

# Section 48 Statutory Inspection Denominational Report

## Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist Primary School

Address	29, Ravenshurst Street, Camp Hill, Birmingham, West Midlands, B12 0EJ		
Date of inspection	7 July 2022	URN	136440
Status of the school	<b>Primary – Voluntary Aided</b>		
<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Additional Judgements</b>	<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
	<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

### School context

The school is the only Seventh-day Adventist voluntary aided in the country. There are 189 on roll. A significant proportion enter or leave at different points across the school year. Pupils have different Christian and other faith backgrounds: just under half of families identify as having no religion. Most pupils are of African and African Caribbean heritages. The proportion considered to be disadvantaged is well above national averages. Those who have special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) or who speak English as an additional language are in line with national averages. This is its first section 48 inspection.

### School vision

To provide a Christian education for all pupils so that each receives a balanced intellectual, spiritual, social, cultural, emotional, and physical education in harmony with the school’s Seventh Day Adventist principals and ideals.  
Associated Values: Love, Learning, Laughter

### Key findings

- The vision and associated values are deeply embedded and strongly grounded in biblical teaching and in Seventh-day Adventist principles. Under the skilful and effective leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by staff at all levels, and governors, they drive continued improvement and future development. They are intrinsic in enabling individuals to flourish within a happy and supportive environment.
- Reflecting, and being strongly driven by, the school’s inclusive vision and associated values:
  - the ambitious, innovative and well-focused curriculum provides a robust basis for learning
  - the very high number of pupils who enter and/or leave at times other than usual are excellently supported and extremely well integrated. Consequently, they make very strong progress whilst at the school although this is not reflected in the end of school attainment measures
  - collective worship is pivotal to the school’s spiritual life, providing excellent opportunities for pupils and adults to reflect, pray and consider issues of religious and moral significance. A newly formed pupil worship group is beginning to lead and monitor whole school worship more regularly
  - the religious education (RE) curriculum is well-balanced, offering both breadth and depth to learning and enabling pupils to make excellent progress across the school.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that the strong progress made by pupils is seen in their long-term performance so that overall attainment measures continue to improve.
- Embed the use and positive impact of the recently formed worship group’s role in leading and monitoring whole school worship.

## **How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?**

### **Inspection findings**

The school has an explicit and aspirational vision which permeates and drives forward its Christian and inclusive service to its pupils and their families. As one pupil said, "it doesn't matter what race or religion you are, all are welcome at Harper Bell". At its heart the vision and associated values celebrate a biblical understanding of the value of the individual as a gift from, and created by, God. Consequently, the various gifts and talents of pupils and staff are confidently nurtured and extended. This means that there are positive relationships and a strong climate for learning across the school. Behaviour in classrooms and around the site is excellent. Impressive strategies to support any vulnerable pupils, and their families, are well thought through and executed. Impressive pastoral and safeguarding support, a strong mentoring programme and various well targeted interventions to enable pupils to make progress are all in place and working effectively.

Under the insightful and supportive leadership of the headteacher, the vision and associated values are deeply embedded and clearly put into practice. In this he is well supported by his senior leaders, other staff and by the governing body. Practical self-evaluation and clear development planning lead to focused steps being taken to ensure continued improvement. This is evidenced in the latest OfSTED report (2019), and indeed in subsequently positively addressing issues raised in that report. Beginning with advertisement, through the interview process and on to continuing professional development, the vision and associated values are at the forefront and positively shape the strong support offered to staff. A recent and ongoing emphasis on developing middle leaders in their various roles is successfully contributing to continued improvements. This includes the excellent use of staff development journals to focus ongoing professional development.

The innovative, ambitious, broad, and balanced curriculum is excellently thought through and well embedded. It positively and successfully expresses the school's high aspirations for all its pupils. It meets National Curriculum and RE requirements in a manner linked explicitly to the various backgrounds of the pupils, drawing inspiration from the school's vision and associated values. Focused plans are in place for the further refinement of the curriculum which is well complemented by a range of extracurricular and enrichment activities. This is indicative of the holistic and inclusive view of education expressed in the vision. It also shows the strong ambition of the staff to continue to improve the learning experience for all pupils. There is a strong emphasis on improving the breadth of vocabulary across subjects as a positive support for reading and writing; the inclusion of Latin enhances this.

The progress made by those who spend their whole, or much of their primary education at Harper Bell is at least good and often exceptional. However, well above average numbers of pupils enter at times other than the usual starting points. These pupils are exceptionally well integrated and cared for and clearly benefit from their time in the school. Staff at all levels work tirelessly to ensure the progress of these pupils but often they are not at the school long enough for these efforts to come to full fruition. Consequently, overall attainment against national measures does not fully reflect the strong learning environment and progress being made by pupils across the school. Parents reflect on how their children are eager to talk about their learning when they are picked up at the end of the school day. The personal development of pupils is excellently supported through, for example, the ambitious and inclusive curriculum and through the commendable pastoral care. This means that pupils, and indeed adults, flourish. Equality and justice and personal empowerment through education to 'make a difference for the good' run through the school's life.

The school has productive links with the local authority who have worked with them, for example, in their successful focus on developing the role and work of middle leaders. There are productive links with the British Union of Seventh-day Adventists who are the proprietors of the building. Involvement with the independent Seventh-day Adventists schools is mutually productive. Supporting its specific denominational foundation, the relationship with a local Seventh-day Adventist church is deepening. The school now visits for worship termly and the pastor leads a weekly act of worship which focus on specific Seventh-day Adventist teachings. He will formally become the school chaplain in September 2022.

The site is pleasant and well maintained. There are relevant Bible quotations in evidence which are referred to regularly and which reflect the biblically based vision and associated values. The quality of display is good and there is an increasing emphasis on the use of 'learning walls' where pupils' thinking, and learning are expressed and developed.

The daily worship programme is the linchpin of school life. The importance of belief and faith in action are successfully explored in engaging ways whilst at the same time respecting and including those who do not share

the same, or indeed any, faith. Planning for collective worship includes an appropriate emphasis on elements of Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and practices. Pupils are excellently engaged in both class and whole school worship. The Bible, singing and extemporary prayer provide excellent engagement in worship which pupils and staff respond to with clear enjoyment. It strongly supports their spiritual and moral development. Pupils lead worship in class but until recently have not had so much involvement in leading whole school worship. The impact of worship on school life is monitored principally through regular soundings of pupils' views. These are acted upon. For example, the most recent review identified that many pupils wanted more reflection time in worship which is now being implemented. A worship group to support whole school worship has been developed but this group is too recent to have had great impact. The importance of prayer is strongly evident. Prayer boxes in the entrance hall and in the pupil prayer area in the newly refurbished and equipped library are well used. Worship is further extended by a daily voluntary prayer time for staff towards the beginning of the school day which is well attended.

The RE curriculum has an appropriate balance between a focus on Christianity and other world faiths and beliefs. It is excellently structured to provide effective opportunities for pupils to learn in depth about aspects of religions and worldviews. They are enthusiastic in their learning. They are prepared to share their views and beliefs in class because there is a respectful and thoughtful atmosphere. Governors and senior leaders ensure that RE is given adequate time and resources. This demonstrates its importance as a core subject and its excellent impact on extending the school's vision and associated values. RE subject leadership effectively supports ongoing developments. Through a range of activities pupils engage excellently in RE, finding that it 'helps me learn new things'. Assessment for each unit is focused on a pre- and post-assessment task which certainly helps pupils to reflect on their learning and teachers to assess the impact of their teaching.

Headteacher	Nigel Oram
Inspector name	Pamela Draycott