

England and Wales Cricket Board Limited

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Sport, leisure and recreation

Description of 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 club has an academy programme, which is licensed by ECB. The academy programmes started in 2001 and in December 2006 the advanced apprenticeship in sporting excellence (AASE) was introduced. The work of the programme at ECB is overseen by a programme co-ordinator. Some programme management is subcontracted. Work in the academies is supported by the AASE contract funded by Leicestershire LSC. Currently, 65 learners are attending the programme at 14 clubs.
2. The head office of the ECB is based at Lords cricket ground in London. Each cricket club operates its own academy headed by a director and a team of highly experienced coaches. ECB provide specialist support to academy players, for instance in science, medicine and lifestyle. Assessment, internal verification and reviews are conducted at the academies by the subcontractor and assessors appointed by the academies. All learners are in full-time education and typically attend coaching and personal development sessions during evenings and weekends. One-to-one coaching is also delivered by academy staff at the learners' college or school. 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.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Sport, leisure and recreation	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

3. The overall effectiveness of ECB is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Although it is too early in the programme to judge framework success rates, learners are developing good cricket and personal skills. Attendance by learners at the academies is good. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Learner and employer needs are well met and support for learners is good. Teaching and learning, leadership and management, and the arrangements for equality of opportunity and social inclusion, are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

4. ECB demonstrates a good capacity to improve. A new management structure has been implemented by ECB to support the development of the AASE framework within the academy structures. While the AASE is still in development phase, early problems have been identified and strategies have been put in to place to overcome and improve these issues, for example, in the quality of national vocational qualification (NVQ) assessment, reviews and initial assessment. A particularly well resourced internal verification system is developing a well qualified and experienced assessor network. Opportunities for sharing good practice are well established. The self-assessment process is inclusive, particularly by academy staff and informally by learners. A learner survey provides information for development planning. The report is a broadly accurate reflection of the provision. ECB has a good development plan, which is well reviewed, on target for completion, and is an effective document for improvement. A detailed audit programme has been devised and plans are at an advanced stage to make further quality improvements.

Key strengths

- Good development of physical and cricketing skills
- Particularly comprehensive lifestyle support
- Good accommodation and facilities

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient learner involvement in portfolio development
- Slow engagement with the apprenticeship programme by some academies
- Under-developed quality assurance systems

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. Achievement and standards are, overall, satisfactory. The programme has recently started and the first learners are making satisfactory progress towards completing their apprenticeships. Learners develop good physical, cricketing skills. Batsmen showed very good technique against spin and pace bowling. Bowlers demonstrated consistent abilities to bowl accurately. Learners develop good social and interpersonal skills. This aspect is identified in the self-assessment report.
6. Retention is satisfactory at 79%, including the three learners who have completed the full framework and the NVQ. Leavers are monitored by ECB and of those that have left the programme approximately half have left to pursue a cricket career overseas or a course in higher education. Attendance rates are high at training sessions and academy workshops. No evidence was available to inspectors for attendance at schools and further education programmes.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The quality of provision is, overall, satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Coaching sessions are well structured and promote improved performance. Regard for safety in practical sessions is high with warming up and cooling down exercises used effectively to avoid injury. Learners work well to improve individual targets identified at cricket reviews, for example, head and foot positions in bowling, batting and fielding. Coaches provide good feedback and performance analysis to improve cricketing skills. Video recording and feedback on player performance is used effectively however, learners do not always get sufficient time to practice the skills in training sessions.
8. Monitoring and assessing learner progress is satisfactory. Learners receive quarterly reviews for the apprenticeship and their cricket development. In a number of reviews, comments lacked detail and targets were poor. The review process is insufficiently informed about learners' progress and well being at school or college.
9. Assessment and internal verification is satisfactory. Portfolios include an assessment plan for learners use. A range of assessment methods are used, including observation, witness testimony, electronic evidence and professional discussion. Assessors provide useful feedback to learners. Some assessment and internal verification practice is poor. Some assessed work does not contain sufficient evidence yet is signed off by assessors and verifiers. The ECB has identified this issue and is working with assessors to improve their performance. Additional internal verifiers have been allocated to each club. They are supported by a lead verifier who makes regular visits to clubs and provides formal written feedback to assessors.

10. Learners are insufficiently involved in their portfolio development. Most portfolios are sufficiently evidenced, however learners have little understanding or involvement in how evidence matches NVQ requirements. Many portfolios do not contain a copy of the individual learning plan and learners have limited understanding of the contents or where to find evidence. Some learners were not able to identify the milestones for success in their NVQ. Initial assessment is satisfactory overall. However, some learners do not have an approved equivalent programme of study that merits their current exemption from the technical certificate. The ECB has identified this in the self-assessment report and has rectified the procedures to ensure that this does not re-occur.
11. The needs and interests of employers, and learners' needs and interests are well met. Learners benefit from the support they receive in developing their technical, tactical, physical and mental abilities. They increase their understanding of conditioning, careers opportunities and nutrition. Parents are appropriately involved at the induction stage of the programme and less formally on a regular basis. The range of technical certificate qualifications and their exemptions limits the chances of some learners to enrol on the apprenticeship.
12. Support for learners is good. Learners receive a very effective programme of lifestyle support from professional lifestyle advisors, who also support the professional players. Apprentices access the lifestyle advisors for individual support. Lifestyle sessions are structured, well planned and focused. They include nutrition, drug awareness, etiquette and many other topics appropriate in supporting the sporting elite. A variety of activities are used, including active learning. Learners offer and use their personal experience well to support learning. Lifestyle advisors have developed a number of good community based projects which help athletes establish their place in the community and society.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Work has been undertaken by the managers of the board to implement the AASE programme. A staff member has been appointed to help the academies understand the requirements of the apprenticeship framework and how it complements the academy programme. ECB has established satisfactory assessment and internal verifier processes.
14. The organisations approach to equality of opportunity, diversity and social inclusion is satisfactory. The procedures for safeguarding participants meet current government requirements. ECB has well established safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that all staff have been criminal record bureau checked. The policies are closely monitored by designated staff of the ECB. Emphasis in promoting cricket to under-represented groups is good. Community projects are in place and apprentices are encouraged to participate in community work in most clubs. However, equality of opportunity is not sufficiently reinforced with the learners during reviews and there is little evaluation of achievement of learners from different minority or social backgrounds.
15. The adequacy and suitability of staff is satisfactory overall. Coaching staff are well qualified and all assessors and internal verifiers are either qualified or working towards qualification. In the early stages of implementation many assessors left the programme but this staff turnover has now been rectified and all assessors are receiving good ongoing development from the internal verifier network. The accommodation and facilities are good. The specialist cricket teaching and training resources are excellent in most clubs. Other resources include well equipped class-rooms and fitness gyms attached to the cricket practice areas. The clubs visited during inspection had very good outside facilities.
16. The strategy to support literacy, numeracy and English language is satisfactory. Most learners are exempt from taking the key skills aspect of the framework. For the very small minority, individual support arrangements are satisfactory at meeting the learner's needs, for instance, additional studies at school or college or, in one case, arranging a specialist skills for life practitioner.
17. The self-assessment process and report is satisfactory. ECB produced its first self-assessment report and the process is established. The process is inclusive of staff and subcontractor views. Little performance data was available at the time to support the review and evaluation of performance. The process was not fully informed by learner feedback, however this has now been collected and analysed. The self-assessment report is a broadly accurate reflection of the provision. A well devised development plan addresses the main challenges to further develop and improve the provision. It is on target for completion and is routinely monitored.

18. The apprenticeship programme has been implemented slowly in some cricket academies. However, ECB has recently re-structured the senior management team to better promote the importance and improve implementation of the AASE framework. For example managers have made improvements in the quality of the assessor team and assessment delivery.

19. The quality assurance systems are under-developed. Collection and analysis of learner feedback has been undertaken after the first 12 months of the operation of the programme. Questions cover all aspects of the academy and apprenticeship programme. The feedback has been analysed by the managers of ECB and plans are at an advanced stage to rectify areas for improvement identified by learners. The observation of teaching and learning is not yet formalised. While coaches have regular feedback to improve their coaching skills this is not well recorded. Management information systems are recently established and are satisfactory. A well devised audit programme is at an advanced planning stage and soon to be implemented to identify further improvements.

What learners like:

- ‘I’ve learnt a lot about myself and the way I play cricket’
- ‘Sometimes training lacks intensity, but I learn something at every session’
- ‘I enjoy the programme’
- ‘It makes us into better cricketers’
- ‘Some aspects like diet, Pilates and fitness have really helped me enjoy my cricket’
- ‘The NVQ is most useful in helping me look at what I have achieved’
- ‘That the coaches come to school and give me coaching at lunchtimes’
- ‘The NVQ is good for me; it is more sport specific and scientific than the BTEC national I am doing at college’
- ‘The apprenticeship has helped me develop life skills and will hopefully help get me into university’

What learners think could improve:

- ‘That we know at the start how the programme will run’
- ‘I am already doing lots of work at school, then on top of my cricket the NVQ work is an extra burden’
- ‘The course is more tailored to the academically less able and is not for those of us on A-levels’
- To have progress reviews closer together