

INSPECTION REPORT

Summerhouse Education and Equitation Centre

13 September 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

INSPECTION REPORT

Summerhouse Education and Equitation Centre

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Summerhouse Education and Equitation Centre (Summerhouse) is a family partnership based in Hardwicke, Gloucester. It provides work-based learning for up to 50 learners in horse care and is a British Horse Society (BHS) Approved Riding School, a BHS examination centre and a 'Where to Train' centre. Summerhouse was founded in 1978 to teach recreational riding, and offers BHS examination training from stage 1 to instructor level. It is a Riding for the Disabled Association centre, from which a couple of learners each year train for BHS exams. There are 18 learners working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in horse care at levels 1, 2 and 3. Of these, nine are apprentices, three are advanced apprentices and six are working towards NVQs only. All learners are at work placements and staff from Summerhouse visit them every 12 weeks.

2. Summerhouse has been inspected twice before, in 1999 and 2002. These inspections recognised the quality of training but indicated that Summerhouse was new to work-based learning. In August 2002, Summerhouse was inspected by the ALI and awarded a grade 1 for the occupational area and a grade 2 for leadership and management. In March 2003, Summerhouse was awarded 'Beacon' status, the only training provider in Gloucester to achieve this award.

3. The provision has learners in nine work placements in and around Gloucestershire, including Summerhouse and two yards in North Worcestershire. At Summerhouse, there are 16 full-time and six part-time members of staff. In addition, it has 20 assessors and four internal verifiers, including at least one trained assessor at each work placement. The provider has recently managed a very small Entry to Employment programme of four learners, which had been terminated before the inspection.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 1

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding.** Summerhouse's leadership and management, quality improvement and the equine provision are outstanding. Summerhouse's approach to equality of opportunity is good.

5. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment process is effective and clear. Staff, learners and work-placement providers are fully involved in its development. The report accurately identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses identified during inspection. Summerhouse uses the data well to contribute to judgements on the learners' performance. The self-assessment report is an integral part of the quality improvement strategy for the business as a whole and brings together a learner-centred process.

6. **The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to maintain the high quality of provision.** Summerhouse has proven that it is very effective in carrying out actions to improve already good provision. Strategic, business and development plans all link closely with the self-assessment report and Summerhouse has used them all well to drive forward quality, and manage, invest and develop new resources. Previously, good

SUMMERHOUSE EDUCATION AND EQUITATION CENTRE

systems, including internal verification, have been improved and used better as a tool to promote improvements in teaching and learning.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR SUMMERHOUSE EDUCATION AND EQUITATION CENTRE:

- continue to maintain the quality of provision as the organisation expands
- continue to share good practice
- establish a training programme to formalise staff and learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Leadership and management		1
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality improvement		1

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care			1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
Equine			1
Apprenticeships for young people	12	1	
NVQ training for young people	6	1	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. A team of two inspectors spent two days at Summerhouse in September 2005. Visits were made to work-placement providers. Summerhouse only offers equine provision and this was inspected and graded.

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	4
Number of learners interviewed	10
Number of staff interviewed	12
Number of employers interviewed	1
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	3
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

8. **Since 2002, achievement rates for apprentices have been particularly good, with rates of 93 and 94 per cent.** For 2004-05, 78 per cent of learners have achieved their apprenticeship, with the remainder still in learning and making very good progress. Numbers of advanced apprentices are small, with 15 advanced apprentices recruited in 2003-04, and 87 per cent have achieved the full qualification. Of the 21 learners on NVQ programmes, 10 have achieved the NVQ and six are still making good progress in learning. The achievement rate for technical certificates is very high at 90 per cent. All learners recruited in 2005-06 are still in learning.

9. **The development of learners' skills and knowledge is very good.** Learners' work is of a consistently high standard, with excellent portfolios of evidence. Learners develop good practical riding and stable management skills and become valued members of staff. Many take other qualifications alongside their NVQ. Most learners compete regularly and some learners have had particularly good opportunities to compete on talented young horses, qualifying for regional and national finals.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Agriculture, horticulture and animal care	1	3	1	0	5
Total	1	3	1	0	5

10. **Summerhouse has very good resources for training.** Learners work in good-quality yards where employers have good facilities, including indoor and outdoor schools, cross-country fences, a good range of stabling and suitable areas for lectures and theory work. A wide range of horses suit all abilities. Learners benefit from riding experienced and well-trained schoolmaster horses. They have access to computers at work. Summerhouse uses video recorders well as teaching aids for learners, to help them to improve their riding and to provide evidence for their NVQ. Specialist support, equipment and tuition is available for those who are visually or hearing impaired, and those with additional support needs. Staff are particularly well qualified and experienced. All employers have staff who compete regularly, some nationally and internationally.

11. **Summerhouse uses initial assessment well to plan learning.** All learners have an interview, a riding assessment, up to one week's work experience, and complete a four-week induction period. Assessors record results of assessments, discuss them with the learners and use them effectively to draw up an individual training timetable. They complete comprehensive assessments of their key skills. The learners and assessors decide which training programme and which additional qualifications will be achieved. The organisation identifies and clearly records learners' additional support needs. It sets realistic targets for the achievement of qualifications.

12. **All learners have a thorough and effective induction.** They have a good induction to the NVQ process, with a comprehensive information and an induction booklet. All learners

are allocated a mentor who provides them with pastoral support. Learners receive an induction review in the first four weeks, where the organisation confirms their health and safety understanding. It sets their NVQ targets after four weeks. The learners' progress is well planned and recorded.

13. Summerhouse provides particularly good and well-planned training. It includes riding, practical stable management, teaching practice, lunging, background knowledge lectures and portfolio-building sessions. All learners receive a minimum of 10 hours' training each week, with additional training to prepare for examinations. Many of them receive individual coaching and training. Tutors challenge and inspire the learners and teach them effectively and sympathetically. They are competent, knowledgeable, well qualified and the learners respect them.

14. The organisation uses work-based evidence very effectively. It encourages each workplace to train at least one assessor. Internal verifiers provide excellent support for the inexperienced assessors as they develop their skills. Summerhouse makes excellent use of the learners' experiences at work as evidence for NVQs and key skills. Learners recognise when opportunities arise to gather evidence at work and make good use of the evidence to prove their competence. The organisation provides well-planned and frequent assessments. Assessors negotiate with the learners to decide when they will complete their units.

15. Learners are provided with very effective support. All learners have a mentor who supports their training. All staff, including senior managers, play an active role as mentors. Advice on careers, progression and job opportunities is good. The organisation encourages the learners to be ambitious and aim for high levels of achievement. Early leavers receive effective careers advice and the organisation makes follow-up telephone calls to encourage them to re-enter training.

16. Key skills training and support for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Key skills are taught as an integral part of the vocational training to ensure learners understand the relevance of these skills to the workplace. However, as yet, none of the staff holds a qualification in teaching literacy and numeracy skills. Learners practise taking the key skills test and technical certificate test before sitting the actual examinations.

Leadership and management

17. Managers and staff effectively promote the well-being and achievement of learners through high-quality care, education and training. The staff work very effectively as a team and communication is excellent. Summerhouse uses links with other providers and external organisations effectively to promote and share good practice. It has established good external links with appropriate bodies and linked them to the development of the business.

18. The organisation's operational and strategic management are good. Strategic and business planning are closely linked to the self-assessment and development-planning process. Plans concentrate on improving the learners' experience. All staff are involved in the development of new ideas. Summerhouse reviews its operational structures regularly to ensure that the best performance opportunities are available to everyone.

19. **The management style at Summerhouse is open to comment and responsive to staff and learners' needs.** The management team responds readily to ideas from staff and learners. Communication is effective between staff, clients, learners and outreach centres. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

20. **The appraisal and staff development programmes are particularly good and very effective in identifying and recording staff development needs.** All staff complete an annual appraisal, at which managers set appropriate targets and identify training needs. Training opportunities extend from national governing body qualifications to personal riding targets. Many staff are working towards coaching qualifications at instructor level or higher. All staff have access to weekly personal performance horse skills training at the indoor school.

21. **The organisation's management and use of data and learner information are effective in monitoring the learners' progress.** It produces regular reports and senior staff use them to monitor learners' progress and staff involvement. All staff are aware of how learners are progressing.

22. **Summerhouse has a comprehensive written framework for quality assurance, which clearly emphasises the importance of quality improvement.** The organisation has used it well to drive forward already good to outstanding provision. The quality assurance framework is well designed and focuses strongly on the learning process.

23. **The internal verification system is very thorough and Summerhouse uses it well to drive up standards in teaching and learners' performance.**

24. **The self-assessment report accurately reflects the quality of the provision and the effectiveness of the leadership and management.** Summerhouse has a thorough self-assessment procedure that it uses well to ensure that the views of staff are fully incorporated into the report.

25. **Summerhouse implements its strategy for widening participation well.** It has recently carried out some work to promote equine training to learners who would not normally consider the industry as a career.

26. **The organisation provides a good, detailed handbook to all work-placement providers detailing what it expects of them.** This lays out clearly the organisation's expectations of providers and learners and provides a good reference document for work-placement providers.

27. Staff and learners do not receive formal reinforcement or development of their equal opportunities or diversity knowledge. All activities at Summerhouse have a culture of appropriate treatment and management of equal opportunities and diversity issues. Staff and learners are aware of how to treat and manage others with respect. Strong links and regular training sessions with the Riding for the Disabled Association provide weekly opportunities for learners to work with disabled riders.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good operational and strategic management
- open and responsive management
- particularly good staff appraisal and development
- good links with external bodies to share good practice
- good initiatives to attract learners from under-represented groups
- purposeful quality improvement strategies

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities and diversity for learners

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Equine

Grade 1

Strengths

- particularly good achievement and retention rates
- very good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- very good resources for training
- good use of initial assessment to plan learning
- thorough and effective induction
- particularly good and well-planned training
- very effective use of work-based evidence
- very effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SUMMERHOUSE EDUCATION AND EQUITATION CENTRE:

- 'everyone is approachable here and they help sort out our problems'
- being paid at the same time as training
- learning from knowledgeable and experienced tutors
- receiving individual attention
- 'getting experiences and opportunities we wouldn't get anywhere else'
- riding – 'it's the best bit and I would ride all day, every day if I could!'
- that training is part of the routine and always happens
- that there is plenty of variety and new things to learn
- 'that we are not stuck in a classroom all day'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK SUMMERHOUSE EDUCATION AND EQUITATION CENTRE COULD IMPROVE:

- nothing

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 1

Strengths

- good operational and strategic management
- open and responsive management
- particularly good staff appraisal and development
- good links with external bodies to share good practice
- good initiatives to attract learners from under-represented groups
- purposeful quality improvement strategies

Weaknesses

- insufficient reinforcement of equal opportunities and diversity for learners

28. The organisation's operational and strategic management are good. Strategic and business planning are closely linked to the self-assessment and development-planning process. The strategic plan is detailed and provides a good clear vision for the future development of the centre. Both plans have a strong focus on improving the learners' experience. Plans are clearly prioritised and subject to regular reviews by managers and at staff meetings. Since the previous inspection, Summerhouse has developed an additional indoor and an Olympic-sized outdoor school, significantly improving the facilities for learners. Significant investment in appropriate high-quality horses ensures that the learners ride and work with the best animals available. The organisation uses learners' data and targets well to help develop the plans and drive improvements. All staff are involved in the development of new ideas. Summerhouse reviews its operational structures regularly to ensure that the best performance opportunities are available to everyone.

29. The management style at Summerhouse is open to comment and responsive to staff and learners' needs. All staff attend regular weekly staff meetings. The standard agenda includes staff development, health and safety, and learners' progress. Management staff frequently run sessions with learners and join in staff training events. Staff openly discuss any difficulties facing them or the learners. The management team responds readily to ideas from staff and learners. Communication is effective between staff, clients, learners and outreach centres. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities.

30. The appraisal and staff development programmes are particularly good. The appraisals are very effective in identifying and recording staff development needs. All staff complete an annual appraisal interview with their manager, to set targets and identify training needs. This is then supported with a six-monthly review to amend the appraisal. New staff complete an appraisal at the end of the first month and at six-monthly intervals for one year. The appraisal process results in clear and agreed objectives, target-setting and identification of a learning plan. Training opportunities extend from national governing body qualifications to personal performance targets. Staff achieving these qualifications are able to provide a wider range of training opportunities for learners. Most staff are working towards instructor or coaching qualifications. All staff have access to weekly personal performance horse skills training at the indoor school.

31. Summerhouse has established good external links with appropriate bodies and linked them to the development of the business. The centre co-ordinator is involved with the Sector Skills Council and now chairs a good practice group, advising the equine industry and sharing good practice. The organisation has also made contacts directly with a wide range of training providers locally to share good practice and new ideas. Summerhouse's staff have carried out much work to share good practice and help other providers improve their training provision. The good reputation that the organisation has now established within the equine industry has ensured that the work placements secured for learners are of the highest quality.

32. The organisation's management and use of data and learner information are effective. It produces regular reports and senior staff use them to monitor learners' progress and staff involvement. All staff are aware of how the learners are progressing. Summerhouse uses the data collection system well to record learners' progress reviews and provide timely reminders for assessors to meet with learners for reviews.

33. Health and safety is satisfactory. Staff and learners are aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to horses and equipment. Summerhouse uses appropriate signage to indicate hazards, and staff and learners wear appropriate equipment.

34. The organisation's management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. It interviews all of the learners and they complete assessments that the assessors use well to develop appropriate learning plans. Assessors deliver support and training. However, some more specialist support may help some learners. One learner with very poor spelling received good feedback on correcting her work but has not been given a specific support programme other than during tutorial sessions. At the time of inspection, four staff have completed basic skills qualifications, however, plans are in place for staff to take qualifications at level 3 and 4.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

35. Summerhouse implements its strategy for widening participation well. It has recently carried out some good work to promote equine training to learners who would not normally consider a career in the industry. Minority ethnic groups in specialist schools and young people in local inner areas have received specific targeted promotion of equine training through school visits and presentations at career fairs and local shows. All interested potential learners have the opportunity to spend time on work placement at Summerhouse to appreciate the requirements of the industry.

36. At enrolment, Summerhouse's staff effectively identify and manage equal opportunities and diversity issues to protect the learners. Summerhouse takes into account the learners' personal circumstances when designing their individual learning plans. For example, when completing enrolment forms, the learners disclose issues that may affect their learning, for example travel needs or time needed to care for others. Learners receive a satisfactory induction to equal opportunities and diversity. They review a video and discuss the issues raised and revisit this after six months. They do not receive further formal reinforcement or development of their equal opportunities or diversity knowledge while in training. However, in all the work done at Summerhouse, there is a strong thread and culture of appropriate treatment and management of equal opportunities and diversity issues. Staff and learners are aware of how to treat and manage others with respect. Strong links and

regular training sessions with the Riding for the Disabled Association provide weekly opportunities for learners to work with disabled riders, often on an individual basis. Learners do pick up and expand their diversity understanding informally, but it is not formalised and some have not linked this knowledge with their daily practices. For example, some learners were unable to respond to questions about their personal rights and responsibilities. There is no regular formal programme of equal opportunities and diversity training for staff, but the organisation recognises this. Summerhouse understands issues that affect the learners and discuss these at monthly staff meetings, which include items on equal opportunities and diversity.

37. Summerhouse has a clear policy and relevant procedures to promote equal opportunities and diversity. The policy is inclusive, covering most equal opportunities and diversity issues, but it fails to identify a policy for bullying and harassment. However, the organisation has identified bullying and harassment issues among the learners through the effective support network. Staff have recorded these problems and managed them efficiently and effectively. The organisation regularly monitors working hours for all staff and learners, to ensure that they do not exceed their expected working hours. A good support network is used well by Summerhouse for learners to manage situations that occur at work or home. Some learners have significant social problems, which the organisation identifies early, with staff supporting learners by working with parents or social workers. For example, two learners who could not work together were identified through the concern and support notes, and were scheduled on working different days to prevent problems.

38. Summerhouse provides a good detailed handbook to all work-placement providers that details what is expected of them. Its expectations of its training providers and the learner are laid out clearly, and provide a good reference document for work-placement providers. Summerhouse informs them of their obligations to equal opportunities and diversity and, when appropriate, helps them to develop their own policies.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 1

39. Summerhouse has a comprehensive written framework for quality assurance, which clearly emphasises the importance of quality improvement. The organisation has used it well to drive forward good provision to be outstanding. The quality assurance framework is well designed and focuses strongly on the learning process. At the previous inspection there were few quality assurance weaknesses but, through attention to detail, Summerhouse has developed good provision into outstanding provision. For example, it has used the internal verification systems as a tool that has a direct effect on the learners, learning and teaching. The organisation now uses data as a tool to monitor individual learners' performance and progress. It has significantly expanded facilities in line with the strategic plan to provide better indoor and outdoor facilities for teaching and learning. It regularly carries out learners' satisfaction surveys and uses them well as a tool for improving provision. Returns on these surveys are high, with many very positive comments about the provision.

40. The internal verification system is very thorough and Summerhouse uses it well to drive up standards in teaching and learners' performance. It covers the observation of training, assessment of the standards of learners' portfolios and tutors' assessment decisions, the observation of daily activities in the workplace, learners' progress reviews, the verification of internal verifiers, and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Internal verifiers

check the learners' portfolios quarterly. They provide clear and simple written feedback to the assessors and the learners. Tutors carry out regular good reviews and uses them to alter training programmes to meet the learners' needs. Summerhouse has a clear and effective audit process to ensure internal verifiers can follow changes made by the learners or assessors. It closely monitors reviews for content and regularity, and the internal verifier provides the tutor/assessors with good feedback. Very regular observations of teaching and assessment give staff the confidence to identify strengths and weaknesses.

41. The self-assessment report accurately reflects the quality of the provision and the effectiveness of the leadership and management. Summerhouse has a thorough self-assessment procedure that it uses well to ensure that the views of staff are fully incorporated into the report and the overall report reflects the organisation's operations. The process of self-assessment is a significant part of the quality improvement framework, linking well with various plans and operational management. The report contains detailed information about most strengths and weaknesses identified, but it gives insufficient recognition to the success and improvements in learners' retention and achievement.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Agriculture, horticulture and animal care

Grade 1

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Equine		1
Apprenticeships for young people	12	1
NVQ training for young people	6	1

42. Summerhouse has 18 learners working towards NVQs in horse care at levels 1, 2 and 3. Of these, nine are apprentices, three are advanced apprentices and six are working towards NVQs only. All learners are at work placements and Summerhouse's staff visit them every 12 weeks to carry out progress reviews. Work-based assessors carry out assessments in the workplace. Summerhouse recruits learners directly through the organisation's own marketing activities or through Connexions or employers. Summerhouse also provides some aspects of part-time day-release programmes for 40 learners working towards NVQs and other industry-recognised examinations from Hartpury College.

Equine

Grade 1

Strengths

- particularly good achievement and retention rates
- very good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- very good resources for training
- good use of initial assessment to plan learning
- thorough and effective induction
- particularly good and well-planned training
- very effective use of work-based evidence
- very effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

43. Achievement and retention rates are particularly good. Achievement rates for apprentices have remained consistently high since the programme started in 1998. However, the rates have been particularly good since 2002. In 2002-03 and 2003-04, achievement rates were 93 and 94 per cent. During 2004-05, 78 per cent of learners have already achieved their apprenticeship and the remaining 22 per cent are still in learning and making very good progress. Numbers of advanced apprentices have been small but, of the 15 advanced apprentices recruited in 2003-04, 87 per cent have achieved the full qualification. Since 2000-01, Summerhouse has recruited 21 learners on to programmes leading to an NVQ at level 2. Of these, 10 have achieved the NVQ and a further six are

still in learning and making very good progress. The achievement rate for technical certificates is also high at 90 per cent. Of the 20 learners recruited so far during 2005-06, all are still in learning.

44. The development of learners' skills and knowledge is very good. Learners' vocational work is of a consistently high standard. They produce excellent portfolios and take great pride in their work. Learners are aware of the progress they have made and value the training they receive. They develop good riding and stable management skills and become valued members of staff. Many quickly assume positions of responsibility and develop excellent employability skills. Learners also develop and broaden their skills through a wide range of horse-related experiences. As learners progress and gain experience, Summerhouse encourages them to participate in a wide range of extra activities. Many complete vocationally specific national governing body qualifications alongside their NVQ, and they gain experience in writing for dressage judges, course-building, grooming at competitions, reception duties and customer care, stewarding at competitions, assisting with riding and pony club activities, assisting the Riding for the Disabled Association, and setting up for examinations. Most learners compete regularly and some of them have had particularly good opportunities to compete on talented young horses, successfully qualifying for regional and national finals. Summerhouse also offers excellent training courses in child protection, first aid for horses, first aid and the power of positive thinking. All advanced apprentices complete a formal information technology training course, even though this is not a requirement for the apprenticeship.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

LSC funded work-based learning																
Advanced apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	1		3		15	100	3	100	2	100						
Retained*	0		1		13	87	3	100	1	50						
Successfully completed	0		1		13	87	3	100	1	50						
Still in learning	1		2		0	0	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
Apprenticeships	2005-06		2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02							
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	9		18	100	16	100	15	100	23	100						
Retained*	0		14	78	15	94	14	93	15	65						
Successfully completed	0		14	78	15	94	14	93	15	65						
Still in learning	9		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

LSC funded work-based learning																
NVQ Training	2004-05		2003-04		2002-03		2001-02									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Number of starts	6		5		2	100	6	100								
Retained*	1		2		2	100	5	83								
Successfully completed	0		2		2	100	5	83								
Still in learning	5		1		0	0	0	0								

*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

The quality of provision

45. Summerhouse has very good resources for training. Learners work in a variety of quality yards, where employers have good facilities, such as good-sized indoor and outdoor schools, cross-country fences, modern and traditional stabling, horse-walkers and suitable areas for stable management lectures and background knowledge work. There is a wide range of horses to suit all abilities and to enable the learners to develop their riding skills safely. Many learners have good opportunities to benefit from riding experienced and well-trained schoolmaster horses. Most learners have access to computers at their place of work and staff can provide them with laptop computers. There is a CD-ROM library and a small library of books and videos that the learners can borrow. Summerhouse makes effective and extensive use of video recordings as a training aid to help learners to improve their riding and to provide evidence for their NVQ. Specialist support, equipment and tuition is available for those who are visually or hearing impaired and those with additional support needs. Staff are particularly well qualified and experienced. All employers have staff who compete regularly, some nationally and internationally.

46. Summerhouse makes good use of initial assessment to plan learning. All of the learners have an interview, a riding assessment, up to one week's work experience, and complete a four-week period of initial assessment. Assessors record the results of the initial assessment, discuss them thoroughly with the learners and use them effectively to draw up an individual training timetable. Learners also have a comprehensive assessment of their key skills. The learner and assessor decide which training programme is the most suitable and which additional qualifications should be included in their individual learning plan. Together, they identify additional support needs and record them clearly on the learning plan. Realistic targets are set for the achievement of qualifications and the learners understand these well. Summerhouse makes good use of prior learning and the learners progress quickly through their qualifications.

47. All learners have a thorough and effective induction. Learners are particularly well prepared to start their training and have a very good understanding of the NVQ procedures and processes, including internal and external verification. All learners are allocated a mentor, who provides them with pastoral and confidential support, as well as a supervisor who is also their assessor. Within two weeks of starting training, learners have an induction review. This effectively checks that the induction has been completed successfully. It identifies any additional learning needs, ensures that learners have started to gather evidence effectively and understand how to build their portfolios, and confirms their understanding of health and safety. After four weeks there is a second review, during which learners are set their first NVQ targets on a progress sheet, which is kept at the front

of their portfolio. This sheet is used effectively to plan and record progress. Learners are also given a clearly written complaints and grievance procedure in a comprehensive learner information and induction booklet.

48. Training is particularly good and well planned. All learners have structured planned training, which includes riding, practical stable management, teaching practice, lunging, background knowledge lectures and portfolio-building sessions. All learners receive a minimum of 10 hours training each week, but many of them receive much more. Learners can have an intensive training period to prepare effectively for external examinations and to improve areas of work. Many learners receive individual coaching and training. Tutors challenge and inspire the learners and teach them effectively and sympathetically. Tutors are competent, knowledgeable, well qualified and respected by the learners. Learners enjoy their training and attendance is very good. The training follows a weekly timetable and is recorded on the learners' progress sheets. Learners have reviews every 12 weeks, where progress is checked and targets are set. The reviews are effective and learners are very clear about what they need to achieve before the next meeting. Vocational assessors provide satisfactory key skills training and support for literacy and numeracy, using a range of resources. Key skills are an integral part of the vocational training to ensure learners understand the relevance of these skills to the workplace. However, as yet, none of the staff holds a qualification in teaching literacy and numeracy. Learners practise taking the key skills test and technical certificate test before sitting the actual examinations.

49. Summerhouse's use of work-based evidence and assessors is very effective. The organisation has promoted the use of work-based assessors and encouraged each workplace to train at least one assessor. It provides free training for work-based assessors to achieve their assessor qualification. Internal verifiers provide excellent support for the inexperienced assessors as they develop their skills. Learners' portfolios contain a wide range of diverse evidence from their workplace. Summerhouse makes excellent use of learners' experiences at work to provide evidence for their NVQ and their key skills. Learners have a good understanding of the evidence they should collect and most enjoy building informative and comprehensive portfolios. Learners recognise when opportunities arise to gather evidence at work and make the best possible use of the evidence to prove their competence. Assessments are well planned and frequent. Assessors negotiate with the learners to decide when to assess units and to ensure that learners are progressing at the pace which best suits their needs. Learners are well prepared and confident with the assessment process.

50. Support for learners is very effective. All learners have a mentor who gives them help and support during their training. All staff, including senior managers, play an active role in supporting and helping learners. There is good advice on careers, progression and job opportunities. The organisation encourages the learners to be ambitious and aim for high levels of achievement, and makes great efforts to ensure that they achieve their full potential. They produce a curriculum vitae as part of their training. All learners who leave their training early have a meeting with their assessor and receive careers advice. They are contacted six months later by letter and telephone to check they are still happy with their decision and to encourage them to re-enter training.

Leadership and management

51. Managers and staff effectively promote the well-being and achievement of learners through high-quality care, education and training. The staff work very effectively as a team

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and communication is excellent. Summerhouse effectively uses links with other providers and external organisations to promote and share good practice.

52. All staff contribute to the development of quality improvement strategies and the organisation uses learner questionnaires effectively to monitor the learners' satisfaction with their training. Self-assessment is well established and inclusive. Internal verification is very good and assessors are well supported and monitored. Summerhouse holds regular standard-setting days and all assessors attend.

53. Staff promote equality of opportunity effectively. However, learners' knowledge and understanding of the broader aspects of equality and diversity is only superficial.

