

loose jumping arena, a 25m covered indoor lunging ring, an eight-horse walker, a custom-built crush, starting stalls and stabling for 26 horses.

All training is one-on-one and courses range from two weeks to 10 or 12 weeks. Horses are coming and going all the time so there are no set school terms.

Our team don't become emotionally involved with a horse, so we are not allowed to love the individual pupils, nor are we allowed to dislike them. We're allowed to love the process of growing each horse's potential (and we do) but it's not personal – just like the professionalism of teaching children."

She talks too of the professional teacher/pupil concept of respect, where neither



Dormitory conditions with PJs at the foot of the beds.

should invade the space of the other without mutual consent. "Many horses just don't like being touched or restrained and react so that the human is forced to move out of the horse's way – it's a natural reaction. However many humans act as though they have some superior right to touch and restrain a horse – and then react in fear when the horse is agitated. Then it's the human who's behaving badly. The horse is merely defending himself." She says it's common to hear horses being accused of 'arrogance' and 'bad temper' but more often than not it's the owner who's exhibiting these characteristics.

"Horses, like children, need to know the rules of behaviour – and their owners/parents often need guidance if not tuition on how to manage their 'children'."

The school operates a comprehensive individual report system in which the 'parents' are coached on their horse's behavioural issues – and, by implication, on their own towards their animal. They also learn by watching staff handling their animal. "They are fascinated when we demonstrate how little pressure is needed to get the job done," says the diminutive Cheski. "We go to great lengths to get the message across."

Because Abderry's facilities are so substantial it makes sense to

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Parents are coached on their horse's behavioural issues.

Spring

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