Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Osmond A. Church School
Elementary School Q124
129-15 150th Avenue
Queens
NY 11420

Principal: Maritza Williams Jones
Date of review: December 5, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Shirley Wheeler-Massey
The School Context

Osmond A. Church is an elementary school with 1331 students from grade kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 25% Black, 22% Hispanic, 2% White, and 47% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94%.

School Quality Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></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>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<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>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<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>
<td>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td><strong>To what extent does the school…</strong></td>
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<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>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Findings
School leaders ensure that all staff is consistently informed of the school’s expectations through ongoing communication and differentiated professional learning opportunities. Within the school community, stakeholders take responsibility in positioning students on a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
As a result of ongoing and transparent communication from school leadership, teachers are fully aware of the expectations around teaching and learning and provide collegial support to one another through various job-embedded professional learning and trainings. Through the home-school connection, staff and families work collaboratively to support students’ academic achievement and success.

Supporting Evidence
- At the beginning of the school year, the principal provides all staff with curricula and staff handbooks that outline her beliefs and expectations related to teaching and learning. Based on Advance data, state assessment data and teacher surveys, school leaders developed a differentiated professional learning plan that addresses specific Danielson components that emerge as trends and patterns across the school.

- Teacher leaders support the instructional goals set by school leaders by taking on the responsibility of facilitating some of the on-site professional learning and by providing demonstration and model lessons. During a teacher meeting, teachers articulated how they initiate their own intervisitation across the grade and provide feedback and suggestions on each other’s practice.

- All stakeholders expressed how progress reports, Engrade and Jupiter, the school’s online communication tools, have allowed for ongoing communication and feedback around student progress. One parent shared how some teachers provide daily progress reports to keep parents cognizant of where their children are, which holds students and parents accountable for improvement.

- Parents are provided various workshops, such as on the Common Core Learning Standards, the GoMath program, how to support children’s learning through technology and how to navigate through ARIS, to ensure they are equipped with tools that will guide them in supporting their children at home.
Findings
Across the school, teaching practices are beginning to align to the school’s belief around student learning, but inconsistently provide higher-order thinking questions that push students’ thinking or multiple entry points to support their distinct learning needs.

Impact
The result of inconsistent teaching practices and strategies across the school, has led to students being exposed to tasks that do not support their specific needs and missed opportunities for students to demonstrate their thinking through their work products.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms, teachers made an effort to implement the school’s instructional focus of challenging students to be actively engaged in the learning process by providing opportunities for them to engage in varying levels of student discussions through think-pair-share, some group discussions, and some collaborative partner work. However, the level of questions posed to facilitate discussions, in four of the seven classes visited, primarily stayed on Depth of Knowledge level one.

- While scaffolds to support student learning were evident in most classes, only three teachers provided targeted multiple entry points for students to be able to understand the concepts or objectives of the lesson. For example, in one class, some students were provided graphic organizers and outlines to initiate the writing process, while in another classroom, all students were given the same cut and paste activity to understand the concept of sequencing.

- While teachers in three of the seven classes provided students with some level of differentiated tasks, in the preponderance of classes visited, students were observed working on the same tasks with limited opportunities for them to engage in activities that were tailored to them and addressed their needs. For instance, in one classroom, some students were engaged in Spatial Temporal math activities on the computer, while others worked on differentiated tasks that were provided based on the teacher’s and students’ assessment of their understanding. In another class, students worked on the same math problems for the majority of the lesson, and then were provided the same follow-up problems once they were completed with the initial tasks.
## Additional Findings

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings
Administrators facilitate the use of curricula that are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards that embed the instructional shifts across content areas and offer learning experiences that challenge some students’ thinking.

### Impact
The use of the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) and Go Math programs have allowed for coherence across the school and the promotion of rigorous habits to improve student learning.

### Supporting Evidence
- School leaders have elected to continue using the CKLA and GO Math programs since they provide opportunities to differentiate instruction and academic tasks, as well as to address the instructional shifts. Within lesson plans and unit plans, there was evidence of teachers planning opportunities for students to cite text-based evidence to support verbal and written responses, to utilize close reading strategies, and to solve multi-step math problems.

- Grade 6 students were exposed to rigorous learning experiences through tasks required within the Socratic seminar in which they had to defend their responses to student questions from the complex text, *The Alligators*. Students in grade 8 worked on challenging Integrated Algebra multi-step problems, in preparation for the year-end Regents exam.

- With writing as one of the school’s instructional foci, school leaders developed writing curriculum maps that include skills that help students understand the components of a claim, distinguish between persuasive and argumentative essays, and cite textual evidence to support analysis.
Findings
Although teachers use assessments and rubrics from selected programs and there is a school-wide grading policy, feedback to students regarding their progress is inconsistent across the school. Across classrooms, teachers inconsistently check for understanding and provide opportunities for students to self-assess to glean valuable insight about their progress.

Impact
Inconsistent assessment practices across the school have hindered effective adjustments to curricula and instruction and have limited students’ awareness of their next steps for learning and improvement.

Supporting Evidence
- Teachers utilize rubrics to inform students of the expectations of a task or project; however, feedback across the school varied from teacher to teacher. In some instances, feedback to students was detailed and aligned to the standard and the task, such as, “be sure to include more cite-specific evidence in your writing”, while other feedback to students during instruction and on work products included “awesome” or “great job”. Additionally, in some classrooms, teachers are using the 1-4 scale rubric, while others have begun to align their math rubrics to those used to score state math assessments.

- While there is a school-wide grading policy that correlates levels 1-4 to percentages, some students shared that they are unclear of what grades on their work products mean. On some tasks, teachers grade student work using 14 out of 16 or 20 out of 20, which is misaligned to the grading policy that is posted in some classrooms.

- During class visits, teachers were checking for understanding by circulating the room and asking questions; however, only two of the seven teachers visited, provided opportunities for students to self-assess and made on the spot adjustments based on conceptual misunderstandings or clarification around a topic or ideas within the text. In one classroom, the teacher circulated to small groups, took notes of their questions to peers, and clarified an idea from the text. In another, the teacher asked the whole class, “How are we doing with this?” and based on students’ positive responses, provided an additional worksheet as an extension task.
Findings
Grade and vertical teams across the school are engaged in professional collaborations related to curriculum development, the integration of Common Core Standards, and analyzing student work and assessment data.

Impact
Structured and defined opportunities for teacher collaboration have resulted in teachers using student work products and data more consistently to identify gaps in student writing and to share best practices and strategies, which have improved teacher’s ability to use the writing process to teach writing skills.

Supporting Evidence
- During an observed meeting, first grade teachers were using the Looking Collaboratively at Student Work protocol to share ideas and strategies that would improve student writing across the grade. One teacher of students with disabilities shared her approach to using the writing process and how she breaks down the process even further for her students to deepen their understanding. Other teachers agreed that this approach would benefit all of the learners across the grade and stated that they would try a similar approach during their next writing lesson.

- Teachers expressed how collaboration on and across the grades supports their practice and how intervisitation between each other’s classrooms allows them to see practice in action. This sharing of practice allows them to then try a strategy within their own classrooms and follow-up with the team on how the approach worked with their students and ask for next steps to further enhance implementation. One teacher new to the school stated, “I’ve worked in other schools before and have never felt so supported by colleagues and administration.”

- Both teacher teams conveyed that although they have a structured time to meet, they organically meet daily or weekly to exchange ideas and strategies, to plan lessons and to discuss how they can make modifications and adjustments to their lessons, in order to meet diverse students’ needs across the grades. Teachers shared the importance of ensuring that all of their students are exposed to the same rigorous level of instruction and learning opportunities within and across all grades.