Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School

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

Unique reference number (URN): 136440

Monitoring inspection report:	21 April 2026

At the most recent graded inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

- The school has not been rigorous enough in its appraisal of the curriculum, the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or the standards of behaviour and achievement. Changes are not being made quickly enough to bring about the rapid improvements needed. School leaders, governors, the local authority and the NEC board need to work as a collective body to ensure that there is a well-considered, structured approach to addressing these inadequacies.
- Lessons do not follow the intended curriculum. Staff do not revisit prior learning, or support pupils to build on what they know and can do. As a result, pupils are unable to remember or use much of what they are taught. The school should ensure that staff, including temporary staff, follow the curriculum as intended, identify and address gaps in learning and support pupils to build on from their current knowledge and understanding.
- The school does not have sufficient staff capacity and expertise to provide leadership across the full range of subjects taught. As such, there is limited oversight of the curriculum and its impact on pupils' achievement, and staff do not receive the support needed to improve their practice. The school should ensure that it builds the capacity to develop subject leadership as part of its work to improve the quality of education offered.
- The early years curriculum, including phonics, is not implemented well. Teachers' subject knowledge is weak and activities during continuous provision lack a clear learning focus. The school should ensure that staff are provided with the support needed to deliver the curriculum effectively, including with phonics, so that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- The school has not considered carefully enough how to support pupils with SEND, so that they can access the curriculum and are fully included in lessons. Staff do not have sufficient knowledge to be able to assist these pupils as well as they should. The school

should support all staff to make the adaptations needed for pupils with SEND, so that they access the full curriculum and are successful in their learning.

- As a result of weaknesses in the school's quality of education, low-level disruption in lessons occurs too frequently. This creates a further barrier to pupils succeeding. The school should ensure that expectations from staff are heightened.

Leaders and governors are taking effective action to improve the school but continued work is needed to remove the special measures designation.

The school may appoint up to 2 early career teachers before the next monitoring inspection into any phase within the school.

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following evaluation areas:

- Leadership and governance
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement

Leadership and governance

Leaders have successfully established stable leadership and staffing, strengthening the school's capacity to improve. They have secured rapid and visible improvements since the last monitoring visit, particularly around achievement, curriculum development and inclusion. Leaders act with clarity and purpose, underpinned by a structured and coherent school improvement model, and their plans now guide staff with confidence. The curriculum is now well defined and sets out the knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and when. Leaders have also strengthened systems for identifying and supporting disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), which is helping staff respond more effectively to pupils' needs.

Leaders' priorities are well chosen. They focus on improving teaching, developing consistent approaches and ensuring that staff receive high-quality training. Professional learning is now central to the school's work, with a structured programme of training and instructional support that is improving consistency in teaching. Early career teachers benefit from clear guidance and ongoing support. Governance is also effective. The interim executive board understands the school well and provides the right balance of challenge and support. They show commitment to school improvement and maintain a clear focus on ensuring the school has the resources and environment it needs.

Further improvement is still required. Leaders need to ensure that the pace of change remains sustainable while embedding consistent practice across the school. This includes supporting staff to check pupils' understanding more effectively and to strengthen the development of pupils' handwriting and transcription skills.

Safeguarding

At the previous graded and monitoring inspection, safeguarding was evaluated as being effective.

Inclusion

Leaders have made significant improvements to the way the school identifies and supports pupils with additional needs. The appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator has strengthened leadership capacity. Clear processes now guide the identification of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Staff training has played a central role in this progress; leaders draw on expertise from other settings and external partners to build staff confidence.

Teachers' understanding of the school's approach to identifying and supporting need is developing well. Generally, adaptations to learning reduce barriers for pupils. The Beacon provision offers short-term support that helps pupils regulate their emotions and close academic gaps. Leaders also work more closely with families and have strengthened parental engagement, which is beginning to have a positive effect. Additional funding is used well to support disadvantaged pupils and help them access the curriculum.

Leaders have a clear plan for further improvement. They recognise the need to ensure that all staff apply high expectations and consistent approaches in the classroom. Leaders are also focusing on strengthening evaluation of the support provided so that they can identify which strategies have the greatest impact on pupils' needs.

Achievement

Pupils' achievement is improving after a period of weak outcomes. Recent outcomes in the Year 6 national tests are close to national averages in most areas, although mathematics remains below. Disadvantaged pupils achieve outcomes close to national figures. Pupils' current achievement shows a positive trend, with fewer pupils working below expected standards and more pupils reaching expected levels across reading, writing and mathematics.

Curriculum refinements and greater consistency in teaching are helping pupils to make more steady progress. Phonics outcomes remain below national figures. However, this does not fully reflect pupils' progress because a significant number join the school at different points in the year with gaps in their prior learning, including limited phonics knowledge and, for some, little or no spoken English.

Work in books shows a mixed picture. Younger pupils benefit from stronger foundations, but older pupils still carry gaps from previous weaknesses in the curriculum. Leaders have acted quickly to improve reading and phonics, but improvements in writing, particularly transcription and spelling, are less secure. Maintaining focus on these areas should support pupils in being better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Curriculum and teaching

Leaders have taken decisive action to improve the curriculum. It is now well planned and sequenced, with shared teaching approaches becoming more evident. Teaching shows clear signs of improvement and pupils benefit from positive learning behaviours and consistent routines that help them remember important knowledge.

Leaders have an accurate and increasingly precise understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Informed by clear oversight, they take timely and appropriate action to improve it. Lessons follow a clear sequence and match the revised curriculum. Adaptations to learning usually support pupils with SEND well. Leaders also ensure that staff receive training that builds subject knowledge, although some subjects still need greater depth to avoid limiting pupils' opportunities to think and apply ideas independently.

Further work is needed to secure consistency across the school. Staff need to check pupils' understanding more effectively and address misconceptions during lessons. Expectations for handwriting and presentation also need strengthening beyond the early years and Year 1.

Additional next steps

Leaders and governors continue to work to address the priorities for improvement identified in the last graded inspection report.

About this inspection

The inspector carried out this monitoring inspection under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005, and it was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require special measures following the graded inspection that took place in February 2025.

The school's previous inspection and the second monitoring inspection were carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the school's graded inspection and subsequent monitoring inspection have been cross-referenced to the relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the school inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the school's progress in addressing priorities for improvement since the school's previous inspection.

Since the previous monitoring inspection new leaders have been appointed, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. An interim executive board of governors has also been put in place.

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, governors and the local authority to discuss the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection.

Lead inspector

Cathy Young	His Majesty's Inspector

About this school

School capacity	218
Number of pupils on roll	140

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