Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The 47 American Sign Language & English Lower School

02M347

223 East 23 Street
Manhattan
NY 10010

Principal: David Bowell

Dates of review: January 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Safiyah Satterwhite
The School Context

The 47 American Sign Language & English Lower School is a K-8 school with 214 students from PK through grade 8. The school population comprises 20% Black, 44% Hispanic, 30% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 7% English language learners and 41% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89.2%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school regularly...</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels.</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
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<td><strong>Area of:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
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<td><strong>Area of:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning.</td>
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Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator: 1.2 Pedagogy  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are consistently aligned to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
All students are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that incorporate the instructional shifts and demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products.

Supporting Evidence
- Each classroom has standards-based teaching points posted for the lesson, academic vocabulary lists, word walls, process and anchor charts, visual supports and accountable talk stems. Across classrooms, teachers utilized various strategies, such as wait time, purposeful grouping, parallel teaching, the provision of one-on-one teacher aids, and American Sign Language to warrant that each student has the necessary in classroom supports to provide entry points into the lesson objective.

- In one classroom, students were grouped into centers as a result of a student assessment taken the prior day. Some students were in a guided reading group, while others used Read 180 for individualized support, a third group comprised of students reading to one another and guiding each other through the activity while the last group worked one-on-one with the classroom teacher. These practices were common across the majority of classrooms in the school, demonstrating and reinforcing the school’s belief that students learn best when they are engaged with one another through purposeful grouping in an equitable classroom environment.

- Across classrooms, teachers asked open-ended challenging questions to students to push student thinking while encouraging students to use evidence to support their claims, as evidenced in student work products. For example, in a 1st grade class students were asked, “Why is having the right to vote important?” Another class used graphic organizers to facilitate and support students in generating inferences. The category “it says” labeled on the graphic organizer helped students to ground their thoughts in the literature read.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator | 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development | Rating: Developing |

**Findings**
There is an inconsistent teacher team meeting structure in some of the school grades. Distributed leadership structures are developing across the school.

**Impact**
The inquiry process across the staff is developing and instructional decisions do not consistently reflect teacher voice.

**Supporting Evidence**
- Although the Early Childhood teacher team has a clear plan in place to discuss student progress, share practices and contribute to decisions that affect student learning, this process is not practiced in the upper grades at the school.
- The principal is in the process of implementing systems in which teachers have opportunities to visit other schools to share best practices and collaborate together more often on the school campus; however, this process is in the beginning stages.
- The leadership team expresses that teachers meet regularly with the assistant principal to review data and build coherency in assessments. However, teachers express that time is not built into the program to allow them structured opportunities to consistently engage in the inquiry and curriculum revision process resulting missed opportunities for input into curricula and instructional decisions that affect student learning.
### Additional Findings

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

The school provides curricula that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

**Impact**

Purposeful curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness while all learners have access to curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school establishes priority standards of focus on each grade level; curricula documents are CCLS aligned; all lesson plans include differentiation, a focus CCLS standard, an essential question and an assessment. Questions noted in the curricula are open-ended and rigorous, such as “How can I use key details/evidence from the text to ask and answer my question to show understanding?”; “How does an author’s point of view determine content and structure of a text?”

- Teachers make instructional modifications frequently in response to data analysis. For example, one teacher was conducting a lesson on opinion pieces and students were asked to introduce the name of the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion and provide closure. This 1st grade lesson was to ensure that students supported their opinions with a reason. As a result of data gathered the prior day through a pre-assessment, the teacher modified his lesson plan to ensure that grouping was reflective of the assessment provided. To provide access to the task for all students, it was thus planned that some students worked in a small group with a teacher for modeling and additional support.

- The school uses a Reggio Emilia approach in its early childhood program while the upper grades utilize Ready Gen, Go Math, Fundations and CMP3 resources. Supportive programs, such as Read 180 are also incorporated into the instructional program to ensure that students receive the necessary standards-aligned support needed for college and career readiness. Additionally, author studies supplement the early childhood program and lesson plans are created using student ideas and wonderings.
Findings
A culture of high expectations informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching is communicated to staff, while expectations connected to a path for college and career readiness is communicated to parents.

Impact
The school has successfully worked with all members of the school community to create a culture of high expectations. Together, staff members outreach to families to understand student progress and to support them in preparing students for success.

Supporting Evidence
- The principal sends out newsletters and weekly communication to ensure that staff, parents and students are informed and on track with the expectations that are set in the school. Through these newsletters, parents are informed of critical school and community-building events, such as open houses, conferences, “what to expect in the classroom” and a variety of other opportunities for them to integrate deeper into the school community.

- The principal has spearheaded an initiative that encourages teachers to sign up and lead various professional development sessions that reinforce high expectations. Some examples of workshops that have been led by teachers include topics, such as: how to use data to inform lesson plan design; supporting struggling students; how to ensure the consistency of American Sign Language in mathematics. The practices gleaned and strengthened during these professional development sessions are implemented in the classroom and followed-up on by the leadership team during observations. Teacher evaluations as well as “What I expect in each classroom” drafted by the principal weekly aid in reinforcing expectations.

- In the parent interview, parents consistently expressed that they are always kept in the loop and multiple forms of communication, such as bulletins, videophones, and the school website are utilized to ensure that all constituents are “on board” with promoting college and career readiness for students. As expressed during the parent interview, although parents desired more teaching of American Sign Language, they stated that the school is meeting their needs and their children are prepared for life after M347.
Quality Indicator: 2.2 Assessment  Rating: Proficient

Findings
Across the school, teachers use and create assessments aligned the curricula. In classrooms, practices that reflect checking for understanding and student self-assessment were evident.

Impact
Teachers make effective adjustments to the curricula and instruction and provide students with actionable feedback regarding their achievement.

Supporting Evidence
- Item analysis is utilized and teachers assess and track student performance by standard using the results to plan for curricula modifications. As a result of a small student body, this analysis is done by hand and lessons are, therefore, often customized for students.

- The school utilizes systems to support students and track progress in meeting the rigorous expectations of the standards, such as Read 180, and a variety of other internal and external assessments to track individual student progress and provide students with actionable feedback regarding their achievement. As a result of this individualized guidance, one student’s Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) scores increased from a 1045 to an 1155 in one month. Similarly another went from a 979 to 1018.

- Student work reflects actionable comments and feedback from teachers consistently across grades. Student interviews revealed that students feel supported and that they receive clear feedback from teachers regarding their progress as well as assess their own work. Students were able to cite specifically where they needed to improve; one student referenced needing to enhance the strength of her conclusions, and spoke to teacher conferencing in the classroom as opportunities to get feedback. Teachers initiate this dialogue with students by providing prompting questions for students to answer about their work with teacher guidance. One document utilized, guided students through answering: “The best part of my essay was…”; “Here is one question I still have…”; “The part that needs work is…”