



EDUCATION IN RDA

LEARNING THROUGH HORSES ...learning for life

*Recognising
and rewarding
achievement*



CASE STUDY

Avon's calling...

Recently, children from our school benefited from a couple of terms' placement at Avon Riding Centre – a worthwhile, rewarding experience for children and staff.

Many of our children are largely non-ambulant and non-verbal, but stable staff encouraged them to handle and interact with items in the tack room, from hay, straw and feed, to combs and brushes.

After an initial week showing no understanding of the task, one child showed he remembered his previous visit, choosing a brush and reaching towards his pony's mane. Other children began to make clear choices, showing preferences for smells, materials and activities.

We saw great progress within just six weekly visits for a group of quiet, thoughtful children who sometimes struggled to find their voices among more verbally confident students. After initially approaching horses with caution, time spent grooming and bonding saw their confidence bloom.

Another exciting development was that the visits encouraged communication – animated conversations could be heard on the minibus – and we noted coinciding improvements in self-esteem.

The stables have become an integral element in the holistic curriculum we offer, and as Avon increases the number of horses it owns, I hope even more of our students will be able to benefit from the therapy riding and contact with horses provide.

Hazel Sinclair MA (Ed) BEd (Hons) |
Assistant Head Teacher,
New Siblands Primary School



In RDA, we know the incredible, profound effects that simply being around horses can have on people with disabilities. The therapeutic, health and emotional benefits are well-documented and can, quite simply, be life-changing

60%

Over 60% of RDA groups now offer at least one of our national award schemes. There are now more opportunities than ever to mark achievement in RDA



EDUCATION IN RDA

Recognising and rewarding achievement

16,000+

educational awards were made in RDA in 2014-15

28,000

people with physical and learning difficulties are helped to achieve personal goals, through riding, vaulting, and carriage driving each year

Every year in RDA, around 28,000 people with physical and learning difficulties are helped by dedicated volunteers to achieve personal goals, through riding, vaulting and carriage driving. Aims can be based on physical mobility or improvement in fitness, or simply to overcome social isolation, experience the outdoors, to connect with animals or to find the confidence to gain valuable life skills.

But RDA isn't simply about riding a

horse, or taking the reins of a carriage. The sessions are also a fantastic platform for learning, in an engaging, supportive, rewarding and fun environment.

RDA activities are being increasingly recognised for their educational benefits, and the way curriculum-based subjects can be simply and effectively incorporated; adding enormous benefits to those taking part – both in the session and beyond, and in all areas of their life.

Leaders in our field

Our qualified RDA Coaches help children and young people with special needs to achieve proficiency awards and other resources that recognise effort and persistence to gain success. Schools sending children to ride with RDA tell us that, following riding therapy sessions, children show significant improvements, including:

- ▶ Greater focus
 - ▶ Self-confidence
 - ▶ Raised self-esteem
 - ▶ Enhanced social skills
- RDA also offers unparalleled opportunities for riders who would like to compete. RDA is committed to Special

Educational Needs support. Changes to the way children and young people up to age 25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are educated and supported came into force in England in September 2014. This has resulted in more opportunities for children and parents to have more choice and control over what activities they believe will help them achieve agreed goals. Partnership working between RDA, schools, parents and children helps ensure that education and health care plans are 'co-produced' and geared to achieving agreed outcomes for the individual child.



THE CURRICULUM Horses for courses!

RDA offers a wide programme of educational activities that have been endorsed by teaching professionals, and a learning environment with the flexibility to deliver sessions to suit a wide variety of learning styles. Many core National Curriculum areas can be incorporated in RDA sessions. Simple exercises to develop numeracy and increase vocabulary, for example, can add interest and an additional focus, alongside learning equestrian skills:

- ▶ English
- ▶ Maths
- ▶ Science
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Art and design
- ▶ Physical Education

“ There is no doubt that the RDA Education Programme supports and enhances the work of schools and opens up opportunities for youngsters. Collaboration between RDA and schools can only be good for all concerned... ”

Dr Liz Sidwell CBE | Former Schools Commissioner for England & Trustee RDA Chigwell Riding Trust Group



THE RDA TRACKER

How we measure up...

The RDA Tracker complements RDA activities as it mirrors schools' reporting methods and markers. Schools use Tracker reports to justify provisioning therapeutic riding, and RDA Groups can use them to demonstrate that they provide a good investment of funds held by schools to pay for therapeutic activities



REWARDS FOR ALL!

Hey, look at us!

RDA is a celebratory organisation, and our culture of recognising and rewarding achievement is at the heart of all we do. The RDA Education programme has been designed to provide appealing, rewarding ways of recognising success for participants. RDA Proficiency Tests, the Endeavour Award, the ASDAN programmes and even the Arts and Crafts competition at the National Championships... all are part of the wide range of exciting and varied education projects taking part within RDA Groups. We're proud to say that there are now more opportunities than ever for children and adults to show what they really **can do** – as that is what counts.



GET INVOLVED!

A community effort

Creating and recording educational opportunities in RDA sessions can add enjoyment and interest for all involved. It gives session helpers, with valuable skills, the chance to play an active part in making the most of participants' experience – and is a fantastic way to engage with schools, colleges, families and carers. RDA is helping participants to learn...

....and live!



How do you justify releasing children to ride during the school day?

Results you can see for yourself

RDA provides therapeutic riding to thousands of children, young people and adults living with every type of disability, each year. In 2013, we brought together a panel of therapy experts to create and test a tool for measuring change in individual riders. The resulting RDA Tracker is a simple-to-use, holistic resource for recording and measuring evidence of changes and outcomes achieved through attending our sessions.

The Tracker shows, at a glance, where and how much change has taken place during the time spent in RDA activities. This information can help to identify future goals, allowing RDA Coaches and therapists to tailor lessons and activities to individual needs.

Working with the Tracker encourages volunteers to be more observant and engage more closely with riders, bringing social and emotional benefits to all involved. The observations, made by teachers, parents, therapists, coaches and side walkers are all combined to tell the story of the participant's RDA journey.

Insights can be shared with family, carers, and schools – not only providing the opportunity for participants to share their achievements – but also for others to build on any positive changes outside RDA sessions.

Immediate benefits for Groups

Having access to evidence about the benefits of RDA activities is proving invaluable for many RDA Groups when submitting grant applications and taking part in fundraising and publicity.

Tracker 'scores' are collected from RDA Groups and analysed in UK-wide reports, to highlight what RDA does well and potential areas for change. The Tracker has been warmly welcomed by schools working in partnership with RDA.

Now online!

The Tracker is now even more user-friendly. RDA Groups can track participants at any time in the school year and enter results online. If Groups track ten or more riders per year, they can receive a personalised report for their group, as well as the wider UK report, providing the opportunity to provide partnership schools with individual reports for each pupil.

MORE INFO

On how the Tracker can benefit your group –
Dom Chambers, RDA Tracker Manager e: dchambers@rda.org.uk
or Denise Robertson, Head of Therapy t: 01926 405976,
e: [drobertson@rda.org.uk](mailto:d Robertson@rda.org.uk)



1 > 5+

The RDA Tracker measures progress in six categories: communication, confidence, enjoyment, relationships, physical changes, and horsemanship – showing, at a glance, that progression through increments from 1 to 5+ on each level of the 'rosette' tool...

IN JUST ONE TERM...

RDA's Tracker report shows



Physical improvement in 74% of riders



77% experienced greater confidence



75% experienced more enjoyment



65% showed greater willingness and ability to communicate



72% showed improved relationship-building skills



78% showed a clear advance in horsemanship

The RDA Endeavour Award enables Groups to recognise and reward individual achievements by all riders, vaulters and carriage drivers, regardless of ability or time spent in sessions and without the constraints of any set syllabus, or the need to take any kind of test...



5,000+
On average 5,000+ Endeavour Awards are made each year. And 45% of Groups are now taking part

Because it's what you *can do* that counts

“It is the best award RDA has produced. It allows our participants to achieve success regardless of disabilities or difficulties. It can be awarded for something as simple as sitting still, holding reins, or learning rising trot, which can be quite an achievement. As well as a certificate, they receive a badge, which is worn with great pride. I have had the pleasure of presenting Endeavour Awards, so I know how much this achievement means...”

Pat Holden | Trustee,
Midgeland RDA Group and
Lancashire County Chairman

“Our RDA Group has a session for specific learning difficulty (SLD) adults. Each term we present the riders with an Endeavour Award. The mother of a new rider was moved to tears as her 52-year-old daughter Susan had never won any award or had any achievement recognised in that way before...”

Why offer the Endeavour Award?

- ▶ **Resources provided free:** RDA Groups can choose from eye-catching certificates, colourful badges, and iron-on embroidered patches.
- ▶ **No tests and no set syllabus:** Groups create their own goals with participants. You decide how to make the award!
- ▶ **No limitations:** More than one award can be given and groups can set the pace and the timescale. Goals can be short-term, to be awarded after a couple of weeks, or perhaps something more long-term, to steadily work towards over a school term.
- ▶ **Confidence boost:** The awards are fantastic for boosting self-confidence and esteem.
- ▶ **Something for everyone:** Everyone can achieve the award. Endeavour is particularly suitable for participants for whom traditional proficiency tests or even ASDAN aren't an option.
- ▶ **Endeavour and schools:** Offering extra opportunities for participants to achieve and be rewarded helps to demonstrate to OFSTED that the sessions are high value, as pupils are not only riding, vaulting or carriage driving, but are also meeting targets, developing and progressing physically, socially and in an educational capacity.



Thank you...

RDA is extremely grateful to the Worshipful Company of Loriners for its generous sponsorship of the RDA Endeavour Award

Exciting resources, including syllabus cards, certificates and badges, are available completely FREE of charge to all RDA Groups directly from RDA National Office

An opportunity to rise to the challenge

RDA Coaches are trained to a high professional standard, which is well-recognised in the equestrian world. All RDA disciplines offer a structured progression path, with attractive rewards available to RDA Groups, to mark success at each stage of achievement.

RDA offers a raft of Proficiency

Tests, which have been carefully developed by RDA Coaching experts, with a real focus on measured, defined, and attainable aims.

They give participants the opportunity to gain useful, practical knowledge, even at a basic level, and to enjoy a challenge which is accessible, within the scope of their ability.



Awards are available for achievements in:

- ▶ Riding
- ▶ Horse Care
- ▶ Showjumping
- ▶ Carriage Driving
- ▶ Vaulting
- ▶ Endurance



Did you know?

1 A choice of attractive pin badges or iron-on patches are available for Riding and Horse Care Proficiency Tests

2 Level 1 can be delivered and assessed within your own Group, at your own pace

3 Proficiency tests and ASDAN projects can be completed simultaneously, as many of the activities are easily transferable

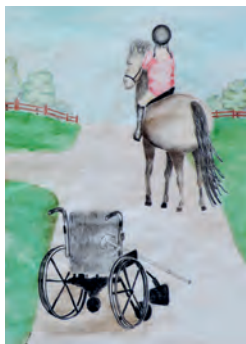


“ When we found we couldn't do carriage driving due to awful weather, a group of our older drivers decided to meet at one of their houses, with their carers, to create an entry for the Arts and Crafts competition. It was entirely their own idea, and they spent a busy afternoon, chatting about RDA, how much they loved carriage driving – and making a beautiful collage! What a great way to keep their RDA time going, even though they couldn't actually drive! That's the RDA effect!



RDA Arts & Crafts Competition

Luck of the draw... Express yourself!



Forming part of the RDA National Championships, the annual Arts & Crafts Competition is always an incredibly popular event.

Not only does the competition provide a brilliant opportunity for riders, vaulters and carriage drivers to express themselves through art, but also, as it is open to participants of all ages, it gives everyone the chance to take part in a national competition in some way, and to achieve recognition.

In RDA, we're always amazed by entrants' creativity and

imagination, and the passion and excitement each has for RDA is clear to see. Each year, classes are offered for both individual and group artwork, and these can be drawings, paintings, collages or montages, sculptures – or even textile creations.

The competition is a fantastic opportunity to involve families, schools, colleges or care centres, too, as participants are encouraged to create their artwork at any time; in RDA sessions, in the classroom, or even at home.

Thank you...

RDA is extremely grateful to Life with Art for its generous sponsorship of the Arts & Crafts Competition, see www.lifewithart.co.uk for more details

LifewithArt

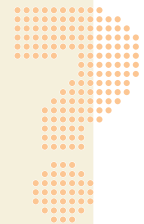


DID YOU KNOW?

The 'write' stuff...

RDA also runs a literary competition for poetry and prose. To inspire you, here is an excerpt from Maryam Ebrahim's *The Healer* – a poem "dedicated to the helping horses".

*Gently we ride,
together as one.
Her struggles behind,
difficulties overcome.
Her willing hand,
my willing heart.
A bond is formed,
a winning start.
The sudden laugh,
I feel her glee.
The fear now vanished
– she is free...*



MORE INFO

To find out more, contact
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ASDAN PROGRAMMES & SHORT COURSES

ASDAN is a pioneering curriculum development organisation and awarding body, offering programmes and qualifications that nurture skills for learning, employment and life

“RDA has a long history of excellence in making the multi-sensory experience of horse riding accessible to an amazingly diverse range of people. We are really proud of our association with RDA and the way in which its team has supported the process of accreditation, striking the right balance between activity and quality assurance

Kath Grant | Director of Education, ASDAN



Recording and sharing the journey

RDA has been working with ASDAN since 2005, and in just over a decade that partnership has given hundreds of RDA riders, vaulters and carriage drivers the opportunity to show off their skills, share experiences, and have their achievements recognised with accredited, internationally-respected certificates.

ASDAN's *Preparing for Adulthood* programmes are designed for those with moderate, severe, complex, profound or multiple learning difficulties. RDA currently offers two of these programmes: *Towards Independence: Animal Care* and *Transition Challenge**. Covering key curriculum areas, they allow for inclusion and achievement at all levels – from having a sensory experience of the activities, through to being able to complete and record tasks unaided.

Photographs, writing, worksheets, drawings, and collages can all be used to show just what's been accomplished. The aim is to be creative and collect a file of evidence, in an attractive and appealing format.

**New Sensory version of Transition Challenge now available*



Did you know?

1 ASDAN *Towards Independence* is a great accompaniment to the RDA Proficiency Tests – many of the activities are easily transferred between both awards

2 There's no time cut-off for completion of the workbooks – to allow everyone the time they need to finish their projects and achieve their certificates. Certificates can be awarded throughout the year



We love ASDAN programmes because

- They allow participants of all ages and abilities to be rewarded for activities and achievements, even sensory experiences
- Activities help develop key, curriculum-supportive skills, such as numeracy and language skills. They also build social awareness, confidence, and self esteem
- Workbook projects can form a simple, useful basis for lesson plans – and they're great fun!
- They enable parents, carers, teachers and assistants to really get involved with riders' development by helping with the projects at home or in school
- ASDAN is highly respected by schools and colleges, who can use participants' achievements as valuable evidence for OFSTED
- Finished projects are something special to keep and share, as a 'diary' of time spent in RDA. They can be shown off to the school or college, family and friends, and are something to be really proud of!
- They help to make the most of the RDA experience
- They can foster friendships and interaction between participants

MORE INFO

Contact Marisa Bretherton-Mackay
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Animal Care Short Course

A course with 10-60 hours of activities, involving caring for animals ranging from RDA equines or pets, farm animals and wildlife, to learning about more exotic species at zoos or wildlife centres.

Challenge descriptions can be adapted, and the course can be carried out in a variety of settings, over a time period to suit the participant/Group.

Aimed at young people of all abilities, mainly 13-19 years (but also adults/younger learners, where appropriate), the focus is on completing challenges and skills development according to individual ability, rather than attainment at a specific level. Certificates can be issued throughout the year, after internal moderation.

