

BRS Education Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

20–23 November 2018

Overall effectiveness		Outstanding	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding	16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding	Apprenticeships	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is an outstanding provider

- Trustees, leaders and staff have highly effective partnerships with the horseracing industry that ensure that most learners and apprentices secure successful careers within horseracing.
- Leaders effectively target learners from hard-to-reach social groups to provide opportunities for them to enter the horseracing industry and thrive within it.
- Learners, trainees and apprentices are motivated and inspired by highly experienced and qualified staff who are credible experts from within the industry.
- Teachers make very good use of high-quality resources that reflect up-to-date industry conditions and techniques. Consequently, learners are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps into employment in racing yards.
- Teachers provide highly effective and instant feedback to learners. As a result, learners make swift progress in developing their skills in riding and handling horses to meet professional occupational standards.
- Teachers and instructors ensure that learners and apprentices rapidly gain new knowledge through excellent theory teaching, linked expertly to practical activities.
- Learners and apprentices develop excellent personal, social and employability skills and behave maturely and independently at a young age when living away from home.
- Learners and apprentices quickly acquire extremely high levels of practical skills in working effectively and professionally with horses.
- Leaders, managers and staff place a very strong emphasis on safe working practices and safeguarding. As a result, learners and apprentices maintain their safety and that of others, at all times.
- Apprentices work within a very supportive industry in which their personal safety and welfare are key to their training. They rapidly improve the skills that enable them to make a strong and effective contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Some employers are not routinely involved in reviewing the progress that apprentices make. As a result, a few do not achieve within the planned timescales.

Full report

Information about the provider

- BRS Education Limited (BRS) is a specialist independent learning provider based in Newmarket. It is a charitable organisation and provides a broad range of training courses to the horseracing industry in the UK and internationally. It offers residential short courses for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes, traineeships and apprenticeships; all are equestrian-based subjects. The residential courses are of four, nine or 14 weeks' duration. Approximately 150 learners or trainees are enrolled on these programmes each year. At the time of the inspection, there were 133 intermediate apprentices and 24 advanced apprentices studying frameworks.
- Most learners enrolled on study programmes and traineeships enter courses with a lower level of GCSE attainment than the national average. BRS works with one main subcontractor, The National Stud.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders, managers and workplace instructors should ensure that employers have a good understanding of the progress apprentices are making, so that they can work together more effectively to enable apprentices to achieve within planned timescales.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Trustees, leaders and managers are highly ambitious for their learners. They have been successful in pursuing excellence and are very effective in inspiring staff and learners to achieve the highest standards. As a result, learners and apprentices succeed in meeting their goals and thriving within the horseracing industry.
- Leaders provide excellent learning programmes that successfully respond to the identified shortage of stable staff within the industry. Leaders' actions ensure that learners' and apprentices' progression into employment is excellent. For example, the chief executive knows each learner's abilities exceptionally well and personally assesses their riding skills each morning.
- Trustees, leaders and managers collaborate highly effectively with employers and a broad range of other partners in the racing industry and use their considerable knowledge and experience of horseracing yards and their trainers exceptionally well to link learners to potential employers. Consequently, learners and apprentices are placed in the most suitable yards for their skills and are enabled to continue their progression into successful careers.
- Trustees and leaders are entrepreneurial and are successful in securing funding from a range of activities that complement the publicly funded courses. As a result, managers ensure that learners access excellent resources that prepare them very well for progression into apprenticeships, and for being highly successful within the horseracing industry. For example, leaders have partnered with another organisation to build a jockey rehabilitation centre on site for learners to access, including a state-of-the-art gym and space to host events provided by guest speakers within horseracing.
- Leaders and managers secure and sustain improvements to teaching, learning and assessment through high-quality professional development. Trainers are credible experts within professional horseracing and are highly experienced and well qualified. Managers ensure that staff improve their expertise by sharing good practice. Staff development includes training from experts such as an elite equine coach with experience of leading an Olympic gold medal team. As a result, staff ensure that their teaching features the most up-to-date techniques in horse riding and handling.
- Learners are enrolled on a programme of study that is tailored to their academic and personal and social development needs. Leaders ensure that the curriculum effectively promotes learners' success in riding, horse care, confidence, independent living skills and wider employability skills. As a result, learners are very well prepared for progression to employment and apprenticeships within the horseracing industry.
- Leaders and managers monitor the progress of groups of learners highly effectively so that individuals do not underachieve. However, managers recognise that they have not yet ensured that enough apprentices on apprenticeships complete their programmes within planned timescales. As a result, leaders have taken decisive action to ensure that all apprentices on frameworks receive the help they need to achieve more quickly. Leaders' latest data indicates that a greater proportion of apprentices achieve their programmes within the planned timescales than previously.

- Managers have ensured that learners gain a good understanding of people with diverse needs and backgrounds and are well prepared to work in modern Britain. Staff exemplify the standards expected and quickly challenge any learners' deviation from this. As a result, learners gain a good understanding of, and respect for, different groups of people.
- Leaders and managers have successfully improved the teaching of English and mathematics. As a result, learners rapidly improve their skills in these essential subjects compared with their starting points and can proficiently apply these skills to their work.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the performance of the sole subcontractor, The National Stud, is of an equally high standard. Staff ensure that the quality of the subcontractor is excellent, for example through rigorous observations of teaching and learning. The subcontractor provides an excellent alternative route into the racing industry for some learners who do not master the appropriate skills for riding race horses. Staff work highly effectively with the subcontractor to provide high-quality training for their staff.
- Leaders' self-assessment is accurate in identifying the very few areas for improvement required to sustain their constant drive for excellence. These are clearly understood and shared by trustees and staff throughout the organisation. Leaders and managers have ensured that their actions focus effectively on securing these improvements and in maintaining the outstanding quality of teaching and learning.

The governance of the provider

- The board of trustees provides an excellent oversight of the provision. Trustees have a wide range of relevant experience, including within the racing industry and education. They are well informed of the organisation's performance. For example, the chair of the board of trustees follows one cohort of learners each year to check on the quality of their experience from induction through to graduation.
- Trustees provide clear direction and robust challenge for leaders. They rigorously monitor each aspect of the organisation and the learning programmes to further enhance the positive experiences for learners and apprentices. The committee structure enables trustees to focus well on their recognised areas of expertise.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- As a provider, BRS takes the lead within the industry in setting very high safeguarding standards. Leaders' work is highly valued by the British Horseracing Authority. Managers ensure robust safeguarding arrangements throughout the organisation, including for learners aged 14 to 16 who use the facilities on site. Staff safely manage arrangements for residential learners in high-quality accommodation. Managers conduct thorough recruitment checks to ensure the suitability of all staff employed.
- Leaders and staff undertake detailed risk assessments on a very broad range of issues to ensure the safety of all at the school, and at employers' premises. Leaders and managers successfully meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. Learners have an appropriate understanding of the dangers and risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, managers have not ensured that teachers routinely reinforce learners' deeper

understanding of these risks in society.

- All staff receive very effective training and frequent updates in relation to safeguarding and they are very confident about conducting their safeguarding responsibilities. Staff with lead responsibilities are available 24 hours a day for learners and apprentices to contact. A trustee with lead responsibility for safeguarding and the safeguarding committee of the board meet regularly to review and further improve arrangements. They provide rigorous challenge to leaders and managers to ensure that safeguarding processes and procedures are robust across all aspects of the provision.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers provide excellent teaching. They use a broad range of interesting and challenging activities that highly motivate learners, trainees and apprentices to make rapid progress. For example, they enable learners to grasp the importance of using different feeds for a variety of horses through touching, smelling and effectively analysing the quality of the feed to successfully select suitable feed for different horses.
- Teachers and instructors ensure that theory is effectively linked to the development of practical skills. As a result, learners, trainees and apprentices have a much deeper understanding and can very effectively apply their learning in the classroom to handling and riding horses. Most learners make excellent progress in swiftly gaining and applying their new knowledge and skills to the industry-specific demands of employers.
- Staff use assessment purposefully, so that most learners, trainees and apprentices undertake the most challenging work to help them realise their potential. Teachers use assessment findings to motivate learners to improve their understanding of subject matter and apply it successfully.
- Most instructors provide highly effective feedback to learners, trainees and apprentices. Staff provide instant, constructive and detailed feedback on all practical activities. As a result, learners and apprentices make rapid improvements in their personal development and work practices. However, a few instructors do not provide enough feedback on apprentices' written work to help them further their knowledge and understanding.
- Learners and apprentices make rapid progress as a result of instructors' outstanding subject knowledge and exceptionally wide range of experiences of the horseracing industry. Employers respect the professionalism and credibility within the industry of workplace instructors. They have confidence in their ability to help them train their apprentices so they can care for their horses.
- Staff establish the skills and knowledge of learners at the start of their programmes through extremely thorough induction processes. A wide range of information is accurately gathered about each learner, trainee and apprentice, which includes their prior knowledge of riding and horse care and their aptitude for the racehorse industry. This helps staff to get to know them quickly and provides very early identification of any specific needs. As a result, staff deliver highly tailored learning programmes that enable learners to thrive and rapidly improve their skills.
- Staff quickly identify any learner who falls behind and work tirelessly to enable them to catch up. They work closely with parents and carers to keep them informed of progress and improvements required to performance. Staff closely monitor learners' punctuality,

dress and behaviour, as well as their practical skills in areas such as mucking- and skipping-out, dressing-over, tacking up, riding, showing and yard work. As a result, most learners make rapid improvements. However, a very few learners and apprentices requiring support for specific learning difficulties do not receive more specialist support to help them make the progress of which they are capable.

- Learners, trainees and apprentices use very high-quality training resources. For example, learners are trained to use mechanical racehorse simulators to establish a better riding technique. As a result, they rapidly hone their practical skills to a high standard. Learners on study programmes and traineeships gain a high level of skills, attributes, knowledge and behaviours within a highly professional training environment prior to progressing to an apprenticeship.
- Teachers use information and learning technologies exceptionally well to enhance learning. They use video technology for learners and apprentices to review, scrutinise and reflect on their riding techniques. Learners expertly critique one another's riding skills, such as their balance, and suggest techniques to improve stability and control.
- Staff ensure that learners, trainees and apprentices significantly improve their English and mathematical skills from their starting points. Those who had poor learning experiences of these subjects in the past now find English and mathematics enjoyable and fun. Instructors help them to deepen their understanding using carefully chosen, sector-relevant contexts. As a result, learners and apprentices effortlessly use relevant vocational language and accurately apply number skills. For example, learners correctly calculate the cost of quantities of feed and bales, and use horse strides to improve and apply their knowledge of angles.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

- The enrichment programme for learners on study programmes and traineeships is outstanding. The breadth of topics that learners explore, and gain skills in, is vast. During off-the-job training, apprentices consolidate their skills and understanding of the industry through a very effective variety of activities. These include attending race meetings, seminars with industry experts, using the mobile racehorse simulator with the jockey coaches, and going abroad with horses and accompanying senior staff.
- Learners and apprentices are proud of the excellent work that they do and the high level of skills that they acquire. Learners succeed in building their confidence throughout the programme, starting at induction. Learners and apprentices have high levels of respect for each other and for staff. They work harmoniously together and gain excellent teamwork skills. Learners, trainees and apprentices are keen to listen to the opinions of their peers and appreciate the cultural values, backgrounds and experiences of others. Learners develop their personal and social skills and confidence well. The attitudes and behaviour of learners are mature, professional and positive.
- Learners enrolled on study programmes and traineeships succeed in high-quality, purposeful work-related learning on a daily basis. The majority of learners also engage in excellent work experience in horseracing yards. As a result, they are exceptionally well prepared for progression to the intermediate apprenticeship once they have completed their residential programme, and employers value the knowledge and skills they possess

when they commence work.

- Learners, trainees and apprentices rapidly gain the skills that they require within the horseracing industry, including in English and mathematics. Learners and apprentices who have significant barriers to learning and personal difficulties receive excellent support for their personal welfare, including regular pastoral support and medical support through the school nurse. Learners, trainees and apprentices with complex social backgrounds receive particularly good help to become more confident in their abilities and independence, and more skilled in social settings.
- Learners and apprentices successfully complete additional qualifications and activities that complement and further enhance their learning and wider understanding of the horseracing industry. This includes speakers and visits from other partners within the horseracing industry, such as the British Horseracing Authority. The majority of apprentices complete additional qualifications within their off-the-job training. For example, they complete qualifications to transport horses, and some achieve a jockey licence that enables them to progress quickly.
- Learners, trainees and apprentices have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, both at the racing school and in their workplaces. They work safely with horses and handle them with confidence. Learners and apprentices have an excellent grasp of wider aspects related to safety, such as online safety, how to report concerns through the school and employers, and how to maintain personal safety when travelling. For the majority of apprentices, the apprenticeship is the first time they have been away from home for a long period of time and living independently. They rapidly succeed in applying their newly learned independence skills within the very supportive culture that workplace instructors provide.
- Learners and apprentices maintain their personal health and fitness very well. They respect and value the importance of fitness in their future career plans. During the residential course, learners and trainees use the on-site gym effectively to improve their physical fitness and establish well-formed nutrition plans for themselves. These activities are complemented by cooking sessions as part of the wider life skills programme, which enables learners to successfully cook meals for themselves and increase their independence.
- Leaders and staff set very high expectations for learners, trainees and apprentices from a very early stage. They have put in place a strict disciplinary procedure to ensure high expectations are maintained with regards to attendance, punctuality and behaviour. As a result, learners' attendance to sessions is very high and their behaviour is exemplary at the school. Apprentices' conduct in the workplace is exemplary and highly valued by their employers and peers.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The majority of learners, trainees and apprentices make excellent progress in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding of working with horses and within the wider racing industry.
- The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve their qualifications is high. Leaders' data indicates that learners' achievement has remained consistently high for the

past three years. The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications is good. The proportion of learners and apprentices who stay on programmes also remains high. A minority of apprentices do not make the swift progress of which they are capable and do not achieve within their planned timescales. However, leaders' data shows that a greater proportion are now achieving in a timely manner than in previous years.

- Leaders' data indicates that the proportion of learners who achieve English and mathematics functional skills qualifications has improved significantly and is now high for learners on study programmes and traineeships. A greater proportion of apprentices now achieve their functional skills qualifications than previously.
- Leaders have effectively narrowed the gap that existed between the achievement of males and females. No other significant gaps in achievement exist between different groups of learners, including those previously in receipt of free school meals.
- A very high proportion of learners and apprentices progress to positive destinations. Most learners on study programme and traineeships progress to the intermediate apprenticeship. Apprentices are recruited into long-term jobs and remain in their employment after completing their apprenticeship. The few apprentices who progress to the advanced apprenticeship quickly secure more responsible positions within the racing industry, such as assistant trainer or yard manager.
- Most learners enter the study programme or traineeship with low GCSE entry grades. On completion of their short study programmes, learners then progress immediately to apprenticeships. They make very swift progress in the short time they are on residential programmes, particularly in their riding skills. Learners who have never ridden a horse before are able to confidently and successfully gallop within 14 weeks. Learners greatly enhance their underpinning knowledge of racehorse care from the basics of horse management to the statutory requirements for their care.
- Most learners are very well supported in developing their English skills, and produce written work that exceeds the level of their qualification. However, the written work of some apprentices is less well developed and does not fully reflect their deeper understanding of theoretical concepts.
- Too few of the few learners who start their short study programme with a grade 3 (previously grade D) in GCSE English and mathematics achieve higher grades in these subjects while on their programme. Leaders work assiduously to give these learners the opportunity to re-sit their GCSE exams after they have left the residential programme, but too few take this opportunity.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Outstanding

- Approximately 120 learners enrol on 16 to 19 study programmes at BRS each year. Study programmes are all short residential courses offered at four, nine or 14 weeks in length, in which learners complete the level 1 diploma in racehorse care. All learners reside at the school and follow a seven-day-a-week timetable. All learners who complete a study programme progress to an intermediate apprenticeship directly afterwards.
- Managers have successfully implemented the study programme requirements and

manage the curriculum highly effectively to provide programmes that expertly meet the skills, needs and experiences of the learners. Teachers use outstanding resources that reflect those found in the industry to prepare learners for the workplace.

- Learners enjoy and learn from classroom activities and complementary practical demonstrations. They enthusiastically put into practice what they have learned. Teachers ensure that lessons have a clear and practical work focus. For example, in a preparation for riding lesson, learners independently saddled up, exercised the horse and then undertook trot, canter and gallop, culminating in relaxing the horse prior to placing them back in their stables.
- Most learners receive exceptional individual support and coaching from staff. Group sizes enable teachers to give each learner the attention they need to succeed. Teachers know their learners very well and use this knowledge to ensure that they make swift progress. For example, in riding lessons, learners' skills and abilities are precisely matched to the behavioural characteristics of the horses.
- Teachers extensively and routinely check learners' understanding. They use probing questions very well to extend knowledge and discuss relevant work-related scenarios. Learners enjoy learning and value highly the skills they gain. For example, in a tacking-up lesson, learners were able to accurately explain specialist terminology such as over-reach boots, Yorkie boots, riser pads, full-tree saddles and hind boots.
- Teachers ensure that the most able learners are further challenged to excel in their skills and knowledge. There are additional sessions on the completion of the course in which most-able learners extend their specialist skills, for example in stalls entry and exit, pace awareness, spatial awareness and jumping. In progress reviews, teachers ensure that learners' perceptions of their riding skills are accurate. This increases learners' confidence to ride more challenging horses.
- Learners gain outstanding practical skills through work-related activities and, where appropriate, work experience in local horseracing yards, to enhance their preparation for employment. For example, in an early morning stable preparation lesson, learners gained practical experience of mucking out and tacking up horses to time constraints and met the high standards expected of working stables. They worked quickly and effectively with minimum supervision.
- Teachers and instructors on study programmes reinforce English and mathematical skills in both theoretical and practical lessons. Learners improve their English skills effectively, using formal language and appropriate sentence structure to complete their work. Staff use very creative techniques to teach mathematics through work-related examples. For example, when discussing the centre of gravity of a horse and its relationship with the rider's position, learners successfully calculated pivotal points in imperial and metric units. As a result, learners make rapid progress from their often low starting points.

Apprenticeships

Good

- At the time of the inspection, there were 133 intermediate apprentices and 24 advanced

apprentices enrolled on equine studies framework programmes.

- Apprentices gain high levels of competencies, which they apply very well within the demanding working environment of horseracing yards. Early in their programme, most apprentices are given demanding, additional responsibilities in the yard due to their ability to swiftly gain good knowledge and skills. For example, they are given sole responsibility for looking after a number of horses, or leading up on the racecourses. They enhance their digital skills through the e-portfolio, which they use confidently and competently to complete their theoretical work.
- Workplace instructors' reviews of apprentices' progress include a focus on relevant wider personal and social issues that may affect apprentices' progress and welfare. Instructors help to identify factors that may disrupt learning, and they work closely with apprentices to overcome such issues. However, they do not ensure that their recordings of reviews provide enough specific detail to challenge apprentices to excel. Reviews are not routinely shared with all employers. As a result, some employers do not help apprentices complete their programmes in a timely manner.
- Workplace instructors skilfully use a range of methods, including digital recording and oral questioning, to effectively assess apprentices' practical skills and understanding of theoretical concepts. They successfully challenge apprentices' practice and understanding to enable them to further improve their riding and horse-care skills.
- Apprentices enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding of the horseracing industry through a range of highly effective activities, as part of their off-the-job training. These include attending competitions and race meetings, seminars and training events led by industry experts, use of the mobile riding simulator and shadowing more senior staff for development.
- Workplace instructors and employers provide very effective pastoral support to apprentices throughout their programme. The welfare of the young apprentices is of paramount importance to all stakeholders within the racing industry and apprentices work within a caring and supportive culture. Apprentices value this strong support, offered from both inside and outside the workplace. As a result, apprentices who struggle early on are motivated to remain on programme, work hard and make good progress.
- The standard of intermediate apprentices' work is appropriate to the level they are working at, and in some instances their work exceeds this standard. However, some workplace instructors do not enable their apprentices to produce written work of a higher standard. These apprentices do not receive sufficiently informative feedback on their written work to help them understand how they can further their knowledge, including how to improve the structure of their writing, spelling and grammar.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1248058
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	415
Chief Executive	Grant Harris
Telephone number	01638 665103
Website	www.brs.org.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	78	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	114	19	1	23	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	30		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	The National Stud							

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. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Goodwin	Ofsted Inspector

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