



**EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT INSPECTION OF PRIVATE FURTHER
EDUCATION COLLEGES AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE SCHOOLS**

THE TALLAND SCHOOL OF EQUITATION

(Company Registration Number - OC375530)

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Principal	Mrs Pamela Hutton
Proprietors	Mr William & Mrs Pamela Hutton
Age Range	11+
Total number of students	14
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 1 16 – 18 5 18+: 8 FE only: 14
Inspection dates	2 to 4 June 2015

PREFACE

This inspection report follows the Framework for Educational Oversight of private further education colleges and English language schools. The inspection consists of a three-day team inspection of the institution's educational provision.

The ISI is an approved Educational Oversight body authorised by the Home Office to inspect privately funded further education colleges and English language schools in England and Wales offering courses on the Qualifications and Credit Framework. It is designed to improve the quality of education on offer to international students who attend UK colleges through Tier 4 of the points-based system for student visas.

ISI inspections are required to:

- Report on the extent to which colleges comply with the published Educational Oversight Standards;
- Assess and report on the quality of educational outcomes and provision;
- Where applicable, make recommendations outside the scope of the Standards to support continued improvement of quality.

Inspection provides objective and reliable reports on the quality of colleges, and by placing reports in the public domain, makes this information available to students, Government and the wider community. Inspection takes account of the context of each individual college, and of how it evaluates its own performance and demonstrates its success.

The inspection of the college is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, though inspectors will comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on students. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit;
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the college, its services or other physical features;
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the college or its accounting procedures;
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the college's compliance with employment law.

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1. CHARACTERISTICS AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Talland School of Equitation aims to provide world renowned training to students, giving them an opportunity to ride and train on quality horses and ponies under highly qualified instruction and to watch top international horses in training. Its mission is to provide high quality training and industry experience to ensure that students are able to build a career in the equine industry. Originally established in 1958 by the parents of the current owner, Talland has been providing riding lessons and training students for British Horse Society examinations for over 50 years.
- 1.2 The business is a limited liability partnership, run by the family. The leadership team consists of the two directors one of whom also acts as principal. An administrative team, which includes a designated student welfare officer, supports the work of the directors.
- 1.3 A variety of British Horse Society (BHS) approved professional short courses and the level 3 to 5 diploma in horse riding, knowledge and care and teaching are offered throughout the year. Suitability is assessed by video footage and at an enrolment interview to check students have the required skills and meet entry requirements. All students are offered a trial period at the school prior to enrolment, depending on the length of their course, to ensure it meets their individual needs.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection the college had 14 enrolled students following part-time courses. All students are female, one is under 16 and all are UK or European citizens. The school does not currently sponsor overseas students. No students need support with English and none have identified, special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school provides 64 stables that can accommodate up-to 100 horses on site. The majority of horses are used to provide lessons, competition and stable management practice for students. Talland also hosts a Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) group and students have the opportunity to become involved with the riding sessions. Accommodation is provided on site and the school caters for students with physical and learning disabilities.

2. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 **The college meets expectations for the quality of education.** At the time of the inspection, all Key Standards for Educational Oversight were met and quality is satisfactory.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Course provision and the curriculum are very well matched to students' needs and career aspirations, and meet UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) requirements. A thorough interview and initial assessment process ensures students have the required skills and motivation for their selected course. Outstanding teaching leads to excellent student progress. Instructors are enthusiastic, highly skilled, with excellent subject experience and knowledge. Lessons are well organised and stimulating. Students are suitably challenged, quickly acquiring new skills that they can demonstrate effectively in practical and riding lessons. Highly effective lesson planning and excellent use of specialist facilities ensures the practical and majority of theoretical lessons meet student expectations. The lectures lack a variety of student led activities, and therefore students are less motivated and engaged in these lessons. Regular assessments and highly effective feedback, ensure students' understand what they need to do to improve and as a result, achievement rates are high. Students are very satisfied with their course and the progress they make.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is satisfactory. A suitable range of health and safety, first aid and food safety procedures are well managed and regularly audited. Staff have an excellent awareness of health and safety and first aid, however no member of staff has received fire marshal training and the annual fire precaution risk assessment has not yet been completed, reducing the effectiveness of fire prevention measures. The site is well maintained, with excellent facilities, providing a safe, professional environment. Student registration and attendance records are accurate but lack any centralised recording, so attendance data can not be reviewed and analysed. Outstanding quality pastoral support provides students with excellent support and guidance in accordance with the school's aims. All staff know the students well and there is an excellent relationship between staff and their students. Child protection and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Staff are suitably trained with good awareness of their role in safeguarding. The lack of any reference within the policy to accommodating students under 18 limits the effectiveness of the procedure when young students stay on site. Accommodation is well managed and meets student requirements. Students speak very positively of the quality of facilities, horses, teaching and guidance they receive from all staff.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The school is highly effective in meeting its educational aims and a strong culture of student support is evident throughout the school with all staff focused on meeting student needs and providing support. Financial management is robust and supports the high standard of specialist resources. Staff work together extremely well with a clear focus on student outcomes and quality assurance. The management team makes good use of data and is swift to act on feedback to improve provision. The lack of

collation or analysis of student questionnaires limits the value of this data to improve the quality of provision. Accurate self-evaluation identifies appropriate strengths and priorities. The school is very successful in recruiting and developing high calibre staff. An effective structure of appraisals and training provides good support. Lesson observation outcomes are not included as part of the appraisal process so there is no formal procedure to review and develop each instructor's specific teaching skills.

3. THE QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM, TEACHING AND LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS

3.(a) Assessment of students prior to or on arrival

- 3.1 The assessment of students prior to arrival is good. Clear information, advice and guidance allow students to be aware of the range of courses offered. As a result students are able to make an informed choice and select a course that is well matched to their aspirations and employment goals. A thorough initial interview and riding assessment ensures students have the necessary skills to meet the requirements of their chosen course. All students undergo a two week trial to allow the student and staff to ensure they are suitable for the course prior to enrolment.
- 3.2 Information from the initial assessment and induction is shared informally with instructors and used well during the course to meet individual student needs, including selecting the most appropriate horse to suit each rider.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.3 The course provision and curriculum are good, enabling students to find a course of an appropriate duration and level to meet their particular requirements. The range of equine-specific short courses and BHS full time courses offered are in line with the school's aims and allows progression through from level 1 to 5. These full-time courses meet the UKVI definition of an approved qualification for Tier 4 international students. All courses offered are modular, enabling students to achieve their intended qualification at their own rate and they are therefore well educated in accordance with their learning objectives and aspirations.
- 3.4 The school website and publicity materials accurately reflect course provision. This information and the effective advice and guidance provided at enrolment enable students to select a course that is most appropriate to their specific goals and career aspirations. Students find the information, advice and guidance provided of great benefit and are extremely satisfied with the provision offered. They also value studying in an organisation that has a world-wide reputation within the equine industry.
- 3.5 Learning programmes include significant input from instructors, all of whom have extensive experience as competitive riders or trainers in the equine industry. As a result, very few students change their course and the vast majority complete the course they initially enrolled on.

3.(c) The quality of teaching and its impact on learning

- 3.6 The quality of teaching is excellent and highly effective in encouraging student progress. Instructors are well qualified and share their expertise to inspire and motivate students.

- 3.7 Schemes of work closely follow the BHS syllabus and individual sessions are well planned and delivered effectively by instructors, providing interesting and engaging lessons.
- 3.8 Students are well matched to appropriate horses in the riding lessons, helping them to develop specific skills and experience. These group lessons are extremely well managed and include a wide variety of appropriate activities that develop confidence and competence. All instructors provide timely, constructive feedback. As a result, students are enthusiastic, demonstrating strong commitment and a positive attitude to learning; they make excellent progress. Lectures are less structured, with a tendency to rely on teacher-centred delivery and limited questions and answers to check understanding. This lack of student-centred activities means not all students are fully engaged during the lecture. As a result, they are less involved and do not progress as quickly.
- 3.9 Assessment of student work is timely and accurate. Due to the nature of the lessons, the vast majority of feedback is verbal, given during and at the end of each riding lesson or practical training session. This progress is clearly summarised within student log books and portfolios. All instructors are highly skilled at providing succinct, focused feedback that clearly highlights areas for improvement and encourages the student to aim for higher levels of performance. Students are very complementary about the feedback and support they receive from the instructors about the progress they make in their lessons. Instructors provide excellent individual support and have high expectations of their students, encouraging them to persevere, make progress and achieve their targets.
- 3.10 The expertise of staff is supported by high quality teaching resources, including a very good range of well-schooled, experienced riding horses and excellent riding facilities. These specialist resources are used effectively to develop students' skills and promote learning. Consequently, students make excellent progress and can apply their skills and understanding in a variety of situations.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.11 Students make good progress against their entry levels. Analysis of achievement rates over several years indicates that high attainment and examination success is consistently maintained
- 3.12 Monitoring of progress, while effective, is informal, relying heavily on verbal feedback with minimal written feedback or formal recording of progress in student log books. Internal assessments are thorough, preparing students well for the external BHS examinations. Students make good progress and develop the specialist skills, knowledge and understanding to enable them to achieve their career goals. This prepares them well for the next stage of their training or employment in the equine industry.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

4.(a) Health, safety and security of the premises

- 4.1 Health, safety and security of the premises are satisfactory. Suitable policies and risk assessments ensure the site is secure and provides a professional, safe teaching environment that meets industry standards. Appropriate measures are taken to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards in a high risk environment.
- 4.2 Health and safety requirements are well understood by staff and students. All procedures are closely managed and students have a good awareness of the specific risks involved in studying around horses. The site risk assessments are outsourced to a specialist contractor and actions arising are acted upon promptly. The site is checked daily to monitor risks, determine and act upon any adjustments and improvements that need to be made.
- 4.3 Fire protection equipment is appropriately sited and regularly maintained. Regular fire drills are held and documented in both the accommodation and teaching areas. All fire fighting equipment is checked internally each week and annually by a specialist contractor. The external fire risk assessment due in 2014 has not yet occurred and there is no one trained and with specific responsibility as a fire marshal, limiting the effectiveness of fire protection on site.
- 4.4 There are sufficient numbers of trained first aiders, and safety signage in the stable yard, teaching spaces and offices is good. The school is effective in implementing an appropriate first aid policy, with suitable record keeping of all incidents or accidents. Arrangements to ensure the health and safety of a student who is ill or injured are effective.
- 4.5 The premises are secure and provide a professional teaching environment. The stable yard and riding arenas are well maintained. Sufficient washrooms are kept clean and hygienic. The school has excellent wheel chair access and is able to accommodate students with physical disabilities.
- 4.6 A well managed café caters for students, staff and visitors and holds a current food hygiene certificate. Students speak very highly of the food provided.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

- 4.7 Student registration and attendance records are satisfactory. The school maintains accurate admission and attendance registers. Staff make timely contact with any students who miss lessons and all such instances are recorded. Students understand the attendance policy and adhere to it. Attendance rates are very high and the vast majority of students live on site during their course.
- 4.8 There is no central database to record attendance data and therefore it cannot be analysed for patterns of poor attendance or lateness. The current paper-based system is suitable for the small number of students enrolled but as numbers grow

and the range of courses offered increases, it will become difficult to track attendance effectively.

- 4.9 Staff understand UKVI requirements regarding attendance and registration and appropriate procedures are in place to record attendance. However, no Tier 4 students are recruited.
- 4.10 The school has a fair, published procedure for the collection and refund of fees and deposits. Students are informed of the procedures during induction and the terms are clearly published on the website and in all enrolment materials.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.11 Pastoral support for students is excellent. A culture of student care and support is very apparent among all members of staff from the directors to the part-time ancillary staff. They work well as a team, considering students' needs and how they can help support them. The school understands its duty of care and provides excellent advice and guidance in line with its aims. It offers an excellent scholarship scheme that encourages applications from talented students, providing them with financial support and accommodation. Students are very clear about who to see and where to go if they have a concern and are comfortable to discuss issues with all staff including the principal. An effective procedure promotes integration and assists in the prevention of bullying and harassment. There is an excellent rapport and a high degree of mutual respect between students and staff.
- 4.12 Weekly group and one-to-one pastoral meetings are held where needed. Professional medical, psychological and language support is available locally if required. Students express high levels of satisfaction with the support they receive on personal issues. This is a particular strength of the school.
- 4.13 A thorough induction programme allows students to settle quickly onto their course and, if applicable, in their accommodation. The welfare staff are very accessible, and offer support for students at all times including evenings and weekends. Instructors also know their students well and provide effective personal and career guidance and advice. Students speak very highly of the pastoral care, expressing high satisfaction with the support and guidance they receive on personal and academic issues.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.14 Safeguarding arrangements for the small number of part-time and summer school students under the age of 18 is satisfactory. A suitable safeguarding policy is clearly understood by staff and includes relevant e-safety and social media protocols. This policy does not include information on accommodating students under 18 on site so it is unclear what is expected of the younger students who are accommodated at the school.

- 4.15 All staff have attended appropriate child protection training and updates. All teaching staff and any staff with regular contact with students have undergone an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. A small minority of staff have not had the check completed prior to appointment. In these cases a personal disclosure document is completed along with references from previous employers and they are supervised when in contact with students.
- 4.16 Safeguarding responsibilities are well understood and led by a designated member of the senior management team, who has been trained at the appropriate level. All staff have an excellent understanding of how to identify any person who is vulnerable and good awareness of the process and support available to offer assistance if required.
- 4.17 A single central register is regularly updated to maintain an accurate record of staff and volunteers. A member of staff who lives on site is also given specific responsibility for overseeing the welfare of students under 18 to ensure they are kept safe and are given appropriate support and guidance. The school communicates effectively with parents of students aged under 18, alerting them to any issues immediately.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.18 The accommodation provided on site is satisfactory. The 20 rooms are suitably furnished, clean and well maintained. The accommodation is registered in accordance with local authority requirements for houses of multiple occupation. There is a very good working relationship between the staff who manage the accommodation and live on site and the student welfare team. This ensures students' pastoral and personal needs are met and any issues are identified and managed effectively.
- 4.19 Students enjoy staying on site and the additional activities, facilities, support and guidance provided fosters their educational and personal development. Feedback from students indicates high levels of satisfaction with the rooms, food and support provided by the staff.
- 4.20 Students under 16 are provided with designated accommodation on site for between 2 and 27 days. There is a lack of reference within the policy as to how this is managed to ensure child protection requirements are fully understood and implemented effectively.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Governance, leadership and management is excellent. The educational direction of the school is very clear, compatible with their ethos and fully supported by staff. The directors provide stimulus for growth and a strong strategic vision. Regular collection and evaluation of performance evidence from a variety of sources provide the directors with a very good awareness of how the school is performing against budget and targets. The directors are highly responsive to feedback and set demanding targets to drive improvements.
- 5.2 Both directors have excellent awareness of day-to-day school activities as both work daily on site. The principal provides support and a suitable level of challenge to ensure the high quality and strong reputation of the school is maintained. Financial planning and investment in staff and resources is very well managed. There are suitable resources and facilities to meet teaching demands. The directors and staff members work extremely well together, ensuring the legislative and statutory duties are met, with particular consideration given to safeguarding for students under 18 and health and safety.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are good and well defined. Clear educational direction is reflected in the quality of students' learning and their high achievement rates. Effective action is taken on student and awarding body feedback. Leadership and management are effective in the discharge of their delegated responsibilities. Staff work very well together, providing support to each other and working well as a team to meet the aims of the school and student needs.
- 5.4 A thorough self-evaluation process identifies a range of appropriate priorities and a budgeted development plan is used to inform and drive continued improvements and maintain the strong reputation of the school.
- 5.5 Management is highly successful in attracting high calibre, well qualified staff. An effective staff appraisal system and regular, informal feedback provides staff with useful information on their performance. As a result, staff are motivated, teaching is excellent and students are very satisfied with the quality of instruction they receive. Lesson observation feedback is not included within instructors' appraisals and therefore this aspect of their work is not considered or reviewed within the annual review.
- 5.6 Staff development and training is very good. Relevant targets are set and all staff, full- and part-time, are encouraged to achieve further qualifications and training to help develop their role and career. Regular training is also provided by the principal and specialist trainers to help staff in their job. This is highly effective in providing

appropriate professional development and all staff attend. As a result, staff are well trained for their specific roles.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.7 Quality assurance is satisfactory. Managers promote a supportive culture across the school, focused upon student outcomes and the continuous improvement of quality. Informal lesson and peer-to-peer observations occur regularly, although these are not formally documented and therefore this information cannot be analysed and reviewed as part of the quality assurance process.
- 5.8 The significance of evaluating a variety of performance and achievement data is recognised by the school. This data is reviewed at monthly meetings with appropriate actions taken to maintain the high quality of teaching and student attainment.
- 5.9 Student feedback is gathered appropriately through regular conversations and annual questionnaire responses. The school is swift to act on this feedback to improve provision, however the lack of any collation or analysis of the questionnaires limits the value and sharing of this data and its use to inform and drive improvement.
- 5.10 The formal complaints procedure is transparent and includes the option for a complaint to be heard by a panel or independent adjudicator. Students consider this procedure to be fair and open.
- 5.11 The school does not offer a fee protection scheme.

5.(d) Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks

- 5.12 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are satisfactory. Appropriate recruitment procedures ensure that staff are suitable to work at the school. References are taken up but the responses are not always documented within staff files. Highly experienced, qualified staff are recruited, the majority of whom trained at the school prior to working in the industry.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.13 Provision of information is good. The website is clear, accurate and contains all the necessary information to enable students to make an informed choice.
- 5.14 All information requested by the inspectors was provided in a timely manner and members of staff were particularly helpful and accommodating.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

In order to further improve the satisfactory quality provided, the college should:

- Update the safeguarding policy to consider accommodation issues; introduce a code of conduct for under 18s and ensure this is implemented.
- Introduce a formal lesson observation system that is included as part of annual review.
- Analyse and share student feedback data with staff to inform improvement.
- Include student-focused activities within the lectures to encourage them to apply what they are learning.
- Record the checking of references and ensure all staff in regular contact with students under 18 have a DBS check prior to appointment.
- Arrange for the external fire risk assessment due for review in 2014 to occur and for at least one member of staff to be trained as a fire marshal.

INSPECTION EVIDENCE

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted formal interviews with students and examined samples of students' work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and the proprietor, and observed a sample of the extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection period. Inspectors visited residential accommodation. The responses of staff and students to confidential pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the college.

Inspectors

Ms Beth Maloney	Lead Inspector
Mr Martin Roundell Greene	Team Inspector