

# Inspection of A.R.T.S. Education

167a Ormskirk Road, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 8HR

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Inspection dates: 25 to 27 February 2025

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Inadequate

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging at this warm and inclusive school. This is a place where difference is celebrated, and pupils feel that they are valued members of the school community.

Pupils enjoy strong, nurturing relationships with staff, who care deeply about their well-being. This helps pupils to feel happy and secure. They trust that there is always a member of staff available to help them if they are worried. They know they are in safe hands.

The school has high expectations of pupils' learning. Pupils are taught by teachers who know them well. The thoughtfully designed curriculum prepares pupils, all of whom have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), well for the next steps in their education and adult life.

Pupils are respectful of others. They conduct themselves well around school. Staff notice when pupils experience distress and respond sensitively to pupils' emotional needs. They are successful in helping pupils to manage their behaviour and feelings.

Pupils enjoy the varied 'enterprise' activities that they can be involved in. For example, they planned a school 'prom' evening. Pupils were given budgets to organise the venue and decorations, as well as the music, food, and drink. These opportunities enable pupils to gain a wealth of skills and to build their confidence and independence.

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

The school has created a broad, balanced, and ambitious curriculum. It is well designed. In the main, staff have thought carefully about the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils need to learn to succeed academically. However, there remain a small number of subject curriculums that are less well developed than others. In these subjects, the knowledge and order in which teachers want pupils to learn this are not as clear as they could be. This means that some teachers are not certain what they need to teach and by when. In these subjects, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

Nevertheless, most pupils achieve well. Staff have created a curriculum which prepares pupils well to be successful in the future. At the end of Year 11, pupils study for a suite of useful qualifications, including GCSEs, which prepare pupils well for their next steps in education.

Teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. There are plenty of opportunities to revisit and recap important learning. Mostly, teachers explain things clearly to pupils. However, sometimes teaching is not as successful as it could be at delivering the curriculum. For example, some of the activities chosen do not always help pupils to learn the intended curriculum well.

The school gathers a comprehensive range of information about each pupil. Together with information taken from pupils' education, health, and care (EHC) plans, the school accurately identifies gaps in learning as well as in social and emotional development. This information is used well to create a personalised curriculum for each pupil.

Reading has a high profile in school. There is a thorough understanding of where pupils are in their reading development. Staff provide effective support for pupils who find reading difficult. For example, pupils benefit from revisiting early reading strategies and developing their comprehension skills further. Staff are relentless in seeking every opportunity to foster a love of reading among pupils who are often reluctant readers.

Pupils behave well in lessons. Many are motivated to learn. If struggling to concentrate, pupils are supported to find strategies to help them to re-engage. Most pupils join the school after having long periods of non-attendance in previous settings. The school analyses and tracks absence thoroughly. Staff do all that they can to re-establish positive attendance habits.

Pupils' wider development is an important part of the school's work. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural aspects are a golden thread throughout the curriculum and are the starting point for decisions about trips and visits. Pupils are knowledgeable about the fundamental British values and the protected characteristics. They regularly demonstrate respect and empathy through their open celebration of diversity. For example, they demonstrate their acceptance and understanding of each other's differences.

From Year 7 onwards, pupils benefit from well-considered careers education, information, advice, and guidance. The school is particularly effective at picking up on pupils' interests and aspirations. A varied range of visits and experiences are offered to pupils, including in the music industry, film production and the NHS. This reinforces the school's belief that there are no limits to what pupils can achieve.

The proprietor has robust systems in place to ensure that all the requirements of the independent school standards (the standards) are consistently met and sustained. The school's building is well maintained, clean and well resourced.

The proprietor has ensured that it adheres to health and safety requirements and meets the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

The proprietor and governance of the school have acted swiftly and effectively to address the failings identified at the first standard inspection. They have transformed the school with a determination to improve and provide the very best for pupils. There is an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support that they receive for their workload and well-being. For example, they appreciate how leaders encourage them to balance their work and home life.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not fully considered exactly what pupils should learn and in what order. This hinders some pupils from achieving as highly as they could. The school should finalise the curriculum content in these subjects to ensure that teachers know exactly what knowledge pupils must learn and when they should learn it.
- In a small number of subjects, the delivery of the curriculum is not as secure as it could be. Where this is the case, some of the activities chosen do not always help pupils to learn the intended curriculum well. The school should ensure that teachers have the knowledge and skills that they need to implement these subject curriculums successfully.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148840
<b>DfE registration number</b>	342/6009
<b>Local authority</b>	St Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	10342189
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent day school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 17
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	20
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	A.R.T.S. Artistic Re-Engagement Teaching Strategies Limited
<b>Chair</b>	Annmarie Read
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annmarie Read
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£42,500 to £50,000
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 638948
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.artseducation.co.uk">www.artseducation.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:info@artseducation.co.uk">info@artseducation.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 to 26 January 2023

## Information about this school

- The previous standard inspection took place on 24 to 26 January 2023.
- The school received progress monitoring inspections on the 17 October 2023 and on the 12 June 2024.
- The school operates from premises at 167a Ormskirk Road, Rainford, St Helens, Merseyside WA11 8HR.
- All pupils who attend this school have SEND. All have an EHC plan. Pupils' needs include autism and social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- There are 20 pupils on roll at the school. The school presently has an agreed capacity with the Department of Education (DfE) for 22 pupils.
- At the time of this inspection, there were no post-16 students on roll at the school, nor were there any pupils in Year 7.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The chair of the proprietor body is also the headteacher. Since the previous standard inspection there has been an increase in staffing, including additional senior leaders. The proprietor has also appointed a group of governors to provide support and challenge to the school.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who are also the proprietors. They also spoke to other senior leaders, including those responsible for the overall curriculum, careers education, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors held discussions with members of staff, which focused on the well-being and safeguarding of pupils.
- An inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors. She also spoke on the telephone to a representative of St Helens local authority and two other local authorities who commission pupils' places at the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of pupils' work and, where appropriate, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The lead inspector made a tour of the premises. Inspectors also reviewed documentation and other information to check the school's compliance with the standards.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. However, inspectors spoke with some pupils about school life. Some of these conversations were held in the presence of a member of staff to support and reassure these pupils.

### **The school's progress in meeting previously failed standards**

During the inspection we checked whether the school now meets the independent school standards that it was judged to have failed at its previous progress monitoring inspection on 12 June 2024.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **the school now meets the previously failed standards.**
- At the time of the previous progress monitoring inspection in June 2024, the proprietor did not have sufficient oversight of the quality of the school's provision. Furthermore, the school was operating beyond its registration agreement with the DfE. The school was registered to admit a maximum of 14 pupils but had 22 pupils on roll. Additionally, there was insufficient challenge provided by the proprietor to ensure that those pupils who struggle to attend school do so as often as possible. Finally, there remained insufficient arrangements in place for the proprietor to check on whether the standards were being consistently met.
- The proprietor has invested in high-quality, specialist teaching staff who have positively transformed the quality of the curriculum offered to pupils. This includes a comprehensive reading strategy which has raised expectations of reading, places the importance of reading central to the whole curriculum offer and seeks at every opportunity to nurture a love of reading.
- The school is now operating within its registration agreement with the DfE. The school is registered to admit a maximum of 22 pupils. There are currently 20 pupils on roll.
- The proprietor has been conscientious in gaining a more thorough knowledge and understanding of the standards. A comprehensive system has been put in place

to regularly monitor the school's compliance with the standards. This has enabled the proprietor to have the necessary information to ensure that standards are consistently met.

- School leaders now regularly report to the governing body on the development of the quality of education, namely, the curriculum, assessment and teaching and learning. As a result, for example, the proprietor is clear about which curriculum subjects are being focused on, what actions have been taken to improve the quality and depth of knowledge being taught, and how this is improving the confidence of teachers to deliver these subjects. These systems are increasingly embedded and have a visible, positive impact on pupils' learning.
- Improvements in the proprietor's accountability can also be seen through its strengthened oversight of aspects such as attendance. There are significant improvements in monitoring absence. Well-thought-out plans are in place to coax pupils that struggle back into school. As a result, attendance has significantly increased for those pupils who find it hard to attend school.

### **The school now meets the following standards**

#### **Part 8. Quality of leadership and management of schools**

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
  - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently
  - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently
  - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

#### **The school's proposed change to the maximum number of pupils**

The school has applied to the DfE to make a 'material change' to its registration. At the DfE's request, we checked whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the DfE decided to approve the change. This part of the inspection was carried out under section 162(4) of the Education Act 2002.

- The outcome of this part of the inspection is: **The school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards if the material change relating to the school provision is implemented.**
- The proprietor has considered how to adjust its safeguarding, risk assessment and fire safety procedures to ensure that these are suitable for an increased number of pupils.
- There is already a high staff to pupil ratio in school. This staffing number would be equally sufficient should this material change application be approved. Pupils are well supervised, including at breaktimes, when arriving at school and on leaving the school premises.
- A written risk assessment policy is in place. Risk assessments are detailed and show that leaders take appropriate actions to minimise risks to pupils.



- The school building is refurbished to a high standard and is well maintained. It has sufficient classrooms, breakout spaces, toilet facilities and outdoor space to accommodate the increase in pupils should this material change request be approved.
- The school has a clear rationale for its request to increase the capacity from 22 to 40 pupils. It has considered the impact on existing pupils. Leaders amply demonstrate the knowledge required to accommodate this material change request. They have rigorous systems in place to ensure that the standards are consistently maintained. They conscientiously fulfil their responsibilities to promote the well-being of pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gil Bourgade

Ofsted Inspector

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