Quality Review Report

2015-2016

P.S. 054 Hillside

Elementary School Q054

86-02 127 Street
Queens
NY 11418

Principal: Anita Prashad

Date of review: March 15, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince
### The School Context

P.S.054 Hillside is an elementary school with 584 students from kindergarten through grade 5. In 2015-2016, the school population comprises 34% Asian, 9% Black, 50% Hispanic, and 2% White students. The student body includes 25% English Language Learners and 14% students with disabilities. Boys account for 57% of the students enrolled and girls account for 43%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-2015 was 93.3%.

### 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>Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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 <em>Framework for Teaching</em>, 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>Proficient</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>Well Developed</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Culture</th>
<th>Area of:</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
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<tbody>
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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>Additional Findings</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<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>Well Developed</td>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.1 Curriculum</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings
School leaders and faculty engage in a rigorous process of curriculum development that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrates the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills are embedded across grades and subjects.

Impact
As a result, there is coherence across subjects that promote college and career readiness and students are consistently pushed to demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence
- Unit plans meet the needs of individual students and contain rigorous content, promoting critical thinking and problem solving skills. Lesson plans include the use of scaffolds and extensions to ensure rigor across grades and content areas for all learners. Teachers use a lesson plan template where academic language is infused, along with common language rubrics. In addition, they incorporate the higher-order questions and regular checks for understanding. Universal Design for Learning strategies are embedded into planning to ensure multiple entry points for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

- Teachers in English Language Arts (ELA) use various resources to inform their planning, including flip charts from Mentoring Minds and tools, such as rubrics and exemplars, from Writing Pathways. ReadyGen is used across the school and is supplemented with Great Leaps, Wilson Reading System and Voyagers. Fountas and Pinnell is used for benchmarks as well as Ticket to Read.

- There is consistent use of academic vocabulary and coherence in math concepts. GO Math! is the base program and Fundations is used in kindergarten and first grade. Additional math tasks, based on GO Math!, create a deeper focus on the writing process to ensure rigorous habits have been created to extend student thinking in grades 2 through 5. Evidence of rigorous written and verbal academic discourse and extending thinking was evident at the student meeting. For example, students were able to explain their work using words such as process and justify, and one student explained a multi-process math project using academic and subject-specific vocabulary. The schoolwide instructional focuses on student response, critical thinking and problem solving skills prepare students for college and career.

- The grade level curriculum units in science and social studies are aligned to match texts in the ELA curriculum, with a focus on using thinking maps and strategy charts to solidify coherence and provide access for diverse learners, including ELLs and students with higher proficiency. Inquiry-based work as well as Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questioning is embedded into curricula. Other supports are embedded into the curricula and students have key rings with the term RACE, reminding students to restate, answer all parts, cite and explain. There are also abundant charts on display to support students in applying best learning practices.
Findings
Teaching strategies across most classrooms provide multiple entry points and challenging tasks for students and reflect a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best.

Impact
Instruction reflects a commitment to engaging all learners in high levels of thinking resulting in high levels of student participation and discussion; however, there are missed opportunities in some cases for high quality supports or differentiation that ensures students are engaged and can demonstrate their learning.

Supporting Evidence
- Across classrooms teachers provide small group instruction. Students participated in discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions, but in-depth analysis was not required of all students across the vast majority of classrooms. Students used research skills and produce text-based evidence as they worked in small groups. In one grade 3 classroom the students were working on different graphic organizers to examine an article on America’s forests and woodlands. The groups were tiered with the ELLs working on vocabulary and transitioning to other table groups. However, in an ELA class, there was no differentiation with the whole class working on the same assignment. Students were given a choice of listing settings connected to their life, there was no follow through of this assignment and many students could not define setting.

- Questioning and discussion techniques have been emphasized in lesson plans and are comprehensive, incorporating higher-order questions. Questioning stems aligned to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge chart support discussions and facilitate deeper understanding. Tiered question wheels and visual cues are used to assist in supporting conversations and guiding students to make connections and integrate new learning with previous lessons.

- In most classrooms there were regular checks for understandings including think-pair-share, quick writes, and activities tiered to address individual student needs. In a grade 5 ELA lesson there were guided reading groups, table groups with individualized assignments, and a CLOSE reading group. The overall goal of the lesson was to read and understand with purpose and understanding. Students were using chunking skills and the guided reading group was working on multisyllabic words. The overall tone of the room expressed great organizational and managerial skills, where students took ownership of their work and their discussions and the teacher responded to their needs as necessary.

- There is evidence across most classrooms of the Gradual Release of Responsibility model, where the teacher moves to the role of facilitator as students have quality discussions and where project-based assessments show high levels of student thinking and participation. Students are engaged with project-based assignments that are assessed on their ability to articulate their thinking verbally and in writing. Re-teach adjustments to lessons provide additional support. For example, in a grade 2 math class the teacher was at the white board with a small group, re-teaching subtraction skills using the break-apart method. The rest of the class was in table groups doing different mathematical strategies and discussing the relationship between addition and subtraction.
## Additional Findings

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings
The school's uniform assessment practices are well aligned to the curricula and the standards. Assessment informs instructional and curricular adjustments.

### Impact
As a result, teachers have a clear portrait of student mastery and adjustments positively impact student performance.

### Supporting Evidence
- There are end of unit assessments along with Measures of Student Learning performance tasks and Fountas and Pinnell benchmarks. Formal assessments used in Fundations, as seen in classroom visits and as discussed during teacher team meetings, are being used as pre- and post-assessments within unit cycles. In addition to pre- and post-assessments, teachers use medial check-ins, allowing students multiple ways of expressing knowledge. Universal Design for Learning strategies are implemented to ensure that all students can engage in text-based discussions to improve learning outcomes for all students.

- There is a schoolwide grading policy along with common rubrics and feedback forms that highlight student strengths and areas of focus as evidenced in a majority of classrooms. Teachers make adjustments to lessons, such as incorporating thinking maps and differentiated graphic organizers, to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers are working to have students meet benchmark levels and student data and performance trends are shared to support this goal. Teachers regularly check for understanding, using a variety of techniques, including hand signals in the lower grades, stop and jots, exit slips, think-pair-share, cold calls. Teachers also assess through daily conferencing notations. Opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently to complete tasks and to engage in self-reflection using rubrics, checklists, and reflection journals are present.

- Students are monitored for progress through SchoolNet, inquiry student cohorts, Great Leaps, Wilson Reading System and Ticket to Read. Teacher intervention using Response to Intervention is built into the schedule to allow for out of classroom personnel to provide support for at-risk students. Teachers maintain support within the classroom while additional support is provided by cluster teachers during assigned blocks. Teachers discussed at teacher team meetings that they are making strategic adjustments to lessons to provide additional support for students at all levels, including students with disabilities and ELLs, to apply complex concepts and metacognition. Through formal and informal assessment students have demonstrated a deeper understanding of content with literary and informational texts.
Findings
The school promotes a culture of high expectations around a path to career and college readiness for staff, students and families.

Impact
As a result, all constituents contribute to a culture of learning. There is a sense of mutual accountability and students are supported by teachers and family to progress towards those goals.

Supporting Evidence
- Staff, administration and parents accept responsibility for, and have a mutual collective understanding of, doing what is necessary to meet high expectations. Structures and systems are in place for teachers to meet during multiple common prep periods. Debriefing sessions after teacher observations provide detailed feedback in a timely, explicit and constructive manner. There is a system of extensive modeling and intervisitations to support and improve pedagogy. During formal and informal teacher meetings, professional articles and teaching resources are provided to support the tailoring of lesson plans to meet the needs of individual students across grades. Teachers agreed that high expectations are set throughout the entire school.

- Communication is provided through a daily bulletin to all constituents informing them about school progress, adjustments to schedules, the expectations of the day and assessment results. In addition, information about upcoming parent workshops, Saturday Academies, and useful websites is provided on a regular basis. Parents reach teachers through email and stated that they are always available to conference about their child. The monthly At a Glance publication states goals and the instructional focus with charts that highlight activities, allowing parents to connect to their child’s learning.

- Parent and family input helps drive initiatives and impact the execution of ideas on programs that lead to student success. For example, there are school safety monitors and a student council. There are also monthly awards assemblies focusing on star students, service learning initiatives, and career days where parents and staff members share their journey and career moves. In addition, on a college pride day, teachers wear their school t-shirts and discuss their college experiences. Family nights in literacy, math, yoga and character education programs further involve families in supporting their student. There has been an increased percentage of parent involvement evidenced by attendance logs for kindergarten orientation, workshops, family nights, breakfast with the principal, and at assemblies.

- One student at the student meeting stated, “The teachers are good and provide me with a good foundation for learning.” Another student stated, “Teachers help you and simplify lessons so we understand better.” All students knew their reading level, spoke positively about setting their own goals and having peer helpers. Students were able to articulate how ready they are for the next level and how they will progress towards goals. Parents spoke of the support the school provides in academics and social emotional behavior. Parents shared that there was a clear path to college and career outlined for their children through classroom organizational skills, articulated values, and specific support programs.
### Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development

| Rating: Well Developed |

### Findings

All teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations through which they analyze their own practices as well as student work and data. Distributed leadership structures are embedded into the school vision.

### Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence, as well as improved pedagogy and student work. Shared leadership structures build capacity to improve student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams engage in collaborative inquiry that supports goals and strengthens teacher capacity. Student work and data analysis within teams improves teaching and learning. There is modeling, guided practice and independent practice designed by teacher teams to strategically align with desired student outcomes. Teacher teams have worked with the administration to identify key standards and designate benchmark targets in literacy and math. Data reports are analyzed to identify student strengths and deficiencies. This work has resulted in using various resources to inform their planning, including the Common Core Flip Charts in English and math and Universal Design for Learning strategies.

- Teams meet multiple times a week both on grade levels and vertically. In addition, there are meetings with the assistant principal to look at student work in cycles by subject. The formal grade level meetings meet once a week but the school culture is that they meet daily. At the grade 3 teacher team meeting, teachers looked at student writing from the story *The Frog Who Lived in a Well*. The meeting was timed with round table discussions on punctuation, transition words, sentence structures, and referenced text. It was determined that complex details were not used in the task and more classroom work was needed on what reflection means. Teachers decided to create an anchor chart with symbols and include tier 3 words. At the vertical team meeting teachers spoke to benchmarks indicating increased results across grades. The grade 1 teacher stated that across grades gaps are being addressed, and with early intervention they are seeing results in grade 1.

- Teachers take responsibility for planning intervisitations. As a result of this practice, teachers are scaffolding more within classrooms and sharing ideas and best practices with each other. In addition, academic language goals are evidenced in lessons across grades and all teachers have Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* questioning wheels to assist with higher-level questioning techniques.

- Professional development opportunities for all staff are provided both in-house and at a multitude of other venues and informed by teacher-need. As a result of teacher input, there is an in-house special education cohort that meets monthly along with the instructional cabinet. In addition, special education teachers meet with general education teachers to discuss practice, share out what is working, and suggest professional articles to support practice. There is a book study group and paraprofessionals participate to inform their practice.