



**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
Proprietor	Mr William Hutton Mrs Pamela Hutton
Age Range	11+
Total number of students	28
Numbers by age and type of study	Under 16: 0 16 – 18: 5 18+: 23 FE only: 28
Inspection dates	27-29 March 2018

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 The Talland School of Equitation is a privately owned Limited Liability Partnership, operated and owned by two designated partners. Established in 1958, by the parents of the current owner, the school provides riding lessons and equestrian training for students studying for British Horse Society examinations. The partners provide governance and general oversight, with one partner also undertaking the role of principal.
- 1.2 The school's mission is to provide high quality training and industry experience for students planning a career with horses. The school 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. The school provides stabling for a large number of horses. The school hosts the Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) and offers a variety of short and summer courses for students under the age of 18.
- 1.3 The school offers diplomas in horse care at levels 1 to 5 as well as a range of professional courses. Courses run throughout the year, along with private riding lessons, and range in duration from 16 weeks to 12 months. Recruitment is through personal and telephone interview. Student suitability is assessed at a pre-enrolment trial period. Accommodation is available on site. The school caters for students with physical and learning disabilities.
- 1.4 At the time of inspection there were 28 full-time students enrolled. The majority are female, over 18 years of age, and are UK or European citizens. International students come from a wide range of countries, including the United States of America, Japan, China and India. A small minority of students have been identified as needing support with English and have declared additional learning needs. English is the first language for the vast majority of students.

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 good.
- 2.2 The quality of the curriculum, teaching and learners' achievements is excellent. Students receive an extremely good education in accordance with their objectives and the school's aims. A wide range of high quality courses are offered that fully meet the requirements of the equine industry and the career objectives of the students. Courses are very well managed and those on offer to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Initial assessment prior to and on arrival is accurate and is highly effective in ensuring that students have the required skills to successfully complete their courses. Teaching is outstanding and is effectively supported by a very well planned curriculum and an exceptional range of horses and specialist resources. Instructors have excellent subject knowledge and equestrian experience and use highly effective teaching methods to motivate and involve the students in their learning. Consequently, students demonstrate high levels of knowledge and skills development across the range of courses and are very well prepared for their examinations. Students' progress and achievement are excellent. Examination and test results are excellent with nearly all students successfully gaining their qualifications.
- 2.3 Students' welfare, including health and safety, is good. The school's buildings are well maintained and provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn. A suitable range of health and safety policies and procedures are in place and implemented effectively. Fire precautions, drills and evacuations are systematically undertaken, recorded and are clearly understood by all students and staff. Students' registration and attendance records are well managed, accurate and used effectively to monitor attendance. Procedures for reporting to the Home Office are secure. The school's pastoral structure provides good support and guidance for the students in accordance with its aims. Relationships between staff and students are excellent. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students under the age of 18 are good and reflect official guidance. Residential accommodation is of a satisfactory quality, well managed and monitored. Students report that they feel safe and well supported.
- 2.4 The effectiveness of governance, leadership and management is good. The proprietors provide good oversight and discharge their responsibilities well for student welfare, financial planning and investment in the future. There is a strong commitment to maintaining very high standards of education and ensuring the availability of a wide range of exceptionally high quality specialist resources. Leadership and management are good. Roles and responsibilities are appropriately defined and there is highly effective communication between managers and other staff. Well-defined policies and procedures are introduced at all levels, and implemented and monitored appropriately. Mechanisms to monitor quality are satisfactory. Student feedback is used well to improve their experience, but formal staff feedback is not collected. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. However, it does not

always focus clearly on the identification of the school's overall key strengths and areas for development or feed into an action plan to set priorities for improvement. The school successfully attracts highly qualified and experienced instructors. Procedures for the recruitment of staff are satisfactory, in accordance with legal requirements, with all appropriate checks undertaken.

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 and on arrival is excellent. Detailed entry criteria are set and used by the school to provide accurate and appropriate advice and guidance to prospective students. The application form is detailed and collects any declared special educational needs and language support requirements. On arrival, effective testing and one-to-one interviews ensure students have the appropriate level of equine and equestrian skills for their selected programme. In addition, students may undertake a two week trial period to ensure they are on the right long course. The process is accurate and students are highly satisfied with their course placements, which they feel are appropriate to their needs and future aspirations.
- 3.2 Regular on-going tests ensure that the course remains appropriate for the students and clearly identify any issues that they may have with the demands of their programme of study. Excellent use is made of this information by instructors to guide their planning and provide any necessary support or guidance.
- 3.3 High quality information, advice and guidance are made available to students prior to arrival. The school's website is detailed, professional and includes accurate information about the curriculum on offer. Students confirm that they are highly satisfied with the pre-enrolment advice they receive.

3.(b) Suitability of course provision and curriculum

- 3.4 The suitability of course provision and curriculum is excellent. Students are extremely well educated in accordance the school's aims and their objectives. The school has a clear statement of educational purpose which is supported by comprehensive schemes of work. The curriculum is very well planned and is designed to allow students to rapidly progress through British Horse Society (BHS) accredited qualifications. Consequently, the content and learning experiences provided for students prepares them effectively for further study or work within the equine industry.
- 3.5 The range of courses offered encourages progression of learning, and programmes of study offered to Tier 4 students meet the definition of an approved qualification, as set out in the Home Office guidance. Retention on programmes is excellent, with nearly all students successfully completing their course. Students report that they are happy the progress that they are making.
- 3.6 Courses match those listed on the web-site and in other marketing material.

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

- 3.7 The quality of teaching and its impact on learning is outstanding. Comprehensive planning and an extensive understanding of the needs of their students allow

instructors to successfully adapt lessons to meet individual learning needs and effectively challenge students. Instructors use a wide range of effective teaching methods and learning activities to engage and motivate students. As a result, nearly all students make outstanding progress in relation to their ability and starting points.

- 3.8 Instructors are very well qualified, highly experienced within the equine industry and have an excellent understanding and knowledge of their subject and associated BHS examination requirements. Relationships at all levels are extremely productive, with instructors and students working collaboratively to enhance learning and progress. Lessons are well paced, with instructors constantly correcting riding errors and asking searching questions that prompt students to think and respond successfully.
- 3.9 Instructors readily offer individual help and support to ensure high levels of skills, knowledge and understanding are developed. The high expectations of instructors ensure that all students are consistently challenged and well supported to meet their learning goals. Resources for learning are outstanding, with an exceptional range of horses and specialist resources available to develop students understanding of the subject and examination requirements.
- 3.10 Assessment is regular, thorough and follows the BHS requirements. It accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses in the students' progress and highlights areas for improvement. Feedback to students is positive, encouraging, accurate and clearly identifies areas for improvement.
- 3.11 Arrangements for tracking student' progress are excellent. The progress of each student is very carefully tracked, allowing managers, instructors and students to monitor their progress effectively.

3.(d) Attainment and progress

- 3.12 Progress and attainment are excellent. The evidence from lesson observation and scrutiny of work shows that the overall standards being reached are excellent. Students reach very high levels of attainment judged on the performance in external BHS examinations.
- 3.13 Attendance levels are high with very few students withdrawing from their chosen programme of study. Students report that they are extremely pleased with their progress.

4. STUDENTS' WELFARE, INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY

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

4.1 Arrangements for the health, safety and security of the premises are good. Health and safety is a priority within the school and arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are still effective. Detailed health and safety policies and procedures are in place, fully implemented and the premises are secure. Buildings are fit-for-purpose, well maintained and fully accessible for students with physical disabilities. Classrooms provide satisfactory spaces to support learning, with good lighting, heating and ventilation. All electrical equipment is tested regularly as required. Where food is prepared and served there are good arrangements to ensure hygienic preparation and service. Toilet facilities are adequate in number and well maintained. As a result, students report that they feel safe, secure and comfortable.

4.1 Measures taken to reduce risk from fire and other hazards are good and conform to legal requirements. An appropriate health and safety policy is in place with clearly allocated responsibilities. Detailed risk assessments for all buildings and activities are carried out and regularly reviewed. An appropriate number of fire-marshals are in place and regular evacuation drills are undertaken, with records of actions and equipment tests accurately maintained in a fire log. Fire action notices are clearly displayed and fire exits are well signposted. Fire protection equipment is properly sited and regularly checked. Regular fire drills are carried out which are well recorded. First aid procedures are good, with a sufficient number of trained first-aiders, well-stocked first aid boxes and an appropriately maintained accident log. Staff and students are aware of their responsibilities and have received appropriate health and safety training. Proper provision is made for students who are ill or injured.

4.(b) Student registration and attendance records

4.2 Arrangements for student registration and attendance recording are good. Admission procedures are detailed and properly observed. A central register is accurately maintained and individual student files contain relevant information on admission details, academic records and, where relevant, copies of student visas.

4.3 Daily attendance is accurately recorded and closely monitored with any unexpected absence followed up on the same day. Communication between administrators and instructors is excellent and effectively identifies students who fail to show for specific sessions. Such instances are rare. Students are made aware that regular absence may seriously disrupt their progress and where appropriate will be reported to the Home Office.

4.4 Management and administrative staff have a clear understanding of Home Office requirements regarding the enrolment and attendance requirements for students, and adhere to them rigorously.

- 4.5 Clear policies and procedures are in place for the collection and refund of student fees and deposits. The policy is fair and applied consistently.

4.(c) Pastoral support for students

- 4.6 Pastoral support for students is good. Student welfare is a key priority for the school and it has been successful in developing a safe and inclusive environment which fosters a spirit of learning and personal achievement. An intensive induction ensures students are well prepared for their time at the school. A useful student handbook includes appropriate information about equine procedures and standards of conduct required within the school.
- 4.7 Staff provide highly effective support and guidance in accordance with the needs of the students. Relationships between staff and students and amongst the students themselves are excellent, with a strong culture of mutual respect, integration and tolerance. A wide range of policies and procedures reinforce this culture and the expectations of behaviour and conduct. Replies to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meetings with students' show that they feel that the school is providing them with a safe and comfortable environment which is effective in meeting their learning needs.
- 4.8 Effective careers advice ensures that students are well prepared for further study choices and life beyond school. A suitable range of enrichment and social activities and excursions are available, which effectively enhances learning.

4.(d) Safeguarding for under 18s

- 4.9 Safeguarding arrangements for students under the age of 18 are good and have proper regard to official guidance. There is a designated child protection officer in place who is appropriately trained. All staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) suitability checks prior to or on appointment, and accurate records are maintained in a centralised register of appointments.
- 4.10 A range of suitable policies is in place and effectively implemented. Staff are made aware of safeguarding issues through appropriate training.

4.(e) Residential accommodation

- 4.11 The quality of residential accommodation is satisfactory. The building is secure, well maintained and managed. Facilities are of a satisfactory standard. All health and safety measures are in place to reduce the risk of fire and other hazards. The premises are properly registered in accordance with national requirements and students report a good level of satisfaction with their accommodation, food and support provided by the staff.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

5.(a) Ownership and oversight

- 5.1 Ownership and oversight are good. The educational direction of the school is clear and fully understood by staff. The focus of governance and leadership has a clear emphasis on supporting students and developing and maintaining extremely high standards of teaching. The senior leadership team has successfully established both formal and informal procedures that are effective in monitoring all aspects of the school's performance. Policies and procedures are well developed, regularly reviewed and effectively contribute to the high quality of education and the care of students. Relationships between the senior leadership team and staff are excellent.
- 5.2 The proprietors, through their roles at the school, have excellent awareness of day to day activities and provide a suitable level of challenge to ensure the high quality is maintained. Consequently, the school meets its obligations with regard to safeguarding, health and safety and fire safety, including all statutory duties in respect of students under the age of 18. Financial management is highly effective and ensures the availability of a wide range of exceptionally high quality specialist resources. All necessary legal permissions are in place for the use of the premises, including relevant insurances and licenses.

5.(b) Management structures and responsibilities

- 5.3 Management structures and responsibilities are good. An appropriate management structure and well-defined roles and responsibilities promote a culture of continuous quality improvement which helps to ensure the good quality of the students' education. Communication between staff and managers is good and staff value the accessibility of managers and their responsiveness.
- 5.4 Managers have a firm commitment to sustaining and improving both the quality of teaching and learning and the educational outcomes of their students. The current self-evaluation report is satisfactory and successfully identifies a number of relevant strengths and weaknesses. However, it does not always focus clearly on the identification of the school's overall key strengths and areas for development, or feed into an action plan to set priorities for improvement. The school has an appropriate range of policies which are properly implemented and systematically monitored.
- 5.5 The school is very successful in securing and retaining well-qualified and experienced staff. An effective system of staff review is in place and this is used to ensure staff are well qualified for the work they do, and are appropriately supported by the school. A good programme of staff development is in place to ensure that staff are appropriately trained for their roles.

5.(c) Quality assurance including student feedback

- 5.6 Quality assurance including student feedback is satisfactory. Arrangements include the observation of teaching, student surveys and regular review of student performance. Data on performance and progress is used effectively to monitor and evaluate course effectiveness and the school makes improvements as a result of student feedback and course reviews. However, formal staff feedback is not collected. As a result, there is a lost opportunity to further improve academic standards and the student experience.
- 5.7 Responses to questionnaires and evidence from interviews indicate a good level of satisfaction with the school expressed by both staff and students. Students are happy and the majority would recommend the school to friends.
- 5.8 The policy and process for making and recording formal complaints is clear and appropriate with access to an independent panel if necessary.

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

- 5.9 Staff recruitment, qualifications and suitability checks are satisfactory. Well-qualified staff are secured through an appropriate staff recruitment policy. All required recruitment checks have been carried out in a timely manner and appropriately recorded. The process to validate references and qualifications is satisfactory and the audit trail is clear with due regard to statutory requirements. A central record of appointments is in place and effectively monitored by senior staff.

5.(e) Provision of information

- 5.10 Provision of information is good. The website is clear and user-friendly. Prospective students are able to access accurate and relevant information to inform their study choices.
- 5.11 The school was responsive in providing information for the inspection in a timely manner.

6. ACTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further improvement

In order to further improve the good quality provided, the school should:

- Ensure the self-evaluation plan focuses on identifying overall key strengths and areas for development which leads to a development plan that sets clear priorities for improvement.
- Regularly obtain formal feedback from staff to further develop school provision.

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 with the proprietors and attended registration sessions. 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

Dr Nigel Chambers	Lead Inspector
Mrs Prue Amner	Team Inspector