

Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School

29 Ravenhurst Street, Camp Hill, Birmingham, West Midlands B12 0EJ

Inspection dates

8–9 March 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good in all years. Consequently, pupils' progress, although improving, remains too slow.
- The quality of mathematics teaching is too variable. Some teachers lack the knowledge and confidence to teach the subject well.
- Subject leaders do not have the expertise or confidence to lead the development of their areas.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 was low in 2015 and 2016. It is now improving.
- The leadership of the early years foundation stage has not secured consistently good teaching and provision for children.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have rejuvenated the school since their arrival in September 2016. They are unrelenting in their determination to provide the best possible education for pupils. They command the confidence of pupils, parents and staff.
- Leaders and governors know the school well. They tackle weaknesses quickly and effectively. Rapid improvement is evident in many areas of the school this year.
- The interim executive board (IEB) provides effective support and rigorous challenge to leaders.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times. They have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy their lessons and are keen to do well.
- The school provides a wide variety of leadership opportunities that pupils enthusiastically embrace. Consequently, pupils are increasingly confident, mature, articulate and proud of their school.
- Pupils feel safe and are very well cared for. Relationships are excellent. Pupils like and trust their teachers and the other adults who work in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of mathematics so that pupils make consistently good progress in all years by ensuring that:
 - teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and confidence to anticipate, identify and tackle pupils' mathematical misconceptions
 - teachers plan activities that are well matched to what pupils already understand, know and can do
 - pupils have a sound grasp of basic skills which they are able to apply when solving problems
 - pupils are able to think and reason, rather than relying on learned methods to solve problems.
- Improve the early years provision by ensuring that:
 - adults are vigilant in making the most of opportunities to intervene to maximise learning during activities that children initiate
 - better use is made of the outdoor area to broaden children's experiences
 - leaders make better use of assessment information to identify and address weaknesses in the provision.
- Sharpen leadership by:
 - securing permanent, expert leadership of the early years provision within the school
 - ensuring that subject leaders have the confidence and expertise to lead the development of their areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has transformed the school since his arrival in September 2016. He is uncompromising in his determination to see the school improve and to see 'all pupils fulfil their God-given talents and aspire to achieve a university education'. He has quickly galvanised pupils, parents and staff around the school's values of 'Love, Learning and Laughter'. More than 100 parents attended a 'vision setting' meeting in September 2016, where these values were agreed. All parents who completed Parent View said that the school is well led and well managed. One parent summed up the views of many when they wrote:

'It has been wonderful witnessing the transformation the school has undergone with the new leadership team in place. This school will now grow from strength to strength and I'm proud to be part of that journey.'
- Senior leaders and governors know the school well and have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Weaknesses are tackled quickly and effectively and the school is improving as a result. Demonstrable improvement is evident this year in teaching, pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance, pupils' personal development, the early years provision and staff morale.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching. When they identify weaknesses, they provide appropriate and specific advice and training, both in school and through visits to see good practice elsewhere. Teachers value this feedback and are keen to improve their practice. Consequently, teaching is improving.
- Morale is high in the school. Teachers and other adults form an effective and enthusiastic team that is fully committed to the school's vision. All members of staff who completed the inspection questionnaire said that the school had improved since its previous inspection. All said that they enjoy, and are proud to be, working at the school.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding that the school receives. They target the pupil premium well to support disadvantaged pupils, taking careful account of the particular difficulties that each pupil faces. Consequently, the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils are improving. Differences between the attendance and progress of disadvantaged pupils and those of other pupils nationally are diminishing and differences in school have been eliminated.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is also well targeted at improving pupils' participation in sport. An external coach takes PE lessons, training members of staff at the same time. Consequently, despite limited sporting facilities, pupils' involvement in sport is growing. For example, the newly formed girls' football team has now played several competitive matches.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils' additional needs are accurately identified and additional support is provided when necessary. Teachers keep a careful eye on these pupils' attainment. Leaders regularly review pupils' progress, involving parents in these discussions. Consequently, leaders ensure that they make good use of the additional funding provided for pupils who have

special educational and/or disabilities.

- Leaders revised the school's curriculum in September 2016 with the aim of accelerating pupils' progress, especially in English and mathematics. The revised English curriculum, based around high-quality books, has proved very successful in quickly raising standards of achievement. The revised mathematics curriculum has also successfully improved pupils' progress, but at a slower rate because of teachers' more limited expertise.
- The curriculum beyond English and mathematics provides pupils with an appropriate range of subjects and experiences. The range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities has grown considerably this year. Pupils enjoy the sporting, musical and academic activities now being offered and these are contributing well to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- The promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance is a strength of the school. Weekly personal, social, health and economic education and religious education lessons help pupils to learn about the democratic process and the legal system. The clear ethos, reinforced in regular assemblies, means that respect for and tolerance of others are well represented in all that the school does. Pupils radiate the school's values because the school curriculum, in its entirety, makes a strong contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is currently highly dependent on its headteacher and deputy headteacher to lead its continuing improvement. Subject leaders are committed and hard-working, but are very reliant on the headteacher and deputy headteacher for direction. They currently lack the expertise and confidence to lead improvement in their areas.
- Senior leaders acted quickly to address concerns about the school's early years provision in September 2016. Lacking early years expertise within school, leaders sourced highly effective external support through the Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), provided by St Matthew's Church of England Primary School. Consequently, the early years provision has improved this year and it continues to improve. However, leaders recognise that they are currently very reliant on this external support and they are seeking to remedy this situation in the near future.

Governance of the school

- An IEB, which was established prior to the previous inspection, governs the school. Members of the IEB bring considerable expertise and commitment to the school, especially in the field of education. They know the school well, including its strengths and weaknesses. They have developed clear and effective plans to address weaknesses and these contribute well to the school's current trajectory of improvement.
- The IEB provides effective support and rigorous challenge to school leaders. For example, a governor recently completed an audit of the school's safeguarding arrangements in order to assure the IEB that safeguarding is effective.
- Governors carry out statutory duties with diligence. They closely monitor the school's finances, managing them effectively. They ensure that additional funding, including the pupil premium, the PE and sport premium and special educational needs funding, is

used effectively to have maximum impact.

- They ensure that leaders and teachers are set challenging targets that are appropriately focused on improving teaching and raising standards of achievement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leadership of this area is meticulous. Systems and policies are clear and well understood by all staff. Records are detailed and stored securely. Leaders understand procedures to recruit staff safely and they use these well.
- Staff are regularly and comprehensively trained in all aspects of keeping pupils safe. Consequently, staff understand that keeping pupils safe is their top priority. They are confident in passing on any concerns they have about pupils, secure in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- A culture of care pervades the school. For example, all members of staff who completed the inspection survey said that the school deals effectively with bullying and that pupils are safe in school. All parents who spoke with inspectors or who completed Parent View said that their child is well looked after, feels safe and is happy in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching across the school is too variable. Some is good or better, but some remains weak, especially in mathematics.
- The teaching of mathematics is not consistently good. This is because some teachers lack confidence because their mathematical subject knowledge is not as strong as their knowledge of other subjects. Teachers are not consistently able to anticipate potential difficulties as they plan activities, and they fail to identify and tackle pupils' mathematical misconceptions in lessons. Consequently, activities are sometimes too easy or too difficult, or teachers move pupils on too quickly before they have a secure grasp of the basic skills needed to tackle new work. Because teaching does not effectively develop pupils' deep understanding of mathematics, they too often incorrectly rely on learned methods or 'tricks' to solve problems. For example, inspectors observed pupils who did not have a secure understanding of what three quarters of a shape looked like and, when being asked to calculate three quarters of six, they were unable to do so. Similarly, inspectors observed pupils incorrectly calculating a quarter of 120 because they used a convoluted learned method rather than using a secure understanding of what one quarter of a number means.
- Teaching in the early years is improving. Children, rather than being directed by adults, now initiate more of their learning. Teachers' assessment of children's learning is now accurate and being better used to plan each child's next steps. However, adults are sometimes too slow to help and prompt children when they are taking part in self-initiated activities and this means that some children do not learn as quickly as they could.
- The teaching of English is of a consistently better standard than that of mathematics. Teachers are more confident in their subject knowledge and well-focused training and

clear schemes of learning have ensured a consistent approach across year groups. Teachers develop pupils' basic skills well and then use high-quality books as a focus for pupils' extended writing. Consequently, pupils effectively apply their newly acquired skills.

- Teaching is improving. This is evident in all subjects, but is more rapid in English than mathematics. Inspectors' extensive scrutiny of pupils' books confirmed leaders' views that teaching has improved this year and that it continues to improve. Pupils take pride in their work, which is presented neatly.
- Relationships are strong in all year groups. Pupils like their teachers and they value the care and support they receive in class. They are happy to seek help when they need it and they are not reluctant to offer answers, secure in the knowledge that they have their teacher's and their peers' support.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, both in class and at other times. As a result, these pupils often make better progress than their peers. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to most lessons. They work closely with the class teacher and then use their expertise to question, prompt and support pupils.
- The teaching of phonics is consistently strong. It is well organised and well delivered, in small groups, by teachers and other adults who have secure subject knowledge. Consequently, pupils make good progress. This is now increasingly contributing to improving progress in pupils' reading and writing, especially in key stage 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident, articulate and increasingly able and keen to talk about their learning. They are caring and considerate towards others and they are unfailingly courteous and polite. In class, pupils work effectively in groups, listening to each other, discussing maturely and encouraging other group members. Pupils work equally effectively by themselves, concentrating well and working hard.
- Leaders' efforts to develop pupils' leadership skills this year have been very effective. The school's pupils and staff are divided into four houses, with pupils in Year 6 as house captains. House captains lead weekly discussions in their houses. They also act as 'big sisters' or 'big brothers' to younger pupils and they carry out this role with impressive maturity and sensitivity. Pupils in all years act as prefects with a variety of responsibilities. Other pupils are 'coach apprentices' who help with after-school clubs and also with lunchtime play. One house captain, when asked if she was a role model for young pupils, told inspectors:

'I tell pupils don't try to be me. Be your own person. But be that person to the best of your ability.'
- Pupils are fiercely proud of their school. They have enthusiastically embraced the school's values of 'Love, Learning and Laughter' and these three words characterise the school throughout the day. For example, inspectors observed an end-of-day assembly.

Pupils' behaviour was impeccable, their enjoyment palpable and their singing joyous.

- Pupils feel safe and well cared for in school. They told inspectors that bullying is very rare and that they have confidence in staff to deal with any bullying that does occur. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they feel safe in school. Older pupils show great care for younger pupils. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe from potential dangers, including those that can arise when using the internet. During the inspection, inspectors observed safeguarding workshops. Here, pupils were reminded about how to stay safe from bullying when using computers and from other potential dangers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. When teaching is strong, pupils respond with enthusiasm and excitement. When teaching is weaker, pupils remain respectful and well behaved. Disruption of lessons is very rare and, consequently, serious sanctions, including fixed-term exclusions, are used very rarely.
- Pupils behave well at breaktime and lunchtime. The school dining room is calm as pupils sit together, and eat and chat maturely. Pupils play together sensibly in the school's rather cramped playground. They are generally considerate of others. The school is calm and orderly throughout the day. Inspectors observed an evacuation of the school following a fire alarm. Pupils left the building quickly and calmly as they had been instructed to do.
- Attendance was a little lower than the national average in 2016. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils, girls and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was lower than other pupils. Concerted action from leaders has seen attendance improve this year, especially that of disadvantaged pupils, girls and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are now no groups of pupils attending significantly less than others and attendance is on track to be close to the national average this year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been low for the past two years because their progress has been too slow. For example, by the end of Year 6, less than a quarter of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. Similarly, by the end of Year 2, the proportion achieving the expected standard was below average in reading and mathematics and well below in writing.
- Pupils currently in the school are making better progress because of stronger teaching and a well-organised curriculum. Their progress is accelerating rapidly in English but more slowly in mathematics. The school's assessment information indicates that mathematics lags behind English in almost all year groups.
- Disadvantaged pupils make similar, and often better, progress than their classmates in

all key stages. They receive effective extra help when they fall behind with their work. Although their progress in the past has been too slow, it is now improving rapidly.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities tend to make better progress than their peers. Over time, expert additional support has reduced the impact of variable teaching on these pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially those who join the school speaking little English, make good progress. High-quality extra help from teachers and teaching assistants, combined with the support of their peers, ensures that they quickly improve their spoken English.
- Children in Nursery and Reception are making improving progress. Their starting points when they enter the school vary each year, and outcomes at the end of Reception have been consistently below the national figure, but the gap is closing. Better teaching now is seeing children's progress accelerate.
- Pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Strong leadership and good small-group teaching ensure that outcomes are consistently above national figures.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- The early years provision has weaknesses but has improved considerably this year. This is because senior leaders have sourced highly effective external support that provides expertise which school staff do not possess. The quality of the early years provision remains reliant on this external support, although the expertise of school staff is growing.
- Leaders have focused this year on improving adults' assessments of what children understand, know and can do. These assessments are now detailed, accurate and used increasingly well to plan what each child should learn next. However, leaders do not yet use this information well to identify broader weaknesses in the quality of provision. For example, children do not have access to two-dimensional shapes and the outdoor area is underutilised. Consequently, some aspects of children's development are not as strong as others.
- Teaching is improving as adults' expertise and confidence grow. Consequently, children's progress is accelerating. The proportion of children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception, although below the national figure, improved in 2016 and continues to improve. Children are increasingly well prepared to start Year 1.
- Behaviour is good. Children move from one activity to another safely, sensibly and with a minimum of fuss. Adults have successfully established clear routines that children follow well. Children are polite and considerate of others.
- Adults take great care to make sure that children are safe. All adults have been well trained and are vigilant to the signs that children might be vulnerable to harm. Positive and warm relationships between children and adults are evident in the early years. Children trust adults and feel safe.
- Leaders spend the pupil premium funding well. Disadvantaged children are a top priority and they are given effective support. The proportion of disadvantaged children who reach a good level of development by the end of Reception is higher than other

children in the school. Consequently, differences between outcomes for disadvantaged children and others nationally are diminishing.

- Parents' involvement in their children's learning is improving strongly. Parents now join their children in class at the start of the day, when they take part in activities together. The school also runs phonics workshops where parents learn how to support their children in their reading.

School details

Unique reference number	136440
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10025189

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Stanley Tucker
Headteacher	Nigel Oram
Telephone number	0121 693 7742
Website	www.hbsda.bham.sch.uk
Email address	info@hbsda.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 February 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than most primary schools. Many pupils travel considerable distances to attend the school.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 40% of pupils are from Caribbean backgrounds and just over 20% are from African backgrounds.
- More pupils than is usually the case join or leave the school during the school year.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2016.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum

expectations for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, and some of these were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and their attitudes to, and opinions about, school. They observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime and as they moved around the school.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors observed an assembly.
- Inspectors scrutinised the work in many pupils' books in order to make judgements about the progress they were making.
- A wide range of documents were scrutinised, including information relating to attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, pupils' progress and the checks made on the quality of teaching.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, other leaders and members of the IEB, including its chair. The lead inspector spoke with two representatives of the BEP.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day and considered 28 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 17 free text comments.
- Inspectors took account of eight responses received to a staff inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cameron

Ofsted Inspector

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