

# Amacsports Limited

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

5 to 7 February 2019

| Overall effectiveness                        |                    | Good                      |             |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>        | Adult learning programmes | <b>Good</b> |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>        |                           |             |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Outstanding</b> |                           |             |
| Outcomes for learners                        | <b>Good</b>        |                           |             |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection |                    | Not previously inspected  |             |

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Directors plan a broad range of courses that help learners gain employment in the fitness industry and extend the range of activities and classes learners offer to their clients.
- Directors manage training programmes well, and they take effective action to ensure learners make good progress.
- Experienced and well-qualified tutors provide consistently good-quality teaching that instils industry good practice and the correct use of terminology.
- Tutors give learners useful and immediate feedback that enables them to make good progress in lessons and correct their errors swiftly.
- Learners develop excellent instructing skills during effective practical training sessions.
- Learners gain extensive knowledge and understanding that they use to good effect when developing clients' fitness programmes.
- Learners behave in an exemplary way. They are exceptionally professional, courteous and polite.
- Learners benefit from outstanding advice and guidance that raise their aspirations for working in the fitness industry.
- Most learners gain jobs as personal trainers or fitness instructors, often overcoming significant barriers to employment and education.
- A high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications.
- A minority of learners do not achieve their qualification on time, mainly because they struggle to pass the level 3 anatomy and physiology examination.
- Tutors do not use learners' starting points well enough to ensure that they have a sufficiently individualised programme.
- Directors do not have sufficient arrangements for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning to help them self-assess and prioritise actions that will help the provision improve further.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Amacsports Limited (Amac) is a company specialising in training for the sports, fitness and active leisure industry. The company is based in Womenswold, Canterbury. Amac has two directors, one of whom carries out much of the training, and a corporate account and course manager. Directors employ five freelance tutors and assessors for additional or specialist training, assessment and quality assurance. Training takes place at leisure centres in Maidstone and Chatham or at Amac's head office. Learners attend 20 face-to-face training days, supplemented by e-learning and self-study.
- Amac currently has 29 learners taking personal training and fitness instructor or exercise referral qualifications. All learners receive an adult learning loan. The adult learning loan provision makes up a small part of Amac's business, with the majority of training funded privately. Learners come from across England and many have barriers to progression.

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

- Directors should analyse why learners struggle to achieve the level 3 anatomy and physiology examination and plan effective learning activities, including the revision day, that will help learners achieve earlier.
- Ensure tutors receive, and use, details of learners' starting points, so they can individualise learning activities from the start of the programme.
- Identify suitable arrangements for judging the quality of teaching and learning, including through observation, and use the findings to contribute to self-assessment and quality improvement planning.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Directors have an ambitious vision for creating excellence in the training they offer and the learners they teach. In response to funding changes, they made the astute decision that one of them, who has extensive experience and knowledge from the fitness industry, would be the main tutor. Directors have secured experienced tutors, assessors and quality assurers as freelance staff to teach specialist courses and additional classes, where required.
- Directors and tutors focus strongly on ensuring inclusivity and participation in training and sport by all, but particularly those from under-represented groups. Directors thread equality of opportunity throughout Amac's strategic aims. As a result, many learners overcome significant barriers to education, including mental health issues, physical disabilities and low levels of self-esteem and confidence. They start new careers as personal trainers and fitness instructors and thrive by learning in small groups.
- Directors structure and plan training programmes exceptionally well. They offer a level 2 fitness instructor qualification as part of the programme, and this means that learners who are new to the industry can gain employment early in their course. Learners choose three additional courses to their main qualification from a wide range of accredited subjects. This often gives them a competitive advantage over their fellow instructors and personal trainers. For example, learners add value and variety to the fitness classes they teach through introducing kettlebells, sandbags, ropes and high intensity interval training (HIIT).
- The managing director reviews learners' progress frequently, identifying those at risk of not achieving on time. She evaluates trends in achievement by different groups of learners and understands the reason why achievement rates dipped last year. In response to this dip, directors changed course materials, revision days and arrangements for external examinations. As a result, learners' achievement rates have risen this year, and where learners exceed their target dates, it is by shorter timescales.
- Directors and tutors evaluate their courses critically. Where needed, they make immediate changes to learning activities and resources. They gather feedback from learners, which is consistently positive about Amac's training and support. Internal and external specialists observe tutors teaching the additional courses to ensure that they meet the required standards and help them improve their practice.
- Directors do not have sufficient arrangements to judge the quality of teaching and learning on the main courses taken by adult learning loans funded learners. The director who teaches on this programme identifies areas for improvement. However, this is not supplemented by feedback from peers or external specialists. This affects how well directors self-assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and put in place improvement actions.

### The governance of the provider

- Both directors have clear roles and responsibilities that complement and support each other very effectively.

- Directors set a challenging and ambitious strategy for the company that ensures good-quality provision.
- The managing director holds the education and training director and team of freelance tutors and assessors suitably to account, ensuring that they intervene and support learners whose progress and achievement is not swift enough.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Directors ensure a sound culture of safeguarding through relevant and up-to-date procedures and action plans. They know their learners exceptionally well and identify many who are vulnerable adults. Directors and tutors create a very caring and nurturing environment. The managing director has a thorough risk assessment process that directors and tutors complete for all venues and lessons.
- Directors and tutors are suitably trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They use this to good effect to make sure that learners are safe and understand their responsibilities for safeguarding the clients they work with in gyms or classes. For example, learners explain in detail the procedures that they follow to safeguard older and vulnerable clients and children.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Tutors plan and manage theory lessons well. They use highly effective learning activities that enable learners to develop extensive technical knowledge and understanding. Learners apply theory accurately when carrying out training and fitness activities. For example, learners gave detailed and accurate instructions when teaching squat, deadlift and lunge exercises to their peers, using correctly the theory they learned earlier in the lesson.
- In practical lessons, tutors provide learners with very clear guidance on the skills and knowledge they need. This helps learners make rapid progress in developing the essential instruction techniques needed to be an effective personal trainer or fitness instructor. Level 4 learners make good use of research and case studies to reflect on, and improve, their practical skills. For example, after learning about periodisation, one learner gained more clients by changing the way he designed fitness programmes.
- Tutors take full advantage of the leisure centres' equipment and facilities to make face-to-face lessons interesting and relevant. They create good peer learning opportunities, where learners practise and experiment with different techniques across a range of activities. For example, learners in a HIIT lesson learned basic concepts using exercise bicycles, before devising a personal training session for one of their peers using a range of gym equipment.
- Exceptionally knowledgeable and experienced tutors set high expectations for learners by replicating industry good practice. They teach learners to use exercise and fitness terminology at an early stage in their course. Learners quickly gain confidence in using technical vocabulary. For example, towards the end of their first training day, learners describe correctly the concentric and eccentric phases of a dumb-bell curl.

- Tutors give learners immediate feedback on their practical work during lessons. This enables learners to correct any errors early and make good progress. Tutors encourage learners to give their peers constructive feedback, providing them with an insight into the effectiveness of their instruction and training.
- Learners receive precise and useful feedback from tutors and assessors about the quality of their written work and assignments. They are clear about what needs to be improved and how to develop their skills further. Tutors frequently use assessment to broaden and question learners' knowledge and understanding of each topic. For example, where learners wrote about general training techniques, their tutor extended this understanding by asking them to research different components of fitness training.
- Tutors do not assess learners' starting points in enough depth to plan and provide individual learning. Learners often experience a delayed start to their programme while the tutor becomes familiar with their previous experience, qualifications and employment. Directors and tutors do not identify which learners might struggle to pass the anatomy and physiology examination. As a result, they set all learners the same learning activities regardless of whether they have prior academic qualifications, work in the fitness industry or have not been in training or education for a long time. Learners are offered optional revision days but not all choose to attend.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

### **Outstanding**

- Learners develop excellent fitness instructor and personal trainer practical skills. They demonstrate these to a high standard early in their course. Tutors set consistently high expectations that inspire learners to succeed. Many learners develop extensive skills very quickly, often with no previous experience of working in the fitness industry. For example, learners who have previously worked in construction or have been unemployed gain skills and qualifications at an early stage that enable them to change careers and make good progress towards level 3 achievement.
- Learners behave in an exemplary way. They are exceptionally professional, courteous and polite. During lessons, learners demonstrate the attributes needed to be successful in the industry. They take their role as a fitness instructor or personal trainer very seriously. For example, during peer-to-peer learning activities, learners replicate how they would interact with a paying client at work.
- Learners are highly respectful of each other. They provide outstanding peer support and encouragement. Learners gain significantly in confidence, particularly when instructing peers they have known for a short period of time. For example, following very constructive peer criticism and self-reflection, a learner transformed his personal training session to be of a very high standard.
- Learners enjoy their studies very much. They value the range of additional qualifications they can take that extend their skills and expertise. Learners like the flexibility and variety of learning activities, including self-study, e-learning and the mobile telephone applications. For example, a learner used an application to find out more about how different muscles work. This helps many learners to develop research and independent study skills.
- Learners benefit from outstanding advice and guidance throughout their course. They receive exceptionally clear initial advice that helps them choose the right courses for their

current and future careers. Learners are fully aware of the progression routes available to them when they finish their course. Many aspire to continue their learning, particularly with Amac. Learners value greatly the careers guidance given by their tutors, who they regard as industry experts.

- Learners attend well and are punctual for lessons. They arrive ready to learn, and they are attentive and keen to participate.
- Learners have an excellent understanding of health and safety requirements in their work environment. Their tutors consistently reinforce industry standards for work, including safe use of equipment. As a result, learners know how to keep themselves and their clients safe and healthy. Although learners receive information during induction about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, not all remember it or appreciate how it applies to them.

### Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- Learners' achievement of qualifications is good. The large majority of learners achieve the level 3 qualification. Almost all learners additionally gain a level 2 qualification that licenses them to work as a fitness instructor. Learners' achievement of qualifications dipped in 2017/18, largely due to one group of learners in London who took a qualification that Amac no longer offers. Achievement so far this year is showing early indications of being high.
- A minority of learners do not achieve their qualifications on time. Directors know that this is mainly because learners struggle to pass the level 3 anatomy and physiology examination on their first attempt. They introduced a revision day, which has helped more learners pass. However, too many learners continue to find this test difficult, and fail initially, and then retake it, which delays their qualification achievement.
- Current learners are making good progress. They gain new skills and knowledge rapidly, and most are up to date with completing assignment work and self-study materials. Where learners fall behind, directors and tutors take swift action to ensure that they catch up quickly.
- Most learners start their career as personal trainers or fitness instructors while studying with Amac. Many overcome significant barriers to employment and have ambitious and/or self-fulfilling goals. For example, one learner has a niche group of clients aged over 60, while another is helping to reduce childhood obesity. A few learners make good use of their own experiences to help clients deal with similar health or well-being concerns through fitness and exercise.
- A few learners progress on to a level 4 certificate in advanced personal training with Amac. This fits well with their career aspirations, including progressing to higher education. For example, one learner has started the level 4 to help reach his goal of taking a master's degree in strength and conditioning.
- Learners produce good-quality written and practical work. They take pride in their work, which is well presented and neat. Learners use technical terms accurately in their work, for example when describing exercises, muscles and movements.

## Provider details

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Unique reference number   | 58248                         |
| Type of provider  | Independent learning provider |
| Age range of learners   | 19+                           |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 45                            |
| Principal/CEO   | Liz Lee                       |
| Telephone number  | 01227 831 840                 |
| Website   | www.amactraining.co.uk        |

## 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)                                      | -                | -   | -        |     |         | 24  | -                | 5   |
| Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age                                     | Intermediate     |     | Advanced |     | Higher  |     |                  |     |
|   | 16–18            | 19+ | 16–18    | 19+ | 16–18   | 19+ |                  |     |
|   | -                | -   | -        | -   | -       | -   |                  |     |
| 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                     | –                |     |          |     |         |     |                  |     |
| At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | –                |     |          |     |         |     |                  |     |

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. Inspectors used individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and tutors, and these views are reflected within the report. Inspectors observed learning sessions. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Janet Rodgers, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Gartland

Ofsted Inspector



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