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Ms T Yasmin
Headteacher
Conway Primary School
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Dear Ms Yasmin

Short inspection of Conway Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 11 June 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since your appointment in 2016, you have worked to ensure that pupils at Conway are well educated and develop as well-rounded individuals. With the effective support of the leadership team, and the multi-academy trust's chief executive officer and trustees, you have established a culture of high expectations for staff and pupils. The school continues to improve and pupils benefit from effective teaching. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It serves a community in a less affluent area of Birmingham. A large number of pupils who attend the school speak English as an additional language. The school joined the Create Partnership Trust in 2016. The multi-academy trust consists of four primary schools with a fairly similar intake of pupils.

Leaders are keen to maintain strong links with the local community. They ensure that parents are fully informed about the content of the curriculum and consult them regularly on key issues. As a result, the school is well regarded in the community. The parents I talked to during the inspection were overwhelmingly positive about the school.

The school provides a welcoming and caring environment for pupils. Relationships

between staff and pupils are harmonious. Pupils value the education they receive. In discussions held during the inspection, pupils made comments such as, 'this school gives me a lot of education', and even described their experience of school as 'spectacular'. These comments reflect the breadth of the curriculum and the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities the school offers.

As you are implementing a new curriculum, in line with your ambition to provide the best possible education to pupils, you are aware that there are still areas you need to address to achieve your aims. The development of pupils' oral skills is one of your priorities. While there is some evidence that this focus on speaking is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' oral skills, new approaches are not yet sufficiently established across the school. The new curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn a wide range of subjects. However, leaders and teachers are still in the process of devising ways to assess progress in all these subjects in order to have clear evidence of pupils' progression through the whole curriculum.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is of paramount importance in the school. Leaders, with the support of the multi-academy trust, ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The deputy headteacher, who has overall responsibility for safeguarding, organises regular training for staff. Through updates and regular reminders about the importance of being vigilant, leaders make sure that all the adults who work at the school have the knowledge and the confidence to identify and protect vulnerable pupils. Leaders work well with external agencies to support pupils and their families when serious issues arise.

Pupils feel safe at school because they are confident that staff would help them should they have problems. The school curriculum includes teaching pupils about adopting safe behaviours, especially when using social media and the internet. Pupils are made aware of what constitutes bullying and why it is not acceptable. Assemblies about respecting the rule of law, and talks by members of the police and the fire service, also help pupils learn how to keep safe.

Inspection findings

- The quality of education in the early years is a strength of the school. It is well led and managed. Early years staff are well trained and dedicated and children receive a positive start to their education.
- In order to make sure that children settle quickly in the school, staff do home visits and ask parents to fill in questionnaires about their children's likes and dislikes. Teachers and support staff make rigorous assessments of children's knowledge and skills when they join the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Activities recorded in learning journals provide evidence that most children make good or better progress. A large proportion of children join the early years with skills and knowledge that do not match what is typically expected for their age, especially in the areas of language and communication. As a result of the quality of teaching and care they receive, children catch up. Most of them are in line

with or close to national standards, in terms of development and early learning goals, by the end of the Reception Year.

- Teaching is effective in both key stages 1 and 2. Phase leaders and their teams plan lessons in ways that provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support pupils who need additional help. Time is used productively in lessons because pupils have positive attitudes and relate well to their teachers.
- Typically, pupils make good progress in key stages 1 and 2. The school's information on pupils' progress shows that an increasing proportion of pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 are completing assessments at greater depth.
- Leaders and trustees have a strong focus on ensuring that pupils leave the school fully equipped for the next stage of their education. They also have as an ambition to prepare them to become well-educated and responsible citizens. To achieve these aims, leaders and teachers have been implementing a new curriculum since September. Pupils study a wide range of subjects through topics. Learning is organised so that pupils study each subject in sufficient depth to develop the knowledge and skills that will allow them to progress further in their education.
- The place given to the arts in the curriculum and the participation in the Royal Shakespeare Company's education programme are examples of the ways in which the school seeks to broaden pupils' horizons.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the approaches introduced to develop pupils' oral skills are fully embedded
- they continue to develop ways of assessing the progress pupils make across the subjects they study in the school's new curriculum.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Birmingham. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Patrick Amieli
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you, the multi-academy trust's chief executive officer, senior leaders and middle leaders. I met with the chair and two other members of the board of trustees. I also met with representatives of the multi-academy trust and had a telephone conversation with a member of the trust who has had a long association with the school. I had a discussion with a group of pupils and spoke to other pupils informally. I listened to pupils read. Together with you and senior leaders, I observed teaching in the early years, key stage 1 and key stage 2. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered the six free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.

I scrutinised various documents, including the school's self-evaluation, its improvement plan and the documents that are used to check the quality of teaching. We discussed the national test results and assessments undertaken by pupils in 2018, as well as the attainment of current pupils. I also looked at the published information on the school's website, as well as minutes of the board of trustees meetings and information about attendance, behaviour and safety.