England and Wales Cricket Board Limited

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	58178
Name of lead inspector:	Tim Gardner HMI
Last day of inspection:	25 November 2010
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Lords Cricket Ground St Johns Wood Road London NW8 8QZ
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Information about the provider

1.   The England and Wales Cricket Board Limited (ECB) is the national governing body for first class cricket clubs in England and Wales. Each county first class club has an academy programme, which is licensed by the ECB. The academy programmes started in 2001 and in December 2006 the ECB introduced the advanced apprenticeship in sporting excellence (AASE). The national performance manager oversees and the apprentice contract manager manages the programme. The AASE contract, funded by East Midlands Skills Funding Agency supports the learners working at the county cricket club academies. Currently, 43 learners are attending the programme at 14 county cricket clubs.

2.   The head office of the ECB is at Lords cricket ground in London. Each cricket club operates its own academy. A director heads each academy and a team of coaches provides cricket training. The ECB provides specialist support to academy players, for instance in science, medicine and lifestyle. Academy appointed assessors conduct assessment, internal verification and reviews. Almost all learners are in full-time education and typically attend coaching and personal development sessions during evenings and weekends. Learners do not have to undertake the technical certificate of the AASE framework if they study, or have previously acquired, specific equivalent academic and vocational qualifications on an exemption list.

3.   The ECB does not provide any training on behalf of other providers.

4.   No organisation provides training on behalf of the ECB.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2009/10
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	83 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2

Capacity to improve	Grade 2

	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Subject Areas	Grade
Sport, recreation and leisure	2

Overall effectiveness

5. The ECB overall is a good provider with a few satisfactory and some outstanding features. The ECB supports and promotes the development of excellent facilities and resources to encourage learners to achieve the sporting excellence qualification. The wide range of highly expert specialist support enables learners to make outstanding choices about their own health and well-being. The sporting excellence NVQ, coupled with their own choice of academic study ensures that the ECB meets all the needs and interests of learners in an excellent way.

6. Learners now achieve high success rates and achieve on time at the end of the two-year programme. They enjoy attending all of the activities at the academies but they especially enjoy the high quality coaching sessions. Learners take part in a range of additional activities to develop them as rounded individuals, not just as elite cricketers. During these activities, they develop a range of skills including communication, teamwork, planning as well as taking responsibility for their own involvement in learning.

7. Formal teaching and training sessions are at least satisfactory. Coaches, qualified to the highest level, provide excellent technical cricket coaching. Apprentices receive very good support from specialists. Support and guidance for all learners is good. Assessment at most centres is good. However, a

minority use too little observation as evidence in portfolios. Internal verification did not identify this problem.

8.   Leadership and management are good. The ECB has a clear strategic vision on how academies support the future development of the cricket and the development of more 'home grown' elite cricketers. The ECB place a high priority on promoting the safeguarding. Strategies to promote further inclusion of women into the game are developing well but staff miss some opportunities to promote equality and diversity with the learners.

Main findings

- Success rates are high, they have increased each year and they are now well above the national average. Learners' cricket skills are excellent. Their progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the life of a professional cricketer is good. All learners thoroughly enjoy academy programmes. They attend regularly.

- The programme is very effective in improving learners' economic and social well-being. It provides good preparation for a career in professional cricket or progression either to other employment or further and higher education. A high and increasing proportion of learners achieve professional cricket status.

- Learners feel safe. Staff pay particular attention to maintaining safe practice at all times during net practices. Risk assessments ensure that particular activities such as overseas trips and venues are safe. However, staff do not all always risk assess practical activities and record these in detail.

- Learners' ability to make informed choices about their health and well-being is outstanding. A well-qualified team, with specialist professional support, manages an extensive programme of personal development and welfare. The team provide both group and individual sessions to support learners covering a range of topics, including nutrition, diet and health.

- The quality of provision is good. Technical coaching sessions are excellent. They provide learners with expert development of their cricket skills. A range of other professionals including physiotherapists, strength and conditioning coaches, doctors and sports psychologists support learners extremely well. Staff maintain detailed records of this support.

- Assessment practice is not consistent across all centres. At a minority of academies, learners do not understand the assessment process sufficiently. Assessors rely too heavily on secondary evidence rather than actually observing the learners. A few portfolios do not contain all of the available evidence and a minority do not have sufficient evidence produced by the candidate.

- The programme is excellent at meeting the needs and interests of the learners. As well as providing a good introduction to the world of professional cricket, it maintains an excellent focus on the learners other educational and academic programme, ensuring that a range of opportunities outside of cricket remain available.

- The use of partnerships and the care, guidance and support for learners are good. Academies continue to develop links with parents and the educational establishments that learners attend to improve support. Personal development and welfare staff, coaches and academy staff all provide learners with a good range of support.

- Overall, leadership and management are good. The ECB has a clear vision, supported by detailed strategies and plans, to implement and develop academies to improve the quality of play at the highest level. Line management of a minority of staff is unclear. This results in them not receiving all of the relevant and appropriate training and updating they need.

- Promotion of learners' safeguarding is good. The ECB provides an extensive portfolio of detailed policies and procedures and other supporting documents. All staff complete an enhanced CRB check, which the ECB renews every three years. Staff receive safeguarding training. Clubs name those responsible for this area but these are not always clearly publicised in academy premises.

- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. However, staff miss a few opportunities to promote equality and diversity to learners. Detailed strategies and strong advocacy promote the inclusion of women's cricket in all programmes. ECB has developed well the opportunities for women to play cricket. A central women's cricket academy is in place.

- The ECB makes good use of its resources to support the programme. Nearly all of the academies have excellent resources to provide high quality learning. Investment in technology assists staff, including assessors, to do their job more effectively.

What does England and Wales Cricket Board Limited need to do to improve further?

- Take action to ensure that assessment practice at every centre is consistent and thorough so that the evidence candidates produce meets the sporting excellence standards more rigorously.

- Make line management arrangements for all staff clear so that all academies fully implement all policies and procedures, including the monitoring and recording of all required staff training and updating.

- Ensure staff training on equality and diversity focuses on developing and improving their depth of knowledge and understanding of this area so that they use every opportunity to promote equality and diversity more effectively to learners.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors
What learners like:

- expertise of the coaches
- opportunities to see and work with professional players
- good quality facilities

- support and guidance from all the staff
- opportunities to go on tour
- good preparation for the next step in their cricket development
- variety in the programme on top of the cricket
- how the programme gives another choice if it is not cricket
- support and help they receive to recover from injury.

What learners would like to see improved:

- reduced paperwork
- help in balancing school work with the demands of cricket
- ensuring that everyone is fully informed
- more recovery time during busy or hectic periods.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors
What employers like:

- no responses from employers.

What employers would like to see improved:

- no responses from employers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement   Grade 2

9.   The ECB's capacity to improve the provision is good. At the previous inspection, no success rate data was available. Subsequently, the data for the first cohort indicated a slow start with success rates low at 35%. These increased substantially the following year to 75%, just above the national average and have increased further to 88% for 2009/10. Actions by ECB have improved the provision. Vision and clear strategic direction ensures that all academy and ECB staff maintain a good focus on continuing improvement. The ECB now directly employs staff that a sub-contractor previously employed. This has improved ECB's ability to manage staff more effectively.

10.   The management team work together very effectively. The ECB carries out self-assessment and the report is largely accurate and evaluative. However, not all the academy staff fully contribute to its development and their understanding of the process is variable. Managers have developed well the gathering of users' views, in particular for learners.

11.   The ECB has a clear management structure dedicated to the apprenticeship programme. Most staff understand their roles and responsibilities well and the ECB provides them with excellent quality resources to support them in their work.

Outcomes for learners   Grade 2

12.   Attainment is good and success rates have increased each year and are now at 88% for 2009/10 and well above the national average. The development of cricket skills is excellent and staff support all learners very well and provide encouragement for other academic studies. Learners make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the life of a professional cricketer. All learners thoroughly enjoy their participation in academy programmes. They attend regularly. Academy staff are flexible in meeting the educational requirements of the schools and colleges that learners attend.

13.   The programme is very effective in improving learners' economic and social well-being. It provides good preparation for a career in professional cricket or progression either to other employment or further and higher education. A high, and increasing, percentage of academy leavers receive an offer of a professional contract with a cricket club. The majority of those players not receiving an offer gain entry to university, employment or a position overseas as a player.

14.   Learners feel safe and staff pay particular attention to ensuring the maintenance of safe practice at all times during net practices. Risk assessments ensure that particular activities such as overseas trips and venues and locations

are safe. However, coaches do not always risk assess and record all planned practical activities in detail.

15. Learners' ability to make informed choices about their health and well-being is outstanding. A team of highly qualified professionals manages an extensive programme of personal development and welfare. The team offers both group and individual sessions to support learners and provide a range of topics such as nutrition, diet and health. Learners understanding of the significance of diet and general health are good. Learners also receive support from a range of specialists including doctors, physiotherapists, nutritionist and sports psychologists. In addition, the programme covers drug control policies and procedures.

16. The support for communities by a growing number of academies is good. Contributions to charities such as the Rainbow Trust and community work overseas whilst on tour are often very good. Learners reflect on cultural aspects that affect cricket especially when they are on tour. For example, on a tour to South Africa learners became more aware of the quota system in use in cricket in this country and its impact on equality of opportunity. Most of these activities assist learners to develop wider skills including planning, finance management, communication as well as an insight into less privileged life styles.

The quality of provision   Grade 2

17. The quality of provision is good. Technical coaching sessions are excellent. They provide learners with expert development of their cricket skills. A range of other professionals such as strength and conditioning coaches support learners extremely well. They maintain detailed records of their work with and the support they provide learners, including action plans. Personal development and welfare staff provide a number of satisfactory teaching sessions. Not all of these staff have received training as teachers or trainers.

18. Assessment practice is not consistent across all centres. At a few academies, learners do not understand the assessment process sufficiently in order to be thoroughly involved in producing evidence for assessment. Assessors rely too heavily on secondary evidence rather than actually observing the learner. A minority of portfolios do not contain all of the available evidence and a few do not have sufficient evidence produced by the candidate. Internal verification did not identify these instances.

19. The programme is excellent at meeting the needs and interests of the learners. As well as providing a good introduction to professional cricket it maintains an excellent focus on the learners other educational programme, ensuring that a range of careers remain available.

20. The use of partnerships and the care, guidance and support for learners are good. Academies continue to develop and improve the links with parents and the educational establishments attended by learners. Personal development and

welfare staff, coaches and academy staff all provide learners with a good range of guidance and support mechanisms. Reviews are regular and recorded although not all of the documentation is always fully completed.

Leadership and management   Grade 2

21. Overall, leadership and management are good. The ECB has a clear vision, supported by detailed strategies and plans, to implement and develop academy structures to improve the quality of play at the highest level. ECB manages the endorsement of academies well. It uses criteria that reflect effectively individual academy priorities. The ECB strongly promotes the development of the whole person rather than just the cricket player. The programme is very effective in achieving this by including a broad range of additional topics, some of which relate to the standards for the apprenticeship. Regular reviews and annual appraisal monitor staff performance.

22. The line management responsibility of a minority of staff is unclear. This, results in some not receiving all of the relevant and appropriate training and updating they need.

23. The self-assessment is largely accurate and evaluative; the resulting quality improvement plan tackles issues well. However, academy directors have variable understanding of the purpose of self-assessment and not all feel that they have the opportunity to fully contribute in its development.

24. The promotion of safeguarding of learners is good. The ECB meets and exceeds the statutory requirements in this area. They provide all academies with an extensive portfolio called 'Safe Hands' that includes extensive and detailed policies and procedures and other supporting documents. These include sample forms and reports as well as clear flow charts to illustrate the actions if a safeguarding issue occurs. All staff complete enhanced criminal record bureau checks. ECB renews these arrangements every three years. All relevant staff receive safeguarding training and clubs name those responsible for this area. However, clubs do not always clearly publicise the names on academy premises. It is a requirement that cricket coaches at the academies receive regular training and updating in order to maintain their professional association membership and licence to practice.

25. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Detailed strategies and strong advocacy promote the inclusion of women's cricket in all programmes. Opportunities for women are well developed and a central women's cricket academy is in place. The ECB strongly encourages all county clubs to develop cricket competitions to increase opportunities for women players. Talent identification is well developed and an increasing number of women play the game at a high level. Several academies have women apprentices but this is not consistent in all clubs. All learners attend a detailed induction on equality and diversity and their knowledge and understanding are effective. Personal development and welfare staff regularly reinforce and promote this area to

learners. However, staff do miss opportunities to promote equality and diversity to learners. The ECB analyses the performance of different groups but arrangements to act on this information are less clear. The ECB has well-established policies and procedures for dealing with issues such as bullying and harassment.

26. The ECB makes good use of its resources to support the programme. Nearly all of the academies have excellent resources to provide high standard learning. Investment in technology assists staff, including assessors to do their job more effectively.

Information about the inspection

27. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's contract manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.

28. Inspectors used individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gain the views of learners and employers. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions and assessments. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in the subject area the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The England and Wales Cricket Board Ltd

Learning types: 14 − 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades **using the 4 point scale** 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	43	43
Part-time learners	0	0
Overall effectiveness	**2**	**2**
Capacity to improve	2	
Outcomes for learners	**2**	**2**
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
*Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?**	1	
*How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?**	3	
Quality of provision	**2**	**2**
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	**2**	**2**
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2	
*How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?**	N/A	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision