

To whom it may concern

RDA is sometimes thought to be a leisure facility offering riding sessions to children with disabilities. However, what RDA provides is therapeutic riding in a context where therapy is disguised as opportunities for achievement and fun. RDA launched a UK wide therapeutic outcomes sample survey during the autumn term of 2013. We collected data about 181 school age RDA riders in 26 RDA Groups. Riders achieved statistically significant progress in six areas of potential change: communications skills, confidence and enjoyment, relationship building skills, physical change and horsemanship. The areas of change assessed by the RDA Tracker, our therapeutic outcomes monitoring tool, are connected and contribute to wellbeing; progress in one area, such as horsemanship, boosts progress in others, such as confidence, which encourages enjoyment.

Research shows that after one term (12 weeks) the majority of our riders are stronger, fitter, more relaxed when relating to ponies and people and very happy to ride. Because our riders have succeeded at something many others cannot do, their sense of pleasure and pride in their achievement often leads them to aspire to do more in other areas of their life.

### **Headline findings**

- 75% of riders improved their communication skills
- 80% demonstrated more confidence
- 80% showed more enjoyment as the term of riding progressed.
- 82% demonstrated improved relationship building skills
- 80% demonstrated improved physical functioning
- 83% showed improved horsemanship skills, proving their capacity to gain knowledge and technical skill

These findings applied to all categories of disability including learning disability, autism, physical and sensory disabilities.

RDA sessions also contain exercises to develop numeracy and increase vocabulary. Our qualified coaches help children with special needs achieve proficiency awards and other attainments that recognise effort and persistence to secure success. Schools who send children to ride with us tell us that children have a number of significantly improved outcomes, including greater focus, self-confidence and raised self-esteem after riding therapy sessions. RDA also offers unparalleled opportunities for riders who would like to compete.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to National Office using the contact details below.