## OCCUPATIONAL AREAS

### Agriculture (equine studies)

### Grade 2

5. The British Racing School provides training leading to NVQs at levels 1, 2 and 3 in racehorse care. Trainees are recruited nationally and need not have ridden any type of horse before. Trainees are guaranteed employment in the racing stable industry after training at The British Racing School. There are 228 racing trainees on youth training programmes and 16 on modern apprenticeships. Thirty-two trainees are receiving training in stud breeding, which is provided by a subcontractor. Trainees taking the racing option attend The British Racing School for 10 weeks. There are 10 intakes a year, and, at any one time, there are two courses in residence.

6. Residential accommodation is provided on site for all trainees. During this period, training and assessment take place for NVQ level 1 and for half of level 2. At the end of this period, trainees are able to ride an average racehorse at exercise and look after two horses to a good standard of recognised stable management. Facilities at Newmarket are maintained to a very high standard and include stabling for 52 horses. There is an indoor school, along with two all-weather gallops and a variety of grass gallops. Trainees in stud breeding attend a five-week residential

induction programme and are then placed at a suitable stud to train for NVQ level 2. The training centre extends to over 500 acres and has accommodation for over 200 horses. Inspectors agreed with the grade proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ excellent resources and facilities for off-the-job training
- ◆ innovative and effective learning methods
- ◆ excellent information technology facilities for key skills training
- ◆ racing trainees are guaranteed employment

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ no training plans in the racing workplace
- ◆ weak supervision of trainees in the workplace
- ◆ some missed assessment opportunities in the workplace

#### GOOD PRACTICE

*When riding horses on any of the gallops, trainees are equipped with radio headsets. The instructor drives alongside the horse and rider, giving instruction through the handset. There is no shouting, and other trainees are aware of what is going on around them. The riding sessions are recorded on video, so that trainees are able to observe themselves in action.*

7. There is a close correlation between the NVQ specifications and the requirements of the trainees' actual job. As a result, assessment at NVQ levels 1 and 2 can be adequately carried out through observation and verbal questioning. The instructors at The British Racing School have achieved NVQ levels 2 and 3 in racehorse care and some key skills at NVQ level 2, along with assessor units. All have been involved in, or worked in, racing; most have ridden successfully under rules.

8. Training is well planned and structured and is supported by innovative learning opportunities. The excellent facilities allow trainees to meet the programme's targets. A new suite of information technology equipment for training and assessment has been established to provide information technology key skills for all trainees. Radio headsets and videos are used constantly and provide instructors with the ability to improve trainees' riding ability rapidly. This high level of training does not occur in the workplace where there is no clearly planned programme of training and assessment. The lack of an assigned mentor or supervisor who understands the training programme has resulted in poorly supported trainees and assessment opportunities. Excellent opportunities are available in the working environment, but there are only 12 work-based assessors in the 130 racing yards where trainees are placed. Trainees in stud breeding all have a workplace assessor, and all are visited by the internal verifier to establish that resources for training and assessment are available. Training and assessment takes place according to a training plan, based on the seasonal activities of the enterprise.

## GENERIC AREAS

### Equal opportunities

**Grade 2**

9. The British Racing School has an equal opportunities policy. Currently, 61 per cent of trainees are women and 3 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. The grade awarded by inspectors is higher than that proposed by the company in its self-assessment report.

#### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ positive action taken to attract applicants from minority ethnic groups
- ◆ fair selection procedures
- ◆ effective promotion of equal opportunities in publicity material

#### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ low awareness of equal opportunities issues in the workplace

10. Equal opportunities issues are actively promoted throughout the organisation. The policy is reviewed and updated annually. Monitoring of the policy's effectiveness is rigorous. Advertisements for the school are targeted at high-unemployment areas with large numbers of those from minority ethnic groups. The promotional video distributed to potential trainees and career advisers clearly promotes equal opportunities. Selection criteria are well designed to avoid bias on grounds of race or gender and are documented and reliably applied. A successful former trainee from a minority ethnic background is promoted as a role model, but awareness of equal opportunities issues remains low in the workplace. All published material involving the recruitment of trainees in stud breeding contains references to equal opportunities.

### Trainee support

**Grade 2**

11. The school provides good support for trainees before and during their training. Potential trainees are encouraged to attend a taster day at the school and to visit a trainer's yard. At interview, if a trainee is unable to decide whether the training is suitable, there is the opportunity to attend a three-day pre-induction programme. This enables trainees to obtain a clear view of the work involved. The self-assessment report accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses in this area.

### STRENGTHS

- ◆ rigorous and well planned off-the-job induction programmes
- ◆ additional programme materials for trainees with learning disabilities
- ◆ good scope for trainees to progress at their own pace

### WEAKNESSES

- ◆ poor induction in the workplace
- ◆ basic skills and key skills not systematically assessed on entry
- ◆ no guidance or counselling available in the workplace

#### POOR PRACTICE

*A trainee who had had a bad riding accident and was nervous of getting back on a horse received no counselling or help to enable her to regain her confidence.*

12. Trainee support during the off-the-job training for trainees in horse racing and horse breeding is well structured and implemented. The induction programme is well planned and documented and assesses basic occupational skills. Fitness sessions are provided three times a week, so that racing trainees are able to maintain the standard of the work expected. Where a trainee is assessed as showing some competence in riding, he/she is transferred from the beginners to the advanced group. The training manual has been reformatted to provide better understanding for those trainees with learning difficulties. Trainees in stud breeding receive five weeks' intensive induction. In the workplace, however, trainees' needs are not clearly identified, and there are no systems in place to give trainees the help required. Induction for trainees in the workplace, especially with regards to health and safety, is weak. Often, trainees are working for at least a month before being visited by a member of staff. Basic skills and key skills are not formally assessed at induction. The introduction of key skills into the training programme is new, and the matter is being addressed. Good guidance on career progression is given throughout the programme, and those trainees on modern apprenticeship programmes have all progressed from youth training.

### Management of training

### Grade 3

13. Management and staffing structures are clearly documented and understood by staff. The director is supported by a board of trustees, members of which are all prominent in the world of racing. The management of off-the-job training compares unfavourably with the high quality of management observed at The British Racing School. The grade awarded by inspectors was lower than that proposed by the company.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ well-defined staff structures and responsibilities
- ◆ regular staff appraisal
- ◆ comprehensive and regularly reviewed management systems
- ◆ good communications which are well documented

### *WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ poor management of on-the-job training
- ◆ limited opportunities for reviewing and monitoring on-the-job training
- ◆ no responsibility taken by management for subcontracted training

14. The British Racing School has a well-documented staff review and development plan, which is supported by a staff-training budget. Training plans, schemes of work and allocation of resources are all of a high standard. Staff are all effectively deployed. Management procedures and responsibilities are clear and effectively implemented. Initial communication with work providers is satisfactory, but regular communication with workplace providers is weak. The British Racing School's quality assurance procedures have not been fully adopted by subcontractors. This is despite the fact that the school is represented on the subcontractor's board of governors.

## **Quality assurance**

## **Grade 1**

15. The British Racing School has an outstanding quality assurance process. The British Racing School is an Investor in People. All policies and procedures are clearly understood and implemented by staff. The staff and managers regularly analyse the resulting information to inform decisions and to improve management of training. Retention rates, frequency of review visits and the movement of trainees among employers are all analysed in this way. The inspectors identified further strengths and awarded a higher grade than that proposed by the company.

### *STRENGTHS*

- ◆ good application of quality procedures
- ◆ procedures understood and implemented by staff
- ◆ instant access to accurate information
- ◆ rigorous monitoring of off-the-job training
- ◆ good co-ordination of internal verification processes



*WEAKNESSES*

- ◆ quality procedures not applied to subcontractors or employers

16. The quality system is being reviewed and updated constantly. Clear information, through action-plans, is available on this process. The organisation is further developing the system to fill evidence requirements for any external assessment and to provide staff with the procedures and documentation necessary to deliver first-class training. There is documentation on both actual and proposed quality assurance procedures and this specifies who is responsible for their implementation. It also gives dates for quality assurance activities and details of how they will be reviewed. Information on trainees' progress and placement can be accessed by staff instantly. A monthly update is produced of those trainees who are due to be visited, by whom and the requirements of the visit. There are seven regional monitors, all with occupational expertise, who receive detailed information on trainees to ensure that monitoring, assessment and verification take place. The school has a team of verifiers which meets regularly to share information and to update its knowledge and expertise.