

A.R.T.S. Education

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

Inspection dates

17 October 2023

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)-2(1)(b)(i), 2(2), 2(2)(e)(i)-2(2)(e)(iii), 2(2)(h), 3(a)-(g), 4

- At the standard inspection in January 2023, inspectors found that leaders had not considered in enough depth or detail what they wanted pupils to learn in each subject, including in reading. This meant that teachers were not clear about what to teach to pupils and in what order. Furthermore, there was no clear assessment system in place. As such, teachers could not judge how well pupils learned new knowledge, nor could they address the gaps in pupils' learning. Teachers did not design learning activities that enabled pupils to achieve well.
- At the standard inspection in January 2023, inspectors found that pupils did not receive a structured programme of careers education. This meant that pupils were not able to make well-informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in August 2023, it was judged that leaders' priorities to improve the quality of the curriculum for pupils were likely to be sufficient to address the independent school standards ('the standards') in this part that were unmet. This was because leaders outlined how they had recruited a curriculum manager and additional subject leaders. They also described how they would engage with external consultants to help them to improve the design and delivery of the curriculum, including in reading. Leaders presented a clear plan of how they would improve their assessment systems to check pupils' progress through the curriculum.
- In their action plan, leaders also outlined how they had appointed a specialist careers teacher. Leaders described appropriate actions to implement a coherent careers programme into the curriculum.
- The evidence from this progress monitoring inspection showed that leaders have set out with more clarity what they intend pupils to know and remember in each subject. Increasingly, this is helping some teachers to design more appropriate learning activities for pupils. However, this is not the case for reading, where there is no curriculum in

place. Therefore, leaders are not taking pupils' ages, aptitudes and needs sufficiently into account in reading.

- Leaders have set out clearer systems for assessment in most subjects based on the key knowledge that pupils need to know. However, in reading, there are no established procedures for assessment, as the curriculum is not in place. Leaders are, therefore, unsure if pupils are achieving well in reading. In addition, pupils lack the reading knowledge that they need to access other parts of the school's curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not learn as well as they could across subjects.
- The school has put in place a structured programme for careers education. There is a member of staff in position who leads the careers provision across the school. Pupils can access the information that they need to make well-informed choices about their next steps. Pupils gain the experiences that they need to set appropriate plans for when they leave the school. Leaders have made links with external agencies to strengthen the range of work experience placements that pupils can access.
- The standards in these paragraphs are unmet.

Paragraph 2A(1), 2A(1)(f), 2A(2)

- During the standard inspection in January 2023, the evidence showed that leaders had not consulted with parents and carers about the programme of relationships and sex education (RSE). In addition, they did not offer parents the option to withdraw their child from sex education.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in August 2023, leaders had proposed a variety of suitable actions to likely meet the specific requirements of this paragraph. For example, leaders had appointed an RSE leader. A new RSE policy had been written and leaders were preparing to consult with parents. A right to withdraw letter had been drafted for parents who did not want their child to participate in sex education.
- During this progress monitoring inspection, it was evident that leaders had shared the content of the RSE curriculum with parents. They had also given parents the opportunity to provide feedback on the content of this curriculum. In addition, leaders had given parents the option to withdraw pupils from sex education.
- The standard in this paragraph is met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7(a), 7(b), 15, 31(1) and 31(1)(c)

- Leaders continue to have appropriate systems and procedures in place to keep pupils safe. They make regular checks on the culture of safeguarding across the school. Leaders take swift action to secure help for pupils from external agencies, when required. They act on the advice that they are given in relation to keeping pupils safe. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school.
- The safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and it is made available to parents on request.
- Leaders maintain accurate records of pupils' attendance. They record attendance information in a timely manner. This ensures that pupils are kept safe.
- The standards in these paragraphs continue to be met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18(2), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(3)

- During the standard inspection in January 2023, the evidence showed that leaders did not carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on staff. This was in relation to the checks that leaders made on the qualifications that staff hold in relation to the requirements for their role.
- When the school's action plan was evaluated in August 2023, leaders outlined that they had increased their knowledge of safer recruitment. The right pre-employment checks appeared to be in place, including securing the appropriate evidence relating to staff's qualifications. Systems appeared to be in place to ensure that all pre-employment checks were completed before staff began working at the school. It was deemed that these actions were likely to be suitable to meet the standard.
- During this progress monitoring inspection, it was evident that leaders have established systems that help them to accurately monitor safeguarding checks during the recruitment process and over time.
- The standard in this paragraph is met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 23(1), 23(1)(c), 24(1)-24(1)(b), 24(2), 29(1), 29(1)(b)

- During the standard inspection in January 2023, the evidence showed that leaders had not ensured that there was provision of a suitable medical room, located near toilet facilities. In addition to this there were no shower facilities available for pupils to use after physical education. Inspectors also found a lack of suitable space for pupils to play outside.
- In their action plan, which was evaluated by Ofsted in August 2023, leaders set out that they would provide a medical room next to a toilet. They proposed a series of actions to provide a suitable recreational space. Leaders committed to installing showers and changing facilities. It was deemed that these actions were likely to be suitable to meet the unmet standards in this part.
- At this progress monitoring inspection, the inspector found that leaders had successfully completed all the actions set out in their action plan. For example, leaders had provided a medical room for pupils to use that was located near toilet facilities. Shower and changing facilities had been provided for pupils. Leaders had created a secure outdoor space that was deemed suitable for use by pupils at social times. There were appropriate areas for pupils to relax and to engage in physical activity.
- The standards in these paragraphs are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- At the standard inspection in January 2023, leaders and the proprietor had not ensured that all of the standards that were inspected were consistently and securely met. For example, there were weaknesses in the design and the delivery of the curriculum, including in reading. Assessments systems were not fit for purpose. There were issues with the RSE curriculum and the provision for careers education and guidance.

Furthermore, some of the pre-employment checks on staff were not carried out. Pupils did not have access to a suitable medical room, shower and changing facilities, or an appropriate recreational area.

- In the action plan, which was evaluated by Ofsted in August 2023, leaders set out a number of actions that were deemed likely to be appropriate to rectify the unmet standards identified at the previous standard inspection in January 2023. The proprietor and leaders also set out how they would improve the leadership and management of the school. For example, leaders intended to provide training for all governors from an external advisor. This was so that governors gained the knowledge, skills and understanding that they required to support and hold leaders successfully to account.
- At the progress monitoring inspection, the evidence showed that leaders had provided additional training to governors. They had also provided training to line managers to improve their quality assurance procedures.
- The inspector also found that improvements had been made to the careers education that pupils received. Furthermore, parents had been consulted on the RSE curriculum. The evidence showed that the concerns around the pre-employment checks on staff had been addressed. The issues around the medical room, the showering and changing facilities, and the recreational space had also been successfully rectified.
- Despite these improvements, however, it was clear that leaders had not taken all the actions necessary to meet all the unmet standards consistently and securely. At this progress monitoring inspection, there remained considerable weaknesses in the quality of education that pupils received. There was no reading curriculum in place. As a result, pupils lacked the reading knowledge that they needed to access other parts of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils did not learn as well as they could across subjects.
- The standard in this part remains unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	148840
DfE registration number	340/6006
Inspection number	10312547

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

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	14
Number of part-time pupils	None
Proprietor	A.R.T.S. Artistic Re-engagement Teaching Strategies
Chair	Annamarie Read
Headteacher	Annamarie Read
Annual fees (day pupils)	£34,200
Telephone number	07749846945
Website	www.artseducation.co.uk
Email address	info@artseducation.co.uk
Date of previous standard inspection	24 to 26 January 2023

Information about this school

- The school's previous inspection was a standard inspection that took place from 24 to 26 January 2023.
- The proprietor is also the headteacher.
- The school operates from premises at 167a Ormskirk Road, Rainford, St Helens WA11 8HR.
- The school caters for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Pupils' primary needs include autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The Department for Education (DfE) also asked for these additional standards to be checked: Part 3 - 7(a), 7(b), 15, part 6 - 31(1) and 31(1)(c).
- The school's previous inspection was a standard inspection that took place from 24 to 26 January 2023, when the school was judged not to comply with the independent school standards.
- The DfE required the school to prepare a statutory action plan. This was evaluated by Ofsted on 21 August 2023. The DfE accepted the school's action plan.
- This was the school's first monitoring inspection since its previous standard inspection. This inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector held discussions with the proprietor, who is also the headteacher.
- The inspector examined documents, including the safeguarding policy, curriculum documents and documents relating to leadership and management.
- The inspector spoke with a group of pupils about their learning and wider experiences in school. The inspector visited some lessons.
- The inspector made a tour of the premises.

Inspection team

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in subparagraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively; and
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(h) that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 4 The standard in this paragraph is met where the proprietor ensures that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in 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.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(2) For the purposes of paragraph (2)(1)(a), the matters are-
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner;
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps to encourage them to fulfil their potential.
- 2A(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor
 - 2A(1)(f) consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e), and
- 2A(2) Arrangements made by the proprietor for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)(b) must ensure that where a pupil's parent requests that the pupil is wholly or partly excused from sex education provided as part of relationships and sex education, the pupil is so excused until the request is withdrawn, unless or to the extent that the head teacher considers that the pupil should not be so excused.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that teaching at the school-
 - 3(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if:-
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person-
 - 18(2)(c)(iv) where appropriate, the person's qualifications.
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies (2)(e) must be completed before a person's appointment.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

- 23(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), the standard in this paragraph is met of the proprietor ensures that
 - 23(1)(c) suitable changing accommodation and showers are provided for pupils aged 11 years or over at the start of the school year who receive physical education.
- 24(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable accommodation is provided in order to care for the medical and therapy needs of pupils, including-
 - 24(1)(a) accommodation for the medical examination and treatment of pupils;
 - 24(1)(b) accommodation for the short term care of sick and injured pupils, which includes a washing facility and is near to a toilet facility; and
 - 24(2) The accommodation provided under sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b) may be used for other purposes (apart from teaching) provided it is always readily available to be used for the purposes set out in sub-paragraphs (1)(a) and (b)
 - consults parents of registered pupils at the school before making or revising a statement under sub-paragraph (e).
- 29(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that suitable outdoor space is provided in order to enable-
 - 29(1)(b) pupils to play outside.

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