

# Amacsports Ltd

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 58248

**Name of lead inspector:** Richard Beynon

**Last day of inspection:** 29 September 2010

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Amacsports Ltd (AMAC) is a private limited company established in 2003, operating across the south east of England with its head office in Womenswold, Canterbury, Kent. Amac specialises in providing training for the fitness industry. Two directors lead Amac, assisted by five managers. Around 25 tutors, assessors and internal verifiers work on a full-time, part-time or sessional basis.

Amac provision since the previous inspection has included national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in active leisure and learning delivered under Train to Gain funding, and Entry to Employment provision. The contracts for these programmes have now ended. At the time of the visit, Amac had 26 learners just beginning apprenticeship training in sport and active leisure. The company also delivers a range of privately funded and sub-contracted programmes for local authorities, colleges, businesses and individuals. These consist of short courses, workshops and NVQs at levels 1 to 3 in a variety of leisure, fitness and sport-related subjects.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

**What is the provider's capacity to make and sustain improvements?**

**Significant progress**

AMAC has good capacity to make and sustain improvements, representing significant progress since the previous inspection. Quality improvement, quality assurance and self-assessment activities are closely and productively integrated. Managers frequently update and amend the quality improvement plan, which forms a standing item on weekly senior management team meeting agendas.

A thorough self-assessment activity occurs twice yearly, and links well to quality assurance arrangements. The company self assessment report has been improved, with a clearer focus on strengths and areas for improvement, and greater levels of analysis. The report now closely aligns with the Common Inspection Framework. Business development planning is thorough and realistic, and takes good account of learners' needs. Good links exist between quality, business planning and marketing activities. Partnerships and sector networks are well established and assist in the development of realistic vocational training.

#### Outcomes for learners

**What progress has been made in raising achievements and outcomes for learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection achievement and standards were good for both Train to Gain and Entry to Employment provision. Both these contracts have now ended, Train to Gain some time ago. Entry to Employment provision, which ended most recently, maintained good outcomes, and improved slightly upon those recorded at the time of inspection. The final achievement rate for the provision was 76%, with progression into work or appropriate further training well above national average at 68%. Success rates on AMAC's other, sub-contracted, European Social Fund national vocational qualification (NVQ) provision are good, at 77% for level 2 and 100% for level 3. Managers reviewed initial assessment procedures, individual learning plans and employer contracts in the light of outcomes from previous provision and improvements have been made in readiness for apprenticeship training.

### Quality of provision

**What progress has Amacsports made in improving the quality of training, learning and assessment to meet the needs of all learners?**

**Significant progress**

AMAC has developed the overall quality of training, learning and assessment well since the previous inspection. The grade profile of internal observations has improved and the internal observation scheme now places appropriate emphasis on learning, rather than simply focussing on teaching as was the case at the previous inspection. Improvements in gathering and using the views of learners following training have resulted in better delivery venues and extra training days. Staff have gained level 2 certificates in safeguarding and some learners now take the qualification. Amac now runs teacher training courses and many staff have completed these. Recruitment processes for staff are improved and include a demonstration of teaching ability. Staff have particularly appropriate specialist knowledge and employment experience for their jobs.

Managers have taken very effective steps to identify and develop functional skills, with a coordinator appointed to lead three delivery staff. Skills are carefully embedded into vocational training activities and schemes of work record this well. A number of useful guidance sheets about skills development exist for staff. New tracking sheets allow managers to monitor closely the achievement of functional skills. A research project resulted in improvements to delivery and management of Entry to Employment training. Advanced plans are in place for the introduction of a virtual learning environment, and technology is used effectively to capture assessment evidence using digital video. Improved initial assessment has helped to focus better the learning support for those with identified needs.

**Have measures to monitor and record learners' progress improved?**

**Significant progress**

AMAC has greatly improved the systems for monitoring learner progress since the previous inspection. AMAC now recruits and interviews its own learners which has helped in developing better focussed support and training. An improved individual learning plan is now used to set appropriately challenging targets and review learner progress against them. The plan now develops with the learner and better reflects their needs and aspirations rather than, as previously, broad qualification aims. A new target setting and review log is helping keep learners aware of the targets they need to achieve. One-to-one tutorials are focusing well on providing learners with feedback to drive achievement.

A focus on improving timely success has included the use of a new achievement chart, clearly showing each learner's progress through the apprenticeship. The chart is colour coded using a traffic lights system to show clearly those learners on target to achieve as well as any slippage in timely progress. Data are shared well with individual tutors and these tutors have an improved understanding of the progress of their learners. A new management information system includes learner progress tracking software that will afford managers easier analysis of data.

## Leadership and management

### **What progress has Amacsports made in improving the effectiveness of internal verification arrangements?**

### **Significant progress**

Since the previous inspection AMAC has made many improvements to the effectiveness of internal verification arrangements. The company had previously worked with seven awarding bodies which meant having different internal verification systems and guidance in place. Following extensive research the number of awarding body contracts was reduced to three, allowing streamlining of systems. The number of internal verifiers has increased from one to three, spreading the workload and increasing the amount of support available to assessors. Assessors receive better mentoring, and there is now greater consistency in assessment practice.

The training to develop assessors has improved and staff undertook online training with an awarding body to outline changes in qualifications, assessment and standardisation practice. External verifier reports are quickly shared using electronic mail. New sampling spreadsheets effectively track learners from start to finish of qualifications. The use of flowcharts helps assessors to take the correct actions when assessing. Comments to assessors on internal verification feedback sheets are improved and the activities in standardisation meetings focus more effectively on improving practice and consistency of decisions.

### **What progress has Amacsports made in developing complete and effective quality improvement arrangements?**

### **Significant progress**

AMAC has made significant progress in developing complete and effective quality assurance arrangements since the previous inspection. Additional members of staff

have been appointed to quality assurance roles in order to represent skills areas. A comprehensive and well-judged quality cycle governs the range and frequency of improvement activities. Staff and managers understand the cycle well. Actions and review dates are appropriately spaced, and there is good articulation between quality assurance, self assessment and quality improvement planning.

Session planning has improved and session plans give good consideration to equality and diversity, safeguarding and health and safety. Session plans are routinely shared among staff as a resource for future course planning. Training and administration staff and managers have received good levels of training in equality and diversity, safeguarding, session planning teaching and learning observation and self-assessment. All staff are now registered with the Institute for Learning, and most have completed teacher training programmes. Measures to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are very effective. All staff are observed three times each year, and each observation is used as an opportunity to gather learner comment. Feedback to trainers is comprehensive and constructive. Observers receive comprehensive training and good arrangements exist for shadowing and moderation among observers. The profile of good or better teaching and learning has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

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