

# The Football Association Premier League Limited

Employer

**Inspection dates**

28–31 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>	Apprenticeships <b>Outstanding</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Outstanding</b>	
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>	
Outcomes for learners	<b>Outstanding</b>	
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Outstanding

## Summary of key findings

### This is an outstanding provider

- Leaders, managers and staff at the Premier League and in its football clubs have exceptionally high expectations of apprentices in terms of their education and the development of their excellent technical and tactical footballing skills.
- The vast majority of apprentices achieve a wide range of qualifications through which they develop excellent skills and knowledge for their careers as professional footballers as well as for their future non-playing careers.
- The Premier League academies provide apprentices with an exceptionally high-quality learning environment and access to highly qualified coaches, medical and performance staff who support their professional development.
- An outstanding 'player care programme' provides an extensive and holistic approach to the development of apprentices' physical, emotional and social well-being.
- Apprentices make excellent progress throughout their apprenticeship, often achieving higher-than-targeted grades in their technical qualifications and developing practical skills that improve their performance on the pitch.
- Apprentices are extremely motivated to succeed as footballers as well as in developing wider skills that they can use in alternative or future careers.
- The Premier League provides apprentices with excellent opportunities to expand their knowledge of different countries, cultures and religions – enabling them to develop and demonstrate high levels of respect for others.
- Managers make exemplary use of management information and data to manage the progress and destination of apprentices and to evaluate the performance of each academy's apprenticeship programme.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- The Football Association Premier League Limited (the Premier League) is a company with 20 shareholders – the football clubs in the Premier League. The Premier League has responsibility for administering the football played at Premier League clubs under a regulatory framework set out in 'The Rules of the Premier League'. The Football Association sanctions these rules. Each Premier League club operates a football academy, licensed by the Premier League, that delivers training and education to a range of young people.
- This inspection covered 16- to 18-year-olds on a funded two-year advanced apprenticeship in sporting excellence at the English Premier League clubs and the second-year apprentices from the three clubs relegated to the English Football League at the end of the 2015/16 season and who continue to have their apprenticeship delivered to them through the English Premier League. Currently, 335 apprentices are following the advanced apprenticeship programme. Two clubs deliver all components of the apprenticeship in-house while the rest of the clubs subcontract functional skills and/or technical knowledge training to other providers of training and education.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of apprentices who pass their functional skills tests at the first attempt by ensuring that subcontractors deliver high-quality programmes, and that staff develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills further, once they have completed functional skills or equivalent, in readiness for their future non-playing careers.
- Leaders should ensure that apprentices at all clubs feel able to raise any concerns they may have, by:
  - sharing good practice that exists so apprentices have regular opportunities to disclose information to a competent and impartial individual
  - increasing apprentices' understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Outstanding**

- Senior leaders at the Premier League have a very strong mission to develop footballers who can play at the highest level through the apprenticeship programme. They are totally committed to the national initiative to increase the proportion of top-flight British footballers in their league and subsequently to raise the standards of the national game. Senior leaders successfully communicate this culture of excellence to staff within the organisation, and to academy staff within their football clubs. As a result, they have maintained the highest standards of training for apprentices.
- Senior managers have an exceptional understanding and oversight of the apprenticeship provision. The Premier League and its clubs offer an outstanding learning and playing environment for apprentices. Managers ensure that apprentices receive a very good education and achieve all the requirements of the apprenticeship framework, most within expected timeframes.
- Premier League managers produce exceptionally detailed annual reports on all the Premier League academies. Club senior managers use these documents extremely effectively to inform their plans for further development of their apprenticeship programmes. Premier League managers use these comprehensive reports to compile an overarching and accurate evaluation of the performance of academies.
- Managers frequently use accurate and timely information from club visits to update their quality improvement plan to ensure that it stays relevant and helps the Premier League to improve the apprenticeship programme further. Senior managers have a very good oversight of subcontractors through frequent visits by the education support managers. This ensures that the teaching and support for apprentices meets the high expectations of the Premier League.
- Senior managers have a clear strategy to support the development of apprentices' cultural awareness. The Premier League, along with its clubs, ensures that apprentices have many exceptional opportunities to expand their knowledge of other countries and religions through visits, discussions, talks and formal teaching.
- Senior managers have ensured that all shareholders are up to date with new developments around apprenticeships to support the continuation of the programme. Managers are actively working on new standards to ensure that they meet the requirements of the industry in the future.

### The governance of the provider

- Governance is well developed and highly effective. An experienced executive board, shareholders and an educational advisory group understand their roles and responsibilities well and challenge senior managers appropriately. Shareholders have a direct input into the running and direction of the Premier League to ensure that their apprentices gain the skills required.
- Premier League leaders and managers work extremely effectively with external agencies and auditors to ensure that scrutiny of themselves and their clubs is impartial, which

ensures that apprentices receive a very good experience.

- All members of the board have a very good understanding of the priorities and expectations of Premier League academies. All shareholders, board members and the advisory group members focus strongly on ensuring that apprentices are safe, given a good education and provided with opportunities to succeed both within football and within the wider community.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Premier League leaders and managers react quickly and appropriately to safeguarding incidents when they become aware of them. Senior managers check that clubs take appropriate action within their academies and can sanction clubs if they feel it is necessary.
- Safeguarding staff at the Premier League and in the clubs receive appropriate and regular training. Many safeguarding leads have vast experience from their previous careers. Apprenticeship coaches receive safeguarding and mental health awareness training so that they can support apprentices appropriately.
- Premier League clubs follow safer recruitment practices for academy staff, ensuring that they are suitable to work with young people and are well qualified and experienced.
- Apprentices receive good safeguarding information, for example in their apprenticeship handbook, about how and to whom they should report any safeguarding concerns. They are aware of the staff members, including the medical team and chaplaincy advisers, and external agencies that they can talk to. However, a few apprentices were concerned about the potential consequences for their future footballing career should they report concerns.
- Safeguarding staff at Premier League clubs ensure that families who host apprentices are assessed and screened appropriately. Host families receive good training which enables them to support apprentices in a positive and valuable way. Apprentices know who to speak to if they are not happy with their accommodation.
- Managers have clear policies and risk assessments linked to international visits, travelling between sites and apprentices' use of their own transport. Apprentices receive good training to ensure that they know how to keep themselves safe when visiting or coaching in schools.
- Leaders and managers have met their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty. Staff and apprentices mostly have a secure understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the threats of extremism and radicalisation.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

## **Outstanding**

- Expert coaches make excellent use of world-class professional resources to ensure that apprentices develop very high-quality practical skills. Coaches expect the highest standards from apprentices. They teach imaginative technical and tactical practical sessions, so apprentices can fully develop the specific football skills required for competition at the highest level.

- The vast majority of apprentices make very good progress in classroom sessions. Teachers plan fun and interesting activities so that apprentices can relate complex theory to practice. For example, apprentices evaluate how the rules of sport affect their decision-making during games and are then able to use this information successfully to improve their performance.
- Teachers listen carefully to apprentices' responses to questions and use them skilfully to expand discussions and deepen their understanding. Apprentices pay good attention and are interested in learning subjects such as exercise physiology. They use the information successfully to improve their sporting potential.
- Apprentices develop strong analytical and critical-thinking skills that help them to assess their individual performance and take positive steps to improve physical fitness, practical and tactical skills. Apprentices deepen their knowledge and understanding of topics such as fitness testing by measuring the effects of exercise on themselves and evaluating their results against their peers. Additionally, they reflect well on, and evaluate successfully, their own performance, often using video footage to review techniques.
- Staff provide highly effective feedback on assessments and sports performance which enables apprentices to improve and make excellent progress. In most cases, feedback on written assignments confirms progress made and informs apprentices how to improve their grades. As a result, most learners achieve their target grade and an increasing proportion achieve above the level expected.
- Assessment practice is very effective. Teachers plan assessment alongside apprentices' practical coaching sessions, which helps them quickly understand theoretical principles. Learning and assessment activities are planned carefully at each club to ensure that apprentices do not fall behind because of competitions and international duty.
- Apprentices receive highly effective individual support from teachers and coaches that prevents the less able, and those who are absent because of injury, from falling behind. Teachers and coaches focus closely on apprentices' individual development needs during one-to-one reviews, ensuring that apprentices achieve their qualifications within the timescales planned.
- Apprentices benefit from using innovative sports science technology to identify accurately their current sports performance, how to improve this and how to avoid injury. Coaches closely monitor and test apprentices' performance and provide them with detailed results that help them to make excellent progress. Apprentices, and where relevant their parents, receive six-weekly comprehensive and insightful reports on their current progress and what they need to do to improve. Apprentices respond positively to this feedback and make the improvement in their practical skills in order to secure a professional career.
- Apprentices who need to achieve English or mathematics qualifications complete either a GCSE or level 2 functional skill. Many activities, such as delivering presentations, analysing performance and financial management extend apprentices' use of English and mathematics. However, staff do not formally review and develop all apprentices' English and mathematics skills further in preparation for their future careers.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

- Apprentices are highly motivated, have great ambition and are incredibly proud of the skills they are developing. They have excellent attitudes to learning, enjoy their training and their behaviour is exemplary. They are confident and self-assured in their practical and academic work.
- A 'player care programme' provides outstanding development of apprentices' personal and social skills. Staff and expert external agencies provide information and specialist guidance to ensure that apprentices make appropriate lifestyle choices. Topics include sexting, respect for women, sexual health, diversity, homophobia, financial management, media training and the dangers of drugs, alcohol and gambling.
- Staff place an exceptionally high priority on apprentices' health and well-being. Apprentices learn about healthy eating, hydration and mental health to improve their performance on the pitch. They benefit from sessions with psychologists, who support them to deal with anxiety, stress and pressures of the professional game. Apprentices value highly the level of support they receive to develop physically, socially and psychologically.
- Apprentices feel safe and know who to raise concerns with if any arise. Most apprentices are confident that when a concern is raised it will be taken seriously and staff will deal with it swiftly and effectively. Many apprentices benefit from an excellent range of welfare support arrangements. Regular access to chaplaincy and support from volunteer mentors ensure that apprentices can share concerns or discuss difficulties which may affect their emotional well-being.
- Staff work extensively to increase apprentices' understanding of fairness, respect, equality and tackling discrimination. Staff make very effective use of the 'Kick it Out' initiative, which relates topics directly to apprentices' future careers and the wider social context. Apprentices are very aware of the boundaries between 'banter' and bullying.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of the dangers of cyber bullying and know how to keep themselves safe while online. They have extensive training in social media and general media, which focuses significantly on how they can protect themselves and their image, as well as that of the game and their club.
- The majority of apprentices take part in community projects with local schools, community groups and charities. These projects enable apprentices to appreciate the privileges they have, inspire young people and develop empathy for those less fortunate. Most apprentices were keen to continue their community activities and were seeking further ways to raise money or support local good causes.
- Apprentices are very respectful of staff and each other, have a strong team ethos, and recognise each other's strengths and vulnerabilities. Staff provide thorough training on the rule of law, both in relation to the rules of football and also in the wider context of laws within Britain.
- Staff encourage apprentices to think about dual career options and the majority can see the long-term benefits of doing so. Staff provide valuable information on alternative career paths in football, should apprentices not be successful as professional footballers or once their career as a player is over. Premier League clubs provide excellent support to apprentices who are released from their playing contracts to pursue alternative education

and training programmes in the UK or abroad.

- Apprentices achieve a good range of additional qualifications, such as coaching and refereeing qualifications. Staff tailor training programmes well to meet individual needs, for example one apprentice is learning A-Level French and another is learning English for speakers of other languages to improve his spoken English and communication skills.
- Apprentices' attendance is very good. When occasional lateness or minor disciplinary issues occur, there is usually a transparent system of sanctions or fines which apprentices fully understand as they can relate these to standard practices in football. In almost all cases, apprentices decide how the money raised will be used.

## Outcomes for learners

## Outstanding

- Apprentices develop exceptional footballing skills, making excellent progress from their starting points. Apprentices' successful completion of their advanced apprenticeship framework has been consistently very high for the last three years. In 2016, all apprentices in five of the clubs completed successfully.
- The vast majority of apprentices achieve all their qualifications in the timeframes expected. The standard of apprentices' work is extremely high and the majority achieve high grades in their industry-specific qualifications.
- The large majority of apprentices secure contracts as professional footballers in the Premier League following their apprenticeship. The remaining small minority of apprentices are playing semi-professional football, have football scholarships in the US or are in other employment or education. In the current year, around a quarter of apprentices have already signed professional contracts, yet continue to develop their technical and practical skills to complete all their apprenticeship qualifications.
- Through their extensive analysis of data, managers recognise significant bias in the recruitment of learners born in the first half of the academic year due to their greater physical maturity. To ensure that all learners have the opportunity to compete and train on an equal footing, 'bio-banding' is being piloted so that players are grouped based on biological maturation rather than chronological age.
- Managers make exceptionally effective use of data to manage apprentices' progress. They became aware of the lower achievement of minority ethnic apprentices in 2014/15. Managers put in place additional support and changed subcontractors, which has reduced this achievement gap.
- A small minority of apprentices who attempt functional skills tests are not well prepared and fail to pass at the first attempt. Managers are changing subcontractors to ensure better delivery of functional skills. A few apprentices take longer than expected to pass their functional skills tests. In two clubs, apprentices were enrolled on English and mathematics qualifications that were not a valid part of their apprenticeship framework, resulting in low achievement rates at these clubs.


## Provider details

Unique reference number	54842
Type of provider	Employer
Age range of learners	16–18
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	363
CEO	Richard Scudamore
Telephone number	020 7864 9000
Website	<a href="http://www.premierleague.com">www.premierleague.com</a>

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	335	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Birmingham Metropolitan College</li> <li>■ Brockenhurst College</li> <li>■ Burnley College</li> <li>■ Carmel College</li> <li>■ East and Otley College</li> <li>■ Free 2 Learn</li> <li>■ Goffs School</li> <li>■ J and K Training Limited</li> </ul>							



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- Let Me Play Limited
  - Loughborough College
  - Sandwell Academy
  - The Harefield Academy
  - West Herts College
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## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the education manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of apprentices and the club staff; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, training, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant apprenticeship provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Joy Montgomery, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracey Zimmerman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Judy Lye-Forster	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lynda Brown	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Hughes	Her Majesty's Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Barnaby Dowell	Social Care Regulatory Inspector
Anita Pyrkotsch-Jones	Her Majesty's Inspector

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