

# A year to celebrate at Harper Bell

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Special Correspondent

HARPER Bell Seventh-day Adventist Primary School is a Christian school located in Digbeth, at the heart of this great city.

A place of immense faith, character, personality and charm, Harper Bell educates 200 children who travel from as far afield as West Bromwich, Wolverhampton and Walsall. This once independent school, now flourishing as a voluntary-aided local authority school, is passionate about helping pupils grow into morally grounded individuals who achieve academic greatness. This is characterised clearly by its vision: "For all pupils to fulfil their God-given talents and to aspire to achieve a University Education."

All connected with Harper Bell believe children are a gift from God and, like any gift, they must be cherished, loved and protected. This view is underpinned by the school's values of Love, Learning and Laughter which are not only emblazoned across the building, but etched into the psyche of every pupil and member of staff who attend this unique school.

The past 12 months represent a fantastic year for the school. Academically, its Key Stage Two results (SATs) improved dramatically, with the number of children achieving a pass in reading, writing and maths



## AT A GLANCE

- Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School
- Head teacher: Nigel Oram
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rising by a massive 34 per cent. In March 2017, Ofsted inspected Harper Bell and acknowledged the improving standards, stating:

"The head teacher and deputy head teacher 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."

Ofsted lavished praise on the school's pupils stating that: "Pupils behaviour is impeccable...they are caring and considerate and unfailingly courteous and polite."

The school's Christian identity is reflected in its determination to support the whole family, rather than simply educating the child. Harper Bell holds a fortnightly clinic run by the school nurse that aims to ensure all families have full access to medical services. Likewise, the school recognises that during these times of austerity, families might need support before setting foot through the school gates, which is why it works with national charity Fair Share to provide food for any family who requests it.

In 2017 the school's work with charitable causes extended to the British Virgin Islands in the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Irma. After several Harper Bell families were personally affected by the natural disaster, the chair of the school's PTFA, Latoya Jackson, led a drive to collect clothes, toiletries and financial donations in support of the emergency aid effort.

Success was not confined to the classroom in 2017 and extended to the sporting arena. One of the most active schools in the city in terms of competitive sport, Harper Bell's pupils competed against pupils from other schools at least once a week over the past 12 months. Titles were lifted in basketball, football, hockey and athletics, with pupils also

competing in handball, netball and cricket to name but a few of the sports excelled at. The incredibly talented pupils were also picked to represent the Erdington and Saltley Primary Schools' FA district football team, and signed by West Bromwich Albion FC and Aston Villa Ladies FC.

As well as shining in sport, the pupils of Harper Bell made their mark in terms of the arts. Blessed with an astonishing talent for singing and drama, the school's pupils performed for Royalty in June when they serenaded the Duke of Gloucester as he presented awards to Severn Valley Railway volunteers. Never ones to hide their light under a bushel, the Harper Bell choir readily put their undeniable talents to use when entertaining residents of local elderly care homes, as well as performing to a captivated audience at St Martin's Church, Bull Ring.

The value of laughter characterised much of 2017 at Harper Bell and during the summer the school opened its doors when hosting a community fun day. The event was opened by Councillor Yvonne Mosquito, who has a long association with the school, and as the smell of Jerk chicken snaked its way around the streets of Digbeth, a considerable amount of money was raised for charitable causes.

2017: the year when Harper Bell's children, staff and parents loved, learned and laughed as one.