Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 114 Ryder Elementary
Elementary 18K114
1077 Remsen Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11236

Principal: Darwin Smith

Dates of Review:
January 24, 2017 - January 25, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Valerie Taylor
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 114 Ryder Elementary serves students in grade K through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<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 Finding</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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school…**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Establish a coherent vision of school improvement that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are tracked for progress and are understood and supported by the entire school community</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<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 Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Evaluate the quality of school-level decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 3.4 High Expectations | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings
School leaders communicate high expectations to all staff and provide ongoing training to ensure they are met. Teachers and school leaders effectively communicate high expectations for all students and families toward a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
A collective understanding of the school's expectations that emphasize the creation of a student-centered learning environment for all students results in a culture of mutual accountability for student progress and successful partnering with families to ensure that all students are making progress toward academic expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional leaders consistently track progress of pedagogy using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to build a common understanding of the quality of teaching points, questioning techniques, and discussions that enable students to extend their thinking. Teachers are expected to use higher-order questions and engaging tasks to ensure high levels of student participation and discussion. For example, feedback to a fourth grade teacher stated that she needed additional support with questioning to ensure that students extend their thinking and participate at higher levels. This teacher received direct support from the instructional coach and was given time to participate in intervisitation to observe questioning in her colleague's classroom. In addition, school leaders provided each teacher with feedback on instructional practices and monitor those practices, assuming mutual accountability with teachers for pedagogical expectations. As a result of regular follow-up conversations and written feedback, teachers are held accountable for meeting those expectations.

- School leaders have developed partnership with parents and provide multiple structures to communicate and encourage reciprocal communications. Parents reported that school staff engages in communication with families regularly via emails, phone calls, newsletters, and progress reports. On Tuesdays, school leaders and staff provide specific workshops to delve into the Common Core Learning Standards and grade-specific expectations in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. Parents are provided with examples of student work products that demonstrate meeting standards and strategies to support their children at home in meeting those standards. As part of the fifth grade expectations, teachers shared that they focus on college and career readiness skills such as informational writing, research and problem solving in math. Parents articulated that the workshops have contributed to their deeper understanding of what is expected of their children and how to help them. In addition, the school utilizes an online grade book which is an interactive system that allows parents to reciprocate in the communication process.

- School-wide memorandums, newsletter, and professional development provide staff members with clear expectations for instruction. A review of memorandums shows that expectations include the use of higher order questioning skills and tasks that promote student discussion. In a teacher meeting, teachers stated that while school leaders have always communicated high expectations and professionalism, the most effective method has been the new departmentalization structure where a group of teachers share a group of students and is provided with opportunities to support these students as a team. This has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability where teachers have volunteered to help each other plan lessons to ensure student progress and success.
Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and common assessments to determine student progress toward goals and provide actionable feedback to students, but do not yet track student progress across subject areas.

Impact

Teachers use assessment results to make modifications in programming and student groupings. However, assessment practices are not used to create a clear picture of student mastery across all subject areas.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school's curricula. Teachers use data from assessments to plan, reteach, and add supplementary lessons based on student learning needs. This year, teachers use assessment data to plan instruction in math fluency, writing short responses, and intervention services. Instruction is departmentalized for fifth grade in order to group students to focus on the gaps identified in math and ELA assessments.

- Teachers adopted some and created other student-friendly rubrics which include both teacher feedback, next steps for learning, and student reflection. A fifth grade four-point problem-solving rubric assesses math knowledge, thinking, application, and communication. Feedback on this rubric for one student includes recommendation for the student to focus on the placement of decimal points. The student reflected on the feedback and recorded next steps in the reflection section of the rubric. Similar use of rubrics and feedback was evident on student work products posted on bulletin boards across grades and subject areas. For example, a fourth grade student received feedback on a writing task recommending that she cites more evidence from the text to support her claim. However, the use of rubrics is not yet resulting in a clear portrait of student mastery.

- School leaders and staff use common assessments in ELA and math to determine student progress. Teachers across all grades administer Fountas and Pinnell running records four times per year. Fifth grade teachers use the district-wide baseline, midline, and end line as well as the RALLY assessments to monitor students' progress in math and ELA. Second grade teachers use the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test to evaluate vocabulary and reading comprehension. In addition, teachers across grades administer mid- and end-of-unit assessments and performance tasks in both ELA and math from kindergarten to grade five. An analysis of the midline RALLY assessment revealed that fifth grade students have not mastered writing extended response in ELA and math. This data led to a focus on regrouping of tier one, two, and three students to identify students in need of academic intervention services. In addition, assessment data revealed that grades one and two students lacked basic skills in writing. This information has led to an additional two days of workshop on writing facilitated by a contracted provider to support teachers in meeting the needs of all students. However, teachers have yet to track progress in other core content areas.
Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts with a focus on academic vocabulary and writing from sources. Lesson plans consistently reflect rigorous academic tasks that require high-order thinking skills.

Impact

Lesson plans and curricula emphasize career and college readiness and require all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and student with disabilities to demonstrate high-order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty develop curriculum maps, lesson plans, and pacing calendars aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate the instructional shifts. For example, in fourth grade, students will read *Because of Winn-Dixie* as a central mentor text to examine the essential question of “Why Opal chose to stand up for Winn Dixie”? In ELA, science, and social studies, teachers plan opportunities for students to read informational text and use academic vocabulary. In fifth grade, students will be asked to read short informational text such as *The Most Beautiful Roof in the World* to explore how the blue creek rainforest is bio-diverse. In math, teachers plan activities that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate conceptual understanding of math concepts, involving the four operations. In second grade, students will solve word problems to figure out how much money they need to purchase four tickets at a carnival and use the inverse operation to check their answer.

- Across classrooms, curricula and academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits and high order thinking skills. For example, teachers plan and utilize Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) questions that require strategic and extended thinking, for example, “Why do you think the author chose to include that information?” In addition, lesson plans indicate culminating and performance tasks that enable students to engage in higher-order thinking such as comparing and contrasting texts, and solving math problems to enhance their writing in math and conceptual understanding. In a second grade science lesson, students will use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the properties of two plants. In a fourth grade math lesson, students will be asked to explain and illustrate their thinking by using equations, arrays, and/or models to solve a word problem.

- A review of lesson plans revealed that writing from sources and analyzing text is a school-wide focus. A fourth grade writing lesson plan indicates that students will be asked to develop theories about the secondary characters by looking for patterns about how secondary characters relate to Opal and use evidence from the text to support their theory. A social studies lesson plan states that students will be asked to determine two or more main idea of a text and explain how they are supported by key details.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula, and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best and include a focus on student engagement and multiple entry points into challenging tasks for all learners.

Impact

Instructional practices enable all learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, to engage in challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leadership articulated a belief that students learn best when they are engaged in personalized learning that require deep thinking and thoughtful conversation. Therefore, the schoolwide focus is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching with an emphasis on questions, discussion, and student engagement. Teachers demonstrated an alignment to those beliefs by making curriculum engaging and interesting. For example, in the majority of classrooms, students worked with guided questions, collaborated on tasks and participated in discussions. In a second grade math lesson, the teacher asked students to solve two-digit subtraction problems. Students used a variety of manipulatives, including number lines and counters to solve differentiated subtraction problems. The high functioning group was given a word problem that required them to subtract two digit numbers. Another group drew models to demonstrate their work and wrote subtraction number sentences. The majority of students completed the task and was able to explain their answers and their thinking. In an ELA lesson, the teacher asked students to identify character traits in the text Because of Winn Dixie and relate them to real world experiences. Students used a Fryer model graphic organizer to make their thinking visible as they listed and discussed Opal’s character traits. The trait that emerged in the majority of the groups was courage. Students argued that Opal showed courage when she stood up to her father because she did not want the dog to go to a shelter.

- In the majority of classrooms, teachers used group work to engage students in tasks and provided multiple entry points via differentiated tasks for groups of students, leveled questions, the use of conversation prompts, and a variety of manipulatives. In a fourth grade math class, students worked in groups using base ten blocks, grid paper, and white boards to model their thinking and solve word problems using the distributive property. In a fifth grade social studies class, students worked in groups to explore and expand their knowledge about rainforests. Some students used notebooks, chart paper, sentence starters as they research the topic. In a first grade class, students used counters, differentiated puzzle pieces, puzzle books, and markers to solve differentiated problems. This practice to provide multiple entry points was present in most of the classes.

- During a social studies lesson on immigration, students discussed pictures of immigrants arriving at Ellis Island in their groups. One teacher circulated and used questioning to guide student’s thinking. Another teacher worked with a small group asking questions and giving prompts to assist them in answering the essential question on what it was like to be an immigrant coming to New York. The teacher asked a student why she thinks the people in the boat were coming to America. The student responded that they may be having problems in their country. Another student stated that it looks like the people were running away because too many of them were on the boat.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
School leaders use frequent cycles of teacher observation to develop an effective system to design professional development.

Impact
Teachers receive effective feedback, relevant next steps from observations and professional development designed to develop instructional practices and promote professional reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conducted formal and informal observations for all staff and provided actionable feedback for next steps. Documented feedback reminded one teacher of the schoolwide focus which is questioning, and recommended that she study the resources and strategies presented in the book *Thinking Through Quality Questioning* to help her design questions that promote higher-order thinking. Another teacher was reminded that she should select multiple strategies aligned with the concept being taught to engage all students. Additionally, she was given an article “Strategies to Extend Student Thinking” to help her with implementing the recommendation. Another comment recognized the improvement the teacher made based on the previous observation which was to work on the classroom organization. It further stated that an inter-visit was planned for her to visit another class to observe a reading workshop. Furthermore, she was given a date and time to meet with the school leader to address her reflection on the observation. A review of the teacher’s inter-visit reflection revealed that she will work on facilitating discussions between students without moderating.

- During the teacher interview meeting, teachers reported that the feedback they received on their observations was very helpful. One teacher shared that her feedback recommended that she provides opportunities for students to engage in accountable talk. She further stated that during her post-observation conversation with the principal, they discussed the feedback and supports that were available to help her implement the recommendation. Following the conference, the principal arranged for her to visit another teacher’s classroom to observe a lesson using the mentor text to engage students in accountable talk. Another teacher shared a similar experience and recalled how observing one of her colleague’s lessons on reciprocal math, helped her with her planning of math instruction and delivery.

- A professional learning calendar outlined topics to be covered during professional learning sessions for staff. Topics included *Advance* observations, and the norming of Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. For example, in the month of December, the priorities for professional development were questioning and discussion. In addition, teachers across all grades participated in professional development on the workshop model, and informational writing facilitated by an outside consultant. School leaders explained that professional development is aligned to school goals and the results of teacher observations. A review of teacher observations conducted in November showed five out of eight teachers received developing and lower in using questioning and discussions. Teachers who demonstrated effective and highly effective practices in that domain were chosen to lead in participating in intervisitation by opening their doors as lab sites for their colleagues to observe effective practices.
Finding

Across the school, the majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote school goals and distributive leadership practices.

Impact

Professional collaborations result in strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers and enhanced their voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades, teachers participate in inquiry teams and grade-level meetings. These collaborations focus on school goals and implementing the instructional shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards. The fifth grade inquiry team used a protocol to focus on the evaluation of student work and on strategies to support student success. The objective was to analyze samples of multi-step math problems from the mid-year assessment. The team discussed their observations and possible explanations for some of the misconceptions noted. The team agreed that students were able to multiply fractions, divide using two digits, but were having difficulty reducing fractions. The next step suggestions included providing scaffolds for division of fractions for groups of students such as the use of anchor charts and re-teaching procedural concept using a common denominator.

- In one teacher conversation, teachers shared how the opportunity to meet as a team has contributed positively to their teaching practices. One teacher stated that through the collaboration she has improved in her questioning practices. Another teacher shared that the collaboration has helped her make sense of instructional texts such as the book that was given to them by the principal *Making Thinking Visible*. She explained that the discussions around the topic focused on strategies that allow students to make their thinking visible such as the see-think-wonder strategy. Another teacher stated that she feels comfortable asking her colleagues for help because of the collegiality they have developed and all the other teachers present agreed. Furthermore, the teachers noted that they stay in frequent informal contact with each other throughout the week during lunch, early mornings, and after school to have discussions and share successful strategies.

- Distributive leadership opportunities and teacher voice are present throughout the school. Teachers have opportunities to provide input on school-wide decisions that affect student learning. Inquiry teams and grade-level teams have teacher leaders who represent them on instructional matters, disseminate information, and serve as the point person to the administration. For example, teachers stated that the science curriculum was chosen based on the feedback that they gave the principal. The principal explained that initially senior teachers served as grade leaders and now the roles are rotated so that junior teachers are stepping into leadership roles on their grades.