

# Inspection of League Football Education

Inspection dates:

21 to 24 February 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Education programmes for young people

**Outstanding**

Apprenticeships

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Outstanding

## **Information about this provider**

League Football Education (LFE) is an independent learning provider based in Preston, Lancashire. It specialises in providing apprenticeship training and education programmes for young people in the sports sector. LFE works with 39 subcontractors to provide training for learners and apprentices.

LFE provides training to apprentices at English Football League (EFL) clubs in England and Wales. LFE engages with 64 football clubs in the EFL. From 2016, LFE began providing community trust (CT) study programmes in partnership with the EFL and the EFL Trust. They engage with 13 CTs to provide education for 16- to 18-year-olds to study sport-related qualifications, while representing their football club.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,184 apprentices studying the level 3 sporting excellence professional apprenticeship standard and 584 young people on a level 3 education programme in sports coaching and development. A small minority of young people were studying a level 2 education programme in sport.

## What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners and apprentices consistently demonstrate extremely positive attitudes to their learning. They are highly enthusiastic and motivated to achieve. Apprentices take pride in demonstrating their football skills and clearly articulate key advances in football-related skills. During learning sessions, learners and apprentices demonstrate high levels of respect towards the views and opinions of their peers.

Learners and apprentices' behaviour is exemplary. This creates a calm and focused environment for learning. Attendance is exceptionally high. Learners and apprentices attend their training and learning sessions punctually.

Learners and apprentices develop high levels of confidence and resilience. Learners swiftly gain confidence from the work experience they complete and improve their public speaking. Apprentices confidently deliver presentations and coaching sessions to their peers. Apprentices are prepared exceptionally well to develop their resilience by transition officers in case they are not successful in achieving a professional football contract. Many learners and apprentices progress to higher levels of study at university.

Learners and apprentices contribute positively to their local communities. Apprentices frequently participate in activities such as supporting foodbanks, feeding the homeless and fundraising for charities. Learners on study programmes volunteer to provide football coaching to primary school children.

Learners and apprentices highly value the support they receive from staff at LFE. They have access to mental health first aiders, counselling, and cardio screening to monitor and improve their physical health. Learners and apprentices receive specialist training sessions from external organisations who promote positive mental health and, sexuality and gender issues in sport.

Learners and apprentices receive high-quality, specialised careers advice and guidance from their regional officers (RO), this prepares them extremely well for their futures. They benefit from guest speakers, attend university open days, and receive talks from LFE alumni. Learners and apprentices learn about careers as elite sports professionals, physiotherapists, nutritionists and physical education teachers. They make informed decisions about their next steps.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They know how to keep themselves and others safe from radicalisation and extremism. Learners and apprentices are aware of local risks such as county lines and knife crime. They complete an extensive range of learning on topics such as healthy lifestyles, drug and alcohol misuse and mental health. A range of specialist speakers provide training on safeguarding awareness in football and suicide prevention.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and board members have high expectations for learners and apprentices. They accurately identify good practice and quickly resolve any areas of learners' and apprentices' learning that could be further improved. Leaders are committed to providing a high-quality education across all curriculum areas. As a result, learners and apprentices that study with LFE do extremely well.

Leaders have built very strong and highly effective relationships with subcontractors. The curriculum that subcontractors provide meets local needs exceptionally well, for example, reducing the number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training. Leaders carry out extensive quality visits to all football clubs and CTs that they collaborate with. They use the results from the quality processes to swiftly identify and improve any weaknesses that they identify.

Leaders provide a highly ambitious and bespoke curriculum for learners and apprentices, including those at the subcontracted provision. They ensure that learners and apprentices develop as individuals first, and professional footballers and coaches second. Leaders incorporate additional learning into the curriculum to support learners' and apprentices' wider development within the sports industry. Apprentices complete a level 3 qualification in sporting excellence and performance that benefits their future careers beyond football. Learners on study programmes complete additional optional learning based on their needs. For example, tutors provide 'technology in sport' topics for learners wishing to study sport performance analysis at university.

Leaders provide a logically sequenced curriculum where learners and apprentices, including those taught by subcontractors, incrementally build substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. Tutors introduce coaching early in the study programme to develop the skills that learners need to become successful coaches. Apprentices learn the fundamentals of health and nutrition before moving on to data analysis, to improve their performance on the pitch.

Leaders ensure that tutors are highly qualified professionals and experts in their fields. They use fitness specialists to provide strength and conditioning training to learners and apprentices. Tutors keep up to date by participating in industry updating with awarding organisations. Leaders are highly supportive of staff development activities by encouraging staff to complete masters degrees and counselling qualifications.

Tutors provide detailed and constructive feedback to learners and apprentices. They know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Apprentices use the feedback that they receive to improve their written work. However, a few tutors on the study programme, do not always provide feedback to learners that identifies the errors made in their work. Consequently, a few learners do not always know what they need to do to improve and repeat the same errors in their written work.

Apprentices are very well prepared for their final assessments. Tutors carefully plan opportunities for apprentices to practise and develop the skills and gain the confidence they need to be successful. Consequently, the large majority of apprentices achieve distinction grades in their final assessments.

Leaders accurately monitor the progress of learners and apprentices. ROs and tutors swiftly implement interventions and additional support if learners or apprentices fall behind. This results in all learners and apprentices making at least their expected progress and many exceed their target grades.

Learners and apprentices benefit from high-quality bespoke teaching in English and mathematics. Apprentices receive one-to-one tuition that allows them to swiftly apply mathematics to nutritional intake and performance. Learners on study programmes swiftly develop their technical vocabulary and grammar. Learners and apprentices relate and apply these skills well to improve both their written and practical work.

Leaders ensure that on- and off-the-job training is highly effective. Apprentices implement their learning well at work to develop their skills swiftly. Apprentices learn about the skeleton and link this to their own performance on the pitch, such as how the cranium protects the brain when heading a ball.

Board members have a highly accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, including that of subcontractors. Board members receive high-quality information that enables them to challenge leaders on the quality of education that they provide. They act swiftly to rectify the very few areas of underperformance.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a very high priority on the safeguarding and well-being of their learners and apprentices. They effectively record and monitor safeguarding referrals and welfare concerns. Leaders ensure that they liaise well with external agencies and put support in place swiftly. Bullying and harassment is not tolerated within LFE.

The designated safeguarding lead and their deputies are very well trained and experienced to carry out their roles effectively. Player care leads provide high levels of well-being support for learners and apprentices. Staff and board members benefit from annual training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff know how to report safeguarding concerns. Managers carry out appropriate checks on staff during the recruitment process to ensure they are safe to work with learners and apprentices.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	52949
<b>Address</b>	EFL House, 10 – 12 West Cliff Preston PR1 8HU
<b>Contact number</b>	01772 326870
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lfe.org.uk">www.lfe.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Sarah Stephen
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 to 20 April 2012

<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Blackpool F.C. Community Trust Southend United Community & Educational Trust Accrington Stanley football in the Community Trust Limited Bristol Rovers Community Trust Bradford City F.C. Community Foundation Birmingham City F.C. Community Trust Derby County Community Trust Wigan Athletic F.C. Community Trust South Gloucestershire & Stroud College Fleetwood Town Community Trust
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## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Chief Education Officer, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Suzanne Horner, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Liz Greenhalgh	Ofsted Inspector
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