Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Mary D. Carter Elementary School
Q151
50-05 31st Avenue
Queens
NY 11377

Principal: Dr. Samantha Maisonet

Date of review: November 5, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto
## The School Context

The Mary D. Carter School is an elementary school with 436 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 19% Black, 57% Hispanic, 8% White, 15% Asian and 2% other students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Developing</td>
</tr>
<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>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
<td>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings
Curricula across the school are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). Higher-order skills are consistently employed for all learners across grades and content areas.

Impact
The school's curricular decisions are coherent, promote college and career readiness and emphasizes student thinking across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- ELA Shift 4 (Text Based Answers) and Shift 5 (Writing from Sources) are integrated into the units of study in grades K-5. Student responses reflect the use of text based evidence in writing samples.

- Shift 4 (Deep Understanding) and Shift 5 (Application) are emphasized in the math curriculum through the inclusion of problem solving assessments that provide students’ the opportunity to demonstrate sound reasoning and understanding of key concepts.

- The school’s International Baccalaureate (IB) inquiry based program of study in Social Studies integrates the New York State Social Studies framework. The IB units provide a framework for students to learn about a topic with greater depth and understanding through meaningful questioning and discussion.

- Coherence is developed in writing through revised units that focus on a planned, deliberate sequence of learning. Learning is paced and developed throughout the year in grades K-5 by teaching introductory, intermediate and advanced writing units for each of the text types. Students develop a foundation for each text type with teachers providing more time for students to learn fewer concepts or ideas within the six week unit cycle.
Findings
Teacher assessment practices reflect effective feedback in order to make instructional adjustments. The use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment within instructional periods is not a fully embedded practice across the school.

Impact
Not all students work includes feedback in the form of next steps for improvement. The inconsistent use of checks for understanding limits instructional adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school collaboratively scores learning tasks in English Language Arts (ELA) and math three times per year. This data is used to identify grade level strengths and weaknesses, to determine learning gaps across the school, and to target additional supports and resources to students and classrooms where students are performing in the bottom one third.

- Third grade students were given more time writing and receiving feedback from peers and teachers by extending the instruction time from twenty days to thirty days. A third grade bulletin board displayed the Unit 2 writing assignment, “Students will write opinion pieces on a text, supporting a point of view with reasons.” Drawings and illustrations were used to help support stated opinion. A rubric aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) that was used to assess the writing was displayed along with the published writing pieces. The use of the specific rubric established a protocol for teachers to look at student work across different performance levels.

- In a fourth grade classroom during an English language arts (ELA) lesson the teacher checked for understanding of student work, observation, questioning and tasks. The teacher used a chart to capture her findings. In other classrooms this practice was not noted.

- In four of the ten classrooms visited, teachers were checking for understanding. A review of student’s notebooks and portfolio indicate that not all student work includes feedback in the form of next steps for improvement, thus limiting progress.
Additional Findings

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
The use of strategic teaching strategies that embed multiple entry points in the curriculum for all learners to foster deep reasoning is inconsistent in student work products across the school.

Impact
Lessons do not always challenge all students, particularly high performers, to their full potential, thus, limiting opportunities for them to engage in higher order thinking tasks or demonstrate ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions. However, in six of the ten classrooms visited, students were able to explore their thinking, justify their conclusions and use evidence or examples to support their reasoning.

- During a writing lesson in grade 4 where students were writing an opinion paper, the lesson was a group lesson: four students had completed the assignment and were not on task waiting for further directions.

- In a kindergarten classroom during a reading lesson, the teacher used discussion questions in small group instruction as a scaffold. Questions were targeted to the needs of students and provided multiple points of entry for all students to enter into rigorous tasks. The lesson plan and activity was informed by a rotation chart with guided reading groups and activities. The Ladybug group read text with the purpose of differentiation of text from pictures. The Fireflies group read text with purpose of word orientation – left to right, and the Bumblebees group read text with the purpose of using fingers to show one to one correspondence. However, this practice was not evident across classrooms visited.

- In a third grade classroom during a math lesson, we observed that Group 1 worked on an enrichment activity sheet, Group 2 was given higher order thinking problems in the workbook, Group 3 used Grab & Go activity cards that reinforced the essential question and facts, and that Group 4 used manipulatives to reteach the initial lesson.
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Proficient

Findings
The school conveys high expectations that promote parental involvement and support learning so that staff, students and families work together toward achieving student and school goals.

Impact
Instruction is more focused in that expectations for classroom practice are now clearly defined and consistently practices through the use of the school-wide research-based framework for teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has developed clear, academic learning goals as part of its School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). These goals form the content of teacher collaboration and ongoing professional development activities.

- Specific feedback about teacher practice through the use of Advance and the school wide use of glow and grows statements on student work samples reflect the high expectations conveyed.

- The school communicates with parents through weekly parent-teacher conferences during Parent Engagement Time, monthly newsletters provided by teachers, report cards, progress reports, family Open House Week and student agendas purchased by the parent's association that provide in-depth school information in two languages.

- Parent workshops are organized and conducted by the parent coordinator, school leaders and staff members in order to support parents with academic and social-emotional needs. These workshops are advertised on a monthly parent activity calendar, listed on the parent's association agenda and recorded on the school phone messenger. They include the Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) Parent Link, Understanding Assessment Data, Homework Help Strategies, Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), Learning Leaders, Western Queens Counseling Services, Nutrition and English as a second language Adult Education class.
Findings
Professional collaborations are a high priority and teachers profit from varied opportunities to research effective instructional techniques that improve student progress.

Impact
Teams ensure that the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) are embedded in each unit of study across grades and subjects, thereby strengthening instructional coherence across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Every teacher in on a team that engages in core inquiry. Teacher teams meet collaboratively, establish norms, and select goals for their team meetings common planning is built into teacher schedules which allows for collaboration three to five times per week for each grade.

- Teachers meet monthly to engage in an inquiry process to discuss student work. Additionally, common planning time with the administration or teacher specialist/international baccalaureate (IB) coordinator is offered to teachers on a weekly basis.

- Teacher teams use anchor papers to discuss how student work samples meets or exceeds the CCLS in writing. Using a descriptive rubric, teachers develop a common language for assessment, provide quality feedback to improve student learning outcomes, and discuss next steps for student learning.