Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Early Childhood Magnet School of the Arts

30Q228

32-65 93rd Street
Queens
NY 11369

Principal: Olga I. Guzman

Date of review: December 16, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lucia Perez-Medina
School Quality Criteria

The Early Childhood Magnet School of the Arts is an early childhood school with 366 students from Pre-k through grade 2. The school population comprises 1% Black, 85% Hispanic, 5% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 40% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95.2%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
<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>
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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>Additional Findings</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>Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
<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>
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<tr>
<th>Systems for Improvement</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<td>To what extent does the school…</td>
<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>
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Area of Celebration

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

Impact
Staff, students and families are well supported towards progress in meeting school expectations and parents understand the schools expectations for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers receive a monthly letter and newsletter that is aligned to the instructional focus and measures of teacher practice. A weekly focus reminds staff of the instructional expectations, professional learning opportunities and other important events for that week.

- In an effort to communicate high expectations to all school constituents, staff received a handbook specifically designed for each constituent. Also, a teacher’s calendar is distributed with monthly events and upcoming deadlines and professional development opportunities for teachers to strengthen their teacher practice to meet schools expectations. Professional development topics include Providing Meaningful Feedback to Students and Strengthening Questioning and Discussion Techniques.

- Monthly Parent Curriculum Newsletters detailing what students in each grade will be learning for the month across all the content areas including technology, physical Ed and health are sent home to families and made available at the school’s wikispaces.com portal for families to reference.

- The school communicates with parents about learning expectations through monthly notices, weekly parent conferences and progress reports. Workshops provided to families include Preparing Students to Meet the Common Core Learning Standards and partnerships like Learning Leaders to mentor and increase parental involvement in the school community. Additionally, parents visit classrooms regularly and participate in student’s academic and social emotional learning by attending honor roll ceremonies and special events.

- During the parent interview, parents stated that the school communicates expectations for their children through curriculum newsletters. Another parent added that the school sends home progress reports, invites them to parent teacher conferences, and informs them about their children’s progress in meeting expectations for learning. Parents also praised the school for having enrichment opportunities, multicultural activities, and hosting workshops, including a workshop on Common Core Learning Standards and a mathematics workshop where families received strategies to help their children with assignments.
Area of Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Developing</th>
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Findings
The school is developing its use of common assessments to measure student progress. In addition, the school inconsistently uses checks for understanding and student self-assessments to effectively adjust curricula and instruction to meet students learning needs.

Impact
The inconsistent use of checks for understanding and analysis of common assessment data limits instructional adjustments to meet students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Formative and end of unit tests in mathematics are utilized to provide additional support through practice in a skill or strategy. However, these practices are not yet consistent across all subjects. In addition, such assessments do not yet consistently yield actionable feedback for students. Student work products in mathematics indicated a grade for the student with no clear next steps for improvement.

- In two out of seven classrooms visited, teachers checked for understanding. However, this was not evident in most classrooms visited. In an Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) class, when most students didn’t understand the essential question “How can we learn lessons from fictional stories?” one teacher stopped and reviewed the concept with a small group of students while the other students continued to struggle without redirection from the other teacher.

- In one classroom, students utilized thumbs up, thumbs down to indicate their levels of understanding in a mathematics task. In another classroom, the teacher had the students reflect on the learning task by asking the students “What did you learn today?” However, this practice was inconsistent across classrooms visited.

- Teachers use the Teachers’ College Benchmark Assessments to monitor students’ independent and instructional reading levels in order to plan small group work to address deficits in the grade level reading progressions. A review of conference notes revealed individual conference notes but planning for small group instruction was not noted in all classrooms visited.

- A review of student work on bulletin boards and student work folders indicate that feedback is given to the students in literacy but inconsistently in mathematics. In addition, student work products didn’t note an opportunity for student’s to self-reflect on their learning. During a student interview, most students stated “I don’t think about what I need to do to make my work better.”
### Additional Findings

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

The school's curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrates key instructional shifts in tasks, regularly using student work to make curricular refinements.

**Impact**

The school has made purposeful decisions to ensure coherence of units of study across content areas, and student work analysis informs curricular enhancements, so that diverse learners have curricular access.

**Supporting Evidence**

- English language arts (ELA) and Go Math units of study integrate the CCLS instructional shifts and include academic vocabulary, fluency and multi-step problem solving, informational writing and text-based responses. A review of unit plans reflected the adjustments that were made as a result of end of unit assessments data.

- The school's Teacher's College curriculum is supplemented with Ready Gen to improve student comprehension, fluency and exposure to just right books and grade level texts. For example, lesson plans show use of academic vocabulary, assorted graphic organizers and visual aids to support student comprehension of complex texts.

- Through a blended curriculum which incorporated Teacher's College (TC) and ReadyGen, tasks provide opportunities for students to cite evidence during close reading group discussions and written responses. Teachers use student work samples to adjust lesson and make curriculum adjustments.

- Unit maps show tasks that require students to engage in complex tasks such as a kindergarten math unit task that requires students to answer the question “How can I compare numbers using greater and less than?”

- Science and social studies units of study aligned to the content standards and the CCLS address the major shifts by increasing non-fiction complex texts, incorporating text-based conversations and increasing the use of open-ended questions that encourage critical thinking. For example, a task required students to formulate questions to discuss the text Mary’s Farm and students had to answer their partner’s questions by citing text-based evidence to support their thinking.
Findings
The school does not yet fully embed multiple entry points so that lessons fully challenge students and engage students in high levels of thinking and discussion.

Impact
Lessons do not consistently challenge all students, particularly high performers, to their full potential, thus limiting opportunities for them to engage in higher order thinking tasks and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- In most classes, students are presented with the same task and receive limited feedback from the teacher. In some cases, several students quickly completed the task with no further direction while others struggled with minimal support. For example, during a group lesson in a science class, students were asked to draw pictures of all the things they were noticing. Eight students had completed the assignment and were provided with no extension activity, while four students struggled with describing their noticing to their partner. In another class, students completed a KWL graphic organizer about the animal they chose to write about. However, there were no supports like books, notes, sentence starters or visual aids available for the English language learners with disabilities that were asked to complete this task independently.

- Although students had opportunities to engage in partnership discussions across some classrooms visited, there were uneven levels of student thinking and participation. During a lesson, teacher asked students to discuss the main idea of their books with their partners and some students discussed it with the partners, while other students didn’t participate or respond to their partner. In one Integrated Collaborative Learning (ICT) class there were three groups of students completing the same graphic organizer. The students didn’t have an opportunity to engage in a discussion with their partners or within their groups. One group completed the task with five students sitting quietly waiting for the teacher, while another group had difficulty completing the task without access to supports such as partnership talk, sentence starters or other scaffolds to accelerate their learning.

- In classrooms visited, some students participated in class discussions and students had access to discussion prompts. In one of the seven classrooms visited, students were able to explore their thinking, justify their conclusions and use evidence or examples to support their reasoning. In three classrooms visited, there were no discussion prompts or sentence starters available to help English language learners articulate their learning to their partners.

- In five out of seven classrooms, students worked in groups. However, in most cases all students worked on the same task, with no visible modifications for the most struggling or accelerated learners. For example, in one class visited all students were expected to generate two questions discussing Mary’s farm. Eleven students were able to complete the task within a few minutes and waited for further instructions, while five students needed additional guidance to write two sentences independently.
Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development
Rating: Proficient

Findings
Teachers participate in professional teamwork to analyze student work and data to adjust curricula to inform instructional decisions.

Impact
As a result, instructional decisions lead to increased student progress and teacher capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to examine student work and engage in making adjustments to lessons to ensure that teams understand the needs of all students. For example, in a teacher team meeting, a teacher shared the running record data. This data was analyzed and teachers spoke about creating leveled reading behavior cards for the students.

- Teachers meet every Monday for professional learning and once a week for inquiry. During the observed teacher team meeting, teachers articulated that during inquiry meetings they focus on strengthening the literacy skills of the lowest one third students in first grade. As a result, students are being targeted for RTI one period, three times a week in the morning using Fountas and Pinnell intervention to increase their stamina and fluency.

- Grade leaders participate in instructional cabinet and facilitate the work with horizontal grade teams. This practice has resulted in a coherent curriculum across grades and content areas.

- Teacher teams promote the implementation of the CCLS through collaborative standard-based planning and inquiry study sessions weekly on the following topics: CCLS-aligned curriculum planning, lesson study, ongoing assessment and data review, questioning and conversations and differentiated instructional strategies to increase student achievement.

- The principal indicated that team meetings include all teachers of the grade, Response to Intervention teachers, related service providers and teachers of English as a second language, with lead teachers and coaches providing support with data analysis, instructional resources, and next steps to improve student learning outcomes and teacher pedagogy. As result, teacher practice is continuously strengthened, contributing to improvements in student performance on the 2013-2014 Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) assessment.