

INSPECTION REPORT

League Football Education

15 December 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE



Estyn

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi Dros Addysg
A Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate
For Education and Training in Wales

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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League Football Education

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. League Football Education (LFE) was incorporated in July 2004. It is a partnership between the Football League and the Professional Footballers' Association. The provider has charitable status and is limited by guarantee. The primary objective of LFE is to promote and enhance educational and vocational training for apprentice footballers aged between 16 and 19. The co-ordinating funding body is the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) National Employer Service. Funding is also provided by the Welsh Assembly Government.

2. LFE's board of directors consists of two representatives from the Football League and two from the Professional Footballers' Association. The provider's senior management team consists of a chief executive officer, a chief finance officer and a chief education officer. A quality improvement manager, a performance manager, a management information systems manager and an office manager support the senior team. The chief finance officer is responsible for finance and human resource management and the management of the head office. The chief education officer is responsible for education and training, and the quality improvement manager for implementing and monitoring LFE's quality improvement strategy and equality of opportunity. The performance manager is responsible for LFE's education and training providers. Health and safety issues are the remit of the assistant performance manager. The chief executive officer has overall responsibility to the board for all aspects of LFE's provision.

3. The chief education officer manages nine regional officers, two of whom are employed on a part-time basis. Regional officers support a group of learners and are responsible for co-ordinating the training programme and reviewing learners' progress. Regional officers also act as LFE's first point of contact with clubs and education providers. Head office support to the regional officers is provided by three data administrators.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

4. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is good.** LFE's leadership and management are good, as are its arrangements for quality improvement, and its provision in sport, leisure and recreation. The arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

5. **The inspection team had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** LFE's process for self-assessment is particularly thorough and effective. The procedure sets clear deadlines for the different activities which contribute to the final report. LFE consults widely with all staff, learners, football clubs and subcontractors. It goes to great lengths to ensure that staff play a full part in evaluating the quality of the training. A summary report provides a very useful shortened version of the main report. Key messages are communicated well to all staff. The accompanying quality improvement plan is particularly comprehensive and includes actions resulting not only from the self-assessment report, but also from the feedback collected using questionnaires. LFE has made very good use of data to support its judgements, and the plan sets clear, realistic and measurable targets. A useful summary shows actions month by month and the

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plan is easy to monitor and review. The self-assessment report is evaluative, and critical, and its findings match those of the inspection team.

6. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements.

LFE's strategies for quality improvement have been particularly effective. A quality improvement group meets regularly and focuses on identifying improvements, monitoring progress made with the quality improvement plan, and evaluating the successes of actions for improvement. A well-structured system is used for the observation of key learning activities which includes induction, initial assessment, progress reviews and teaching. The paperwork used clearly identifies the key competences concerning each activity and observers make clear and appropriate judgements against each criterion. All observations are graded and LFE thoroughly evaluates the results to identify trends and common themes. Joint observations are carried out with external consultants to check the standards being applied. The results of observations are used to contribute to staff appraisals. LFE makes particularly good use of feedback to improve the quality of the training programme. Strong action has been taken to review, monitor and improve the performances of subcontractors. LFE carries out thorough, annual 'health checks' and observations of teaching and learning with all subcontractors. The provider has introduced an excellent system of risk banding using a variety of data which includes the results of inspections, observations of teaching and learning, reports from regional officers and feedback from learners.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR LEAGUE FOOTBALL EDUCATION:

- raise success rates and continue to develop the quality of the programme for all regions
- improve the standard of feedback about learners' written work
- make better use of computerised management information
- develop additional learning support arrangements
- provide timely and effective internal verification
- improve classroom teaching
- continue to develop exit strategies for learners

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		2

Leisure, travel and tourism		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	954	2

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

7. Leadership and management, including quality improvement and equality of opportunity, was reported on and graded. The provision in leisure, travel and tourism was also reported on and graded. Inspectors sampled the training provided in the football clubs and by the many training provider subcontractors to LFE throughout England and Wales. All inspection took place during one inspection week.

Number of inspectors	11
Number of inspection days	56
Number of learners interviewed	251
Number of staff interviewed	50
Number of employers interviewed	49
Number of subcontractors interviewed	49
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	50
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	4
Number of visits	50

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very effective strategic and business planning
- particularly productive links with partners
- good internal and external communications
- good initiatives and investment to improve provision and raise success rates
- particularly effective framework for quality assurance
- very effective strategies for quality improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient additional learning support
- delayed implementation of effective internal verification for NVQ

Leisure, travel and tourism

Sport, leisure and recreation

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good practical coaching

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- very effective programme content meets learners' needs
- good support to meet the individual needs of learners
- well co-ordinated and managed programme

Weaknesses

- low framework completion rate
- inadequate feedback on some written work

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LEAGUE FOOTBALL EDUCATION:

- informative and thorough induction
- good practical training facilities
- very good-quality coaching
- the good support that they receive from club and education staff
- the well-organised programme
- improving their skills and playing abilities
- achieving qualifications
- being able to study for additional qualifications such as A levels

WHAT LEARNERS THINK LEAGUE FOOTBALL EDUCATION COULD IMPROVE:

- assessment planning
- the number of vocational options at college
- the timetabling of college studies

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- very effective strategic and business planning
- particularly productive links with partners
- good internal and external communications
- good initiatives and investment to improve provision and raise success rates
- particularly effective framework for quality assurance
- very effective strategies for quality improvement

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information
- insufficient additional learning support
- delayed implementation of effective internal verification for NVQ

8. LFE has very effective strategic and business planning. The aim and objectives of the provider are clearly and thoroughly identified in its mission statement. Core values are most appropriate and establish learners as the main focus for attention and development. The seven strategic aims are well considered and most of them include the key elements of the provider's mission and its core values. These set a clear direction for quality improvement. Effective and detailed business plans support LFE's strategic objectives. Staff are effectively involved in, and have appropriate knowledge of, strategic objectives and business planning and the priorities for LFE. A useful briefing paper is shared with staff after each board meeting. LFE communicates effectively with clubs, subcontractors and key partners concerning its strategic direction and objectives. The provider has developed a recognisable logo for all its communications and published documents.

9. LFE has established good and productive partnerships with a wide range of organisations, including clubs, administrators and sponsors associated with football training and education. Board members and senior managers have prominent and national roles in football management or education, and have an informed understanding of national developments to which LFE can respond quickly and effectively. The chief executive is actively involved nationally in training for the football industry and is a regular contributor to the industry's national conferences which are held by the Football League. The chief executive's involvement promotes the apprenticeship in sporting excellence framework to the industry, and also their responsibilities in training and supporting their learners. LFE has strong links with the Football League, the Professional Footballers' Association, the Sector Skills Council, and sponsors who support the industry. From these partnerships, LFE acquires an in-depth knowledge of the education, training, and employment needs of the football industry, and of additional funding opportunities to support and develop football training in England and Wales.

10. Internal and external communications are very effective. Many staff work in their

own regions of England and Wales and are kept well informed by e-mails and telephone messages and attend regular, scheduled and well-planned staff or managers' meetings. Staff speak very highly of the standard of communications within LFE, and how open and supportive managers are in providing timely but considered answers to problems. Appropriate agendas and detailed, action-led minutes with clearly defined responsibilities are produced for each meeting. Teamwork is good in LFE, especially between regional officers and administration staff who together support clubs and learners effectively.

11. Staff are kept fully informed of LFE's strategic objectives, policies and procedures and proposed changes, through the provider's intranet system. Staff have good opportunities to discuss issues and to share ideas and good practice. Senior managers are very approachable, and have an open-door policy which staff appreciate. Staff clearly understand their roles and responsibilities and how these relate to those of their colleagues and LFE.

12. Regional staff are actively involved in the learning process and have ownership of this essential element. They improve the learning process through various staff and management meetings.

13. External communications are often conducted through LFE's website and involve parents and learners. Users of the website find it very informative and useful. LFE hosts an annual communications event with clubs at three different locations nationwide. These events help to explain developments in training and what they can do to improve the progress and achievements of learners. A newsletter called 'touchline' is very well presented and most informative. It is circulated to staff, learners and clubs. Other publications, such as the apprentice handbook and other guides for clubs and football coaches, are produced to a very high standard and have a clearly recognisable LFE logo. The cartoon style and well-written content are easy to read and allow complex details to be explained very simply.

14. LFE has introduced good initiatives and investment to improve the provision. A very useful package of financial support and incentives is provided to clubs to support and improve the delivery of the apprenticeship in the sporting excellence training programme, and learners' achievements. This financial support package is used to support learners in the clubs and pay allowances, and to support a development fund for the clubs' individual youth development programmes. This includes help to improve the standard of teaching aids and fitness or information technology equipment, or to develop learners' mental and tactical skills in football. Financial support is available to the clubs to support their coaching and national vocational qualification NVQ developments, and includes improvements to the standards of assessments and the use of expert witnesses. Clubs make bids to LFE to obtain this financial support.

15. LFE provides value for money. It uses its staff and accommodation effectively and efficiently to suit training needs. Financial management processes and procedures are appropriate.

16. The resources of LFE and most clubs and subcontractors are good. Most of the accommodation, training grounds, fitness equipment and learning materials to support teaching and learning is of a very good standard. Resources are available in sufficient quantities and are accessible enough to meet learners' needs. Staff are appropriately

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qualified for their roles and responsibilities. Learners are not supplied with textbooks to support their learning and none are available at the football clubs. The only option they have is to use the subcontractors' libraries.

17. LFE has a satisfactory staff appraisal scheme that monitors job performance and identifies staff development and training needs. Target-setting for staff is appropriate and is designed to meet the provider's and individual's performance needs. Staff development is suitably focused on improving learners' achievements and their support needs. Health and safety arrangements are suitable for staff and learners, and for monitoring the subcontractors.

18. LFE recognises that it does not use its computerised management information sufficiently. The present system is unable to show in-depth trend analyses of learners' progress at clubs, the progress of groups of learners and the achievement of qualification units. The system cannot provide managers with data about the slow progress of learners, or incomplete units, or enable them to share best practice about achievements. LFE is unable to test a variety of scenarios to allow it to monitor and improve learners' progression and achievements. Currently, there is much reliance on paperwork and the manual input of data. LFE is in the process of upgrading the present computerised system.

19. The provider does not have sufficient procedures to deal effectively with the delivery of learners' additional support needs in literacy, numeracy and language. LFE has only recently established effective diagnostic online arrangements to ensure that learners' support needs are identified more accurately. There are no clear timetables for each element of the initial assessment process, or any checklists for regional officers to ensure consistency of delivery. Subcontractors have been contracted to deliver the specialist support, but have not received the results of this year's initial assessments. LFE recognises that further development is required for skills for life and for learners for whom English is an additional language. Subcontractor's arrangements for the monitoring and quality assurance and improvement of learners' additional support needs are inadequate. A skills strategy for additional support has been developed very recently.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

20. LFE has a good strategy for ensuring equality of opportunity and a clearly written policy which includes all current legislation. The policy is also written in Welsh. The strategy clearly sets out how LFE will monitor and evaluate the success of its policies and procedures. However, the monitoring arrangements are new and, as yet, LFE has not carried out any evaluation as the initial monitoring date has not been reached. The equality of opportunity policy is reviewed and updated annually to include the most recent legislation.

21. Managers and regional officers have all received good training in equality of opportunity, and they have a satisfactory understanding of equality and the broader issues of diversity. LFE offers annual equality training to its staff to ensure that they keep up to date with legislation and continue to expand their knowledge. All regional officers have also attended training in child protection. LFE monitors its subcontractor's promotion of equality effectively through the service level agreements, observations of teaching, and reviews of learning materials. The provider's most recent self-assessment report recognises the need to improve the monitoring of the football clubs' promotion of equality. All football clubs must either have their own equality of opportunity policy, or

adopt LFE's in order to take part in the apprenticeship scheme. Recently, LFE has begun to ask for copies of the clubs' policies, but as yet it does not have policies from all clubs, and it has not checked or evaluated those that it does have.

22. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. They receive clear information about their rights and responsibilities as part of their induction. Induction materials and reviews include questions that are designed to check learners' understanding. However, the questions asked at progress reviews focus too much on checking learners' understanding of legislation and terminology, and not enough on promoting the discussion of the wider issues of diversity. Learners understand the complaints and appeals procedure and their confidence in raising issues if necessary is checked during quality assurance observations of progress reviews. LFE has recently reviewed its literature to ensure that the images used promote the participation of learners from different social and ethnic backgrounds. The provider has commissioned a new set of multicultural images to use in its promotional materials.

23. Many of the football clubs that LFE works with have taken positive action to increase the participation of learners from minority ethnic groups. For example, scouts have been sent to watch games played by Asian teams in the community. However, although LFE supports such action it is not assertive enough to influence clubs to recruit in this way. LFE supports and promotes the well-publicised 'Kick it out' campaign to eradicate racism from football, as well as the 'Football in the Community' programme. This programme encourages the participation of women, people from minority ethnic groups and schoolchildren in football. LFE is currently piloting the 'Every Player Matters' project with Grimsby Town, Leeds United and Sheffield Wednesday football clubs. This programme is offered electronically as part of the learners' virtual learning environment. Units include assertiveness, the misuse of drugs, and alcohol awareness.

24. LFE monitors data about equality of opportunity regularly and, overall, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups significantly exceeds that in the national population. However, although LFE monitors such participation at club level, it has not matched this to regional data to check participation in this context. Analysis of success rate data appears to show that the success rates for learners from minority ethnic groups are lower than for other groups. However, LFE recognises that it needs to improve the analysis of this data to ensure that it can identify which factors might be causing these inconsistencies. Current data shows that retention has improved for those learners from minority ethnic groups.

25. LFE has recognised the importance of supporting those learners who are not offered a professional playing contract at the end of their apprenticeship. It has carried out some excellent research to identify the best ways to support these learners into employment. The research has identified the most appropriate points during the programme to introduce events such as careers days. It has also highlighted the need to improve exit interviews and the timing of exit football trials. LFE has carried out thorough research into the most popular types of alternative employment for learners, and is developing more effective ways of preparing these learners for work.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

26. LFE has a particularly effective framework for quality assurance. The quality management system is easily available to all staff and a quality policy statement clearly

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states LFE's commitment to provide a quality service. The provider has a particularly well-designed quality strategy and a flow chart clearly illustrates how the different parts of the system are integrated and support the learners' experience of the training programme. A quality assurance calendar shows when staff are to carry out different activities and particularly good use is made of a colour-coded 'traffic light' system to ensure that activities take place on time. LFE has particularly well-written quality assurance procedures and document control is strong and effective. The operating procedures are easy to understand and follow, and include clear flow charts where appropriate. Each procedure includes the allocation of responsibilities and arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and progress reviews. The procedures are comprehensive and include all key aspects of LFE's work, with a good emphasis on those activities that most strongly affect learners. Audit arrangements are well-established, thorough and effective. All staff complete questionnaires to evaluate their knowledge and understanding of the quality assurance arrangements.

27. LFE's strategies for quality improvement have been very effective. A quality improvement group meets regularly and focuses on identifying improvements, monitoring progress against the quality improvement plan, and evaluating the success of actions for improvement. A well-structured system is used for the observation of key learning activities which include induction, initial assessment, progress reviews and teaching. The paperwork used clearly identifies the key competences for each activity and observers make clear and appropriate judgements against each criterion. All observations are graded and LFE thoroughly evaluates the results to identify trends and common themes. Joint observations are carried out with external consultants to check the standards that are being applied. The results of observations contribute to staff appraisals. LFE has several mechanisms for identifying and sharing good practice, but recognises that it needs to develop these mechanisms as the apprenticeship programme evolves over time.

28. LFE makes particularly good use of feedback to improve the quality of the apprenticeship programme. The provider collects feedback annually from learners, football clubs, and subcontractors using a series of well-designed questionnaires. Observers also collect feedback from learners, following observations of key activities. LFE collates, evaluates and uses the feedback to provide evidence for the self-assessment process and to contribute to actions identified in the quality improvement plan. LFE responds rapidly and effectively to the feedback. Improvements since 2005 include better progress review forms, standardised presentations from inductions and initial assessments, much-improved log books and club guidance books, and better apprentice handbooks.

29. Strong action has been taken to review, monitor and improve the performances of subcontractors. LFE carries out thorough, annual 'health checks' and observations of teaching and learning with all subcontractors. It has introduced an excellent system of risk banding which uses a variety of data which includes the results of inspections, observations of teaching and learning, reports from regional officers, and feedback from learners. LFE has collated this data and used the results to devise a risk-band score for each subcontractor. Resources were then focused appropriately where the need was most urgent. Those subcontractors who LFE identified as high risk received extra observations, more frequent visits from LFE's managers and action plans for improvement. Service level agreements are detailed and comprehensive. Financial penalties exist for those subcontractors who do not achieve their targets for success rates. LFE ceases to contract with those subcontractors who consistently fail to meet its standards. The

provider uses data well to compare the performances of football clubs, subcontractors and regional officers.

30. LFE's process for self-assessment is particularly thorough and effective. The procedure sets clear deadlines for the different activities which contribute to the final report. LFE consults widely with all staff, learners, football clubs and subcontractors. It goes to great lengths to ensure that staff play a full part in evaluating the quality of the training. The current self-assessment report is LFE's second one, and shows significant development and progress since the first report. The current self-assessment report is evaluative and critical, and matches inspectors' findings. LFE has made very good use of data to support its judgements. A summary report provides a very useful shortened version of the report which helps to ensure that it can communicate key messages easily to all staff.

31. The accompanying quality improvement plan is particularly comprehensive and includes actions resulting not only from the self-assessment report, but also from the feedback collected from questionnaires. A useful summary shows actions month by month. The quality improvement plan is easy to monitor and review. It sets clear, realistic and measurable targets. However, there is not enough cross-referencing between the self-assessment report and the quality improvement plan. It is not always possible to see clearly where strengths and weaknesses identified in the text of the report are translated directly into specific actions to resolve them. In some cases the actions themselves, although bringing about improvements, will not necessarily completely resolve the weaknesses identified in the report.

32. LFE has taken too long to implement an effective system for internal verification of the NVQ in sports excellence, and LFE recognises this in its self-assessment report. In September 2006, LFE subcontracted the responsibility for internal verification to another training provider as it was having difficulty in quality assuring assessment practices. This subcontractor has taken a measured and appropriate approach to introducing the new arrangements. However, in most cases internal verifiers have not yet observed assessors carrying out assessments, and most of the internal verification has been based on learners' portfolios. The subcontractor has introduced regular meetings to allow assessors to develop their assessment practice, but so far only one meeting has focused on assessment judgements compared with evidence. Some of the broader aspects of internal verification such as interviews with learners, support for new assessors, sharing good practice and developing the role of lead verifier have not been firmly established.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		2
Apprenticeships for young people	954	2

33. The LFE programme is designed to develop sporting excellence in playing football. The primary objective for learners is employment as a professional footballer. The apprenticeship framework incorporates a newly devised NVQ at level 3 in sporting excellence, a level 2 football coaching qualification, and technical certificates that consist of nationally recognised awards in sporting excellence at either level 2 or level 3. Two key skills of literacy and numeracy are also included at level 2. Currently, 954 learners are on the two-year programme at Football League clubs in England and Wales. Five hundred and thirty-six learners are currently in their first year of the programme, and 418 are in their second year. A separate programme, which is provided by another training provider, services the Premier League clubs.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good practical coaching
- very effective programme content meets learners' needs
- good support to meet the individual needs of learners
- well co-ordinated and managed programme

Weaknesses

- low framework completion rate
- inadequate feedback on some written work

Achievement and standards

34. Learners develop good practical skills. Some learners progress very well to club first teams and a few of them achieve international honours. Learners display very high-level skills in football-specific activities, and in fitness-related programmes. They develop very good levels of technical and tactical skills and apply these effectively in match play. They demonstrate passing, dribbling and heading the ball to a very high standard and their tactical understanding is good. Fitness levels are good and coaching sessions challenge and develop skills improvements in all learners. During coaching sessions learners show very good leadership abilities. They manage the equipment and the activities well. Learners' techniques are very effective in sports massage sessions. Learners' work establishes a good basis for coaching. They use a range of analytical techniques very effectively to review their performances and make critical judgements about their key

strengths and weaknesses.

35. To date, only one group of learners has completed the full apprenticeship framework of this new, complex programme. In 2005-06, there were 370 LFE learners, of whom 332 completed the full two-year learning programme. Thirty-eight learners left the programme without completing it. One hundred and forty-five learners completed the full framework, which is a success rate of 39 per cent. This figure is low, but learners have been more successful in achieving some of the component parts of the framework. Fifty-seven per cent of learners achieved the level 2 coaching qualification, 61 per cent achieved the NVQ at level 3 in sporting excellence, and 52 per cent achieved their technical certificates. Key skills success rates are also low at 38 per cent, although the initial framework did include the very demanding three wider key skills at level 3.

36. Learners who gain professional status often leave the education programme. The demands of first team training are high and policies regarding priorities in football and education are not clear. Some learners who do not achieve professional status become discouraged and leave their studies.

37. Learners in some clubs have been slow in gathering evidence for their NVQs. There are inconsistencies in the management and delivery of key skills training, and some learners have not begun their key skills training and assessment.

38. No achievement table has been produced here. The data used in the report is LFE's, which has not yet been validated by the LSC. However, the LFE's data was checked by inspectors and found to be accurate.

The quality of provision

39. All the practical coaching sessions observed were very well planned and delivered, and were graded good or better. The coaching provision in Wales is very good. Coaches are well qualified and most of them have professional experience. They have detailed, one-year coaching plans with monthly themes. These plans form the basis for the planning of all training sessions. These sessions focus on particular aspects of the themes, performance issues from the previous match, and preparation for the forthcoming match. Sessions frequently begin with a useful briefing, where the coach reviews the objectives of the training session. Very effective audiovisual resources help to ensure that learners clearly understand the objectives, and how practical skills sessions will operate. Video tapes of recent matches which involve the learners are used frequently to illustrate key coaching points. Very effective dynamic graphics illustrate positional movement and tactics extremely well. Learners can appreciate precisely how they need to improve their performances, and how this relates to what other players are doing. Thoughtful questioning develops and reinforces learning and encourages all learners to become involved. However, most background knowledge development in technical certificate and key skills teaching sessions is at best satisfactory, and in a few sessions it is inadequate.

40. The coaching briefings are followed immediately by practical work. These sessions are well organised and managed. Learners clearly understand what is required of them and of the team in order to be successful in their football. Warm-ups for these sessions are paced appropriately and linked to the type of physical work that players will be involved in. Learners' progression through increasingly demanding practice matches is

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managed effectively, and they gradually improve their performance and understanding. Coaches regularly provide perceptive, well-targeted and useful coaching points to individuals and groups during the matches. Learners respond very well to instructions and demonstrate the required improvements in their performance.

41. The apprenticeship in sporting excellence programme is very effective in meeting the needs and aspirations of learners. Four key elements in the programme promote the precise skills and knowledge required for a professional footballer. Considerable care is taken to ensure that learners receive detailed and thorough information before beginning the programme. Learners' inductions are planned well and prepare them for their training. Learners display high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to their well-planned training, and recognise the benefits of education to support their practical footballing development.

42. Good support is provided to meet learners' individual needs. Initial assessment is used well to identify previous academic achievement and highlight any general support required. Learners' progress is generally well-monitored and recorded. Most target-setting is effective and challenges learners to develop their skills and competence. Learners have good access to specialist fitness training facilities, which include advice about nutrition, medical conditions and the treatment of injuries. Academic support is flexible and effective in helping learning. Many learners who make the first team, or who play external representative matches receive additional training sessions that help them to complete their training courses.

43. Pastoral support is particularly good. Apprentices often live in shared accommodation where they develop good relationships with supportive staff and other learners. Learners who progress to the first team continue to use shared accommodation. All meals are supplied and staff deal effectively with the many welfare issues of learners. Parents of potential learners are fully briefed by LFE's staff and expectations are explained clearly. Learners are able to contact LFE for support at any time. However, the Welsh language is not given sufficient prominence in some clubs in Wales.

44. The level 2 coaching award is very effective in helping learners to develop personal and coaching skills to judge their own performances. The content of the technical certificate course is designed well for the football programme.

45. All learners play in competitive club matches to maintain their motivation and continue their development towards a possible professional contract. The national certificate helps learners to understand the range of relevant football topics and provides some of them with a route to higher education. Many learners comment that the programme has significantly improved their understanding of the links between education and work. Also they believe that the well-organised programme has contributed to significant progress in their personal development and career aspirations.

46. Formal and informal contacts between the club, LFE and the subcontractors are good. Learners receive regular and comprehensive progress reviews that include the NVQ, the technical certificate and key skills training. Detailed targets are set and monitored. Learners increasingly aspire to high-grade achievements on the technical certificate course. Club coaches give all-embracing support in developing learners' technical skills. Learners at some clubs benefit because their club can access LFE's funds to purchase

equipment such as heart rate monitors.

47. The feedback given to some learners about their written assignment work and portfolio evidence is inadequate. Tutors and staff generally mark learners' work and return it promptly, and clear judgements are made about the grades that are given. However, marking does not identify poor spelling or inappropriate grammar and punctuation. Not enough opportunities are created to reinforce key skills development and to raise the standards of learners' written work by identifying their mistakes. Learners' use of external research sources is not referenced adequately.

Leadership and management

48. Overall, the apprenticeship programme is well co-ordinated and managed. LFE communicates very effectively with all participants. These include clubs, subcontractors, parents and learners. Positive working relationships ensure that issues such as attendance, punctuality and inappropriate behaviour are resolved quickly. Pre-course information and guidance are good. Learners and parents are well briefed and fully understand the implications and expectations of completing the programme. LFE's staff brief parents to ensure that they understand that most learners do not achieve professional status in football.

49. LFE provides good support to clubs and subcontractors. The delivery of the programme is flexible and the development of background knowledge is effective. Good and effective quality assurance policies and procedures generally ensure successful monitoring of subcontractors' performances. LFE regional officers visit clubs and subcontractors frequently and provide good support. They review learners' progress effectively and deal efficiently with operational issues. Most development officers are very effective in communicating key policies and procedures to improve the quality of provision.

50. The management and co-ordination of the provision in the southeast region is not effective. In this region the management and planning of the programme is poor. The integration of different aspects of the apprenticeship framework is incomplete, and there is a lot of duplication. There is not enough identification and sharing of good practice, and there is a lot of duplication of learners' assessments. LFE has no procedure to cover for staff absences. Some clubs in this region had poor apprenticeship framework success rates.

