Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 116 Elizabeth L Farrell
Elementary School 32K116
515 Knickerbocker Ave.
Brooklyn
NY 11237

Principal: Antoinette Tucci

Dates of Review:
January 26, 2017 - January 27, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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**


**School Quality Ratings**

**Instructional Core**

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

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</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>Additional Finding</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<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>Area of Celebration</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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Across the school, grade teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data and student work products as well as to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Professional collaborations have strengthened teacher instructional capacity and resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence. Systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- An observed fourth grade inquiry team meeting involved a team looking at student essays about *The One and Only Ivan*. Students were being assessed on their ability to write opinion essays and teachers analyzed the writing according to a rubric. The topic of these particular essays was that Ivan was lonely in his domain and students had to identify why by specifically stating the reasons and supporting the reasons with evidence from the text. Through the discussions of the inquiry team, teachers identified what students did well in their opinion essays, such as explaining their work, explaining details, understanding the topic, making suggestions, and organizing ideas. The team also identified that students still need support with using a variety of details and making connections between text and real life. As a result, the team identified several modifications for the unit and for instruction, including teaching organization through color coding, using more explicitly the OREO (opinion, reason, example, opinion) chart as a coherent strategy, adding a modification to the T-Chart to include a section about self and text, and a lesson on empathy to build students' ability to connect with characters.

- During a second grade inquiry team meeting, teachers examined informational writing, specifically life in ancient Greece as compared to life in present-day New York City. Teachers integrated Greek information from *Core Knowledge* along with modern day New York City topics as a way to create relevance for the students. Teachers came to the conclusion that their next steps were to revise and edit writing lessons, with a focus on different topics such as transportation, foods, and religion. During a third grade inquiry team meeting, teachers examined narrative, informational, and opinion writing units. Teachers came to the conclusion that their next steps were adding another writing period and extra time to write during social studies and science periods. Teachers reported shared improvements to their practice as a result of their work in teacher teams.

- As a result of teacher teams’ systematic inquiry work in six-week cycles, schoolwide instructional coherence was evident in curricular documents across content areas and grade levels. Student trends towards mastery of goals for groups of students in 2016-17 is documented through pre- and post-assessments from *Writing Pathways* and *Teachers College Running Records* for reading. Trends have shown improvement since the beginning of the school year across grade bands including kindergarten through grade two, where 40 percent of students showed improvement in inerfering and understanding in reading and 45 percent showed improvement in adding details to their writing. In grades three through five, 50 percent of students showed improvement in inerfering during reading, and 50 percent showed improvement in organizing ideas and paragraphs in writing. Math trends that reflect growth include 67 percent of kindergarten students who understand the relationship between numbers and quantities and can connect counting to cardinality for numbers zero to five. 88 percent of first grade students tested got 76 percent or higher on addition and subtraction concepts. 65 percent of first grade students assessed got 76 percent or higher on addition and subtraction strategies.
# Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated belief that students learn best when instruction allows for multiple entry points through use of scaffolding and differentiated instruction. Student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and participation in most classes.

## Impact

Although students are strategically grouped and engaged in differentiated work and student work products and discussion reflected high levels of student thinking and participation in most classes, articulated beliefs and student ownership were not yet evident in all classes.

## Supporting Evidence

- During a fifth grade math lesson on division of decimals and whole numbers, students rotated through four different stations, which were differentiated by tasks based on mid-chapter checkpoint and formative assessments from recent lessons. Students were doing basic division in station one. Students were working on connecting the math work to real world problems using money in station two. Students were doing an error analysis of math problems for which they were required to identify and rectify the errors in station three. Station four had students using Mathletics to apply their knowledge to online versions of division problems. Each station included a required exit ticket to assess students understanding and allow students to process their learning. Students demonstrated high levels of thinking and participation by collaborating with peers to determine if they were using the correct operation and checking their work through multiplication and estimation, however students were dependent on specific instructions to guide their learning.

- A second grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) math class worked on determining the mathematical operation to solve word problems. The lesson included five different rotations as the two teachers worked with students who were identified by name in each group as needing additional learning supports determined by assessment results. One group was an enrichment group above grade level, one group was below grade level with scaffolds, and three on-level groups each with a separate supporting activity. The below level group was given manipulatives, including counters, number lines, hundred charts, and connecting cubes. The on-level groups were given a choice to use manipulatives and white boards. The enrichment group discussed their answers using mathematical academic vocabulary. While differentiated tasks based on assessment were seen across classrooms, ownership was missing from students who could not articulate why they were in certain groups or what next goals were.

- In a fifth grade ELA class, students were reading Excerpt from Hatchett and looked for text evidence to support the challenges faced by the main character. Students worked in groups to complete a graphic organizer as they described challenges faced by the main character from text evidence, how the main character reacted to the challenge, and their interpretation regarding what the possible theme of the story was as a result of this challenge. Students were given differentiated supports based on previous assessments. Groups one and two received a graphic organizer that included some of the text from Excerpt from Hatchett and group three had a graphic organizer that did not include the text. The exit slips that asked students to write about theme was differentiated for students in the identified groupings, one included lines for the student to write their answer on and one included a graphic organizer for their text with one side for text and another for the two details to support their response. Articulated beliefs how students learn best with multiple entry points were in most classes, but not across the vast majority of classes.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum  
Rating: Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula promote college and career readiness for all students so that a diversity of learners, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Review of curricular documents revealed alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and New York State content standards where applicable, as well as integration of the instructional shifts across grades and content areas. The school uses ReadyGen curriculum for reading and writing. In math, GO Math! is used. Curricular documents across grades and content areas evidence consistent alignment with the Common Core and the integration of the math instructional shifts. For example, in a second grade lesson plan, students determine mathematical operations to solve word problems. A fifth grade lesson plan details how students will rotate through a series of activities to apply their knowledge of division of decimals. The exit ticket asks students to explain what strategy they used to solve the problems and to include why they chose that strategy to show their deep understanding of the core math concepts. Curricular documents included assignments evidencing integration of the English Language Arts (ELA) instructional shifts. For example, on a fourth grade lesson plan the learning objective is “I can make inferences about a character by identifying relevant details in a text.”

- In a second grade social studies class for English as a New Language (ENL) students, the lesson plan connected to previous knowledge students have developed through their studies of how technology has impacted New York City since the 18th century. Group work was divided into three groups based on New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) levels. The level of group one was entering/emerging and the teacher did a shared reading with these students about the technology of phones. Students sorted images of technology and categorized them as either technology from the past or technology of now. Students referenced a word wall in the classroom and used sentence frames to scaffold their writing of one sentence about what form of technology they felt is most important. A transitioning group read a leveled text about technology, answered a comprehension question about the text and gave their opinion by writing a sentence with the support of a sentence starter. Students in this group gave their opinion with two supporting reasons. The third group was the commanding/expanding group and they read a leveled text geared for their level, answered a comprehension question, and stated their opinion with two or more supporting reasons.

- Curriculum documents include evidence of modification by teachers that were not included in the adopted curriculum. Curriculum maps and unit plans indicate which areas have been specifically adjusted as a result of the analysis of student work and data. Adjusted items are noted in either the curriculum map or unit plan. For example, a third grade opinion writing unit outlines a performance task with three articles combined from curricular resources Times for Kids and EngageNY, detailing how students were to respond by using examples and details from the three texts. There are multiple examples of teachers, across grades and content areas, having adjusted curricula based on individual students’ and student groups’ needs. For example, a fourth grade unit plan on identifying theme in a narrative, uses resources from EngageNY for a pre-assessment to determine skills.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and checklists aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals.

Impact
Students receive actionable feedback regarding their achievement with a consistent glow and grow format. Data from common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teacher-written actionable feedback. These examples appeared throughout the school in classrooms, hallways, and attached to samples of student work brought to the meeting with students. For example, on a fourth grade assignment about supporting an opinion about a character by using textual evidence, feedback includes, “Glow: I love how you stated your opinion and cited evidence from the text. Grow: Give more examples that reflect your opinion to make your writing stronger.” On a third grade opinion writing assignment about why students eat healthy, feedback reads: “Glow: Good job stating your reasons in your introduction and using transition words. Grow: Next time try to add more details like how it feels ex: Is it smooth? Is it rough?” The grow and glow format is consistent across the school as a support for students to improve their work.

- Across classrooms, rubrics and checklists are used as assessment tools and feedback mechanisms. Rubrics that are aligned with the curricula, along with rubrics and checklists that have been modified for student use, are used. Evidence of students’ use of these tools is posted on classroom walls, on hallway bulletin boards, and reported by the students themselves. A student reported how the assessment format from his teacher has helped him and how analyzing the text helped him answer the question, “It helped me because the text helped me feel how Ivan feels about Ivan's actions. Also because I understand the question even more.”

- The school uses NYS ELA and math data from state exams along with item analysis to identify areas of strength and areas of growth to focus on and adjust curriculum accordingly. Data results reveal that students were having difficulty in supporting their answers with text-based details in ELA. As a result, one part of the school’s instructional focus is identifying text-based details. Staff use Teachers College Running Records to determine reading fluency and growth in reading comprehension. Teachers use common assessments such as performance tasks from ReadyGen, GO Math!, and Core Knowledge. Pre-assessments from GO Math! are used to determine students’ current level of readiness in order to plan for appropriate instruction. Summative assessments are used to check for students’ mastery and understanding. A third grade Academic Intervention Services (AIS) document includes data tracked by specific student assessment results, including Teachers College reading levels, NYS exam proficiency levels, performance tasks, and math unit exam data between September 2017 and November 2017 to identify students for AIS services. The AIS data includes both ELA and math tracking and extends to support for students within the classroom. For example, supports include a reteach station for a small group on rounding multi-digit numbers, a do now/entry slip review on subtracting multi-digit numbers with regrouping, and a whole group mini-lesson on estimating. There was also evidence of differentiated groups in classrooms. Teachers use the data gathered from common assessments to adjust these groups.
Additional Finding

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students.

**Impact**

Ongoing communication and support by school leaders around classroom visits supports teachers' understanding and awareness of expectations around teaching and learning. The school offers ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance supports that prepares students for the next level.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism, quality instruction, and high expectations. In addition, teachers receive feedback from school leadership on their assigned prep common planning sessions. For example, “Are you using the data from cycle one that you collected to create your lesson plans? Next steps: Producing lesson plans based on your findings (data).” Teachers also receive an employee handbook that covers topics ranging from day-to-day professional responsibilities and the integral nature of classroom environment, including attendance procedures, teacher attendance, Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and lesson plans, student portfolios, and bulletin boards.

- The Professional Learning Opportunities (PLO) calendar is aligned to support teachers in improving their practice and ultimately to improve student learning. A grade leader represents the grade at vertical team meetings and turnkeys information they receive at PLOs from other schools and the field support center. Teachers demonstrating highly effective practices offer professional learning opportunities to other teachers on PLO Monday. During teacher observations, school leaders specifically look for indicators that reflect strategies and teacher practices presented during PLOs. School leaders monitor student work to look for an impact on student achievement as a result of the implementation of PLO strategies. As a result, more teachers are being rated effective in Danielson *Framework for Teaching* component 3b, questioning and discussion techniques, and component 3c, student engagement. For example, an observation from October showed a rating of ineffective in student engagement and a subsequent observation from a month later was rated effective.

- The school’s culture for learning consistently communicates high expectations that help prepare students for their next level of education. School leaders and staff communicate expectations for student achievement to parents during open house when learning expectations per grade level are communicated and parent-teacher conferences when individualized expectations are reviewed. School leaders have established high expectations for students by departmentalizing two classes in fifth grade ELA and math to improve student performance in ELA and math and to prepare fifth grade students for the next level of middle school. The school maintains a homework policy that involves students receiving homework every night in reading/writing, spelling, and math. Homework expectations increase by grade level. Students are held accountable for academic achievement through student-friendly rubrics, checklists and reflections on student goals utilizing ELA and math goal sheets. Vertical teacher teams consisting of grade leaders meet every month to review prerequisites and what is expected in the next grade level to build coherence between grades and ensure that students are held to high expectations and prepared for the next level.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and teacher peers support the development of teachers, including those new to the profession, with the strategic use of observation cycles and accurately capture effective feedback and next steps using the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns with professional goals for teachers to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection.

Supporting Evidence

- Strategic use of frequent cycles of classroom observations are tracked via an Excel document, where every teachers' observation cycle is documented and each six-week round of observations includes data around how school leaders allocate their time and focus their efforts to support teachers by providing feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Each rated item on observation reports includes specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating, as well as actionable next steps. For example, one observation feedback included, "Component 3d: Assessment- There was no assessment at the end of the math lesson. In the future please provide an exit slip or other form of assessment to make sure students are meeting the learning goal. Please refer to the 'Tools for formative assessments’ sheet that I am attaching to this report." The feedback also includes meeting with a peer to discuss ways to differentiate and assess in math. Mentoring meeting minutes also document teacher peers supporting the development of teachers. For example, a meeting was based on observation notes and next steps or supports included implementing questions and scaffolds into specific lesson plans. Teachers also participate in intervisitations as a form of peer support. For example, an intervisitation log detailed a visit to a classroom to identify what strategies to implement in order for parallel teaching to be effective and feedback from peers were shared with the visited teaching team.

- In addition to the feedback included on official Advance observation documentation, school leadership provides detailed feedback of every classroom observation via email to teachers. Included in the email to teachers is areas of celebration and strength, areas of growth, and a focus area identified by school leadership with specific language from the Danielson Framework for Teaching that includes the elements and indicators aligned to effective and highly effective practices of the Danielson rubric. The professional goals outlined by teachers at the beginning of the year are used to guide feedback from school leaders during the cycles of observations, including within the detailed feedback of every informal and formal classroom observation and visit that school leaders send via email. School leaders also provide written feedback on teacher inquiry team meeting minutes that guide cycles of inquiry and teacher team work that lead to improved teacher practices and instructional coherence across the school.

- New teachers are supported through a New Teacher Institute prior to the school year, during which schoolwide protocols and expectations are reviewed. School leadership meets with new teachers monthly and the school’s grade leaders and coaches mentor new teachers on a regular basis. Following a New Teacher Institute on formulating learning objectives, a teacher reported, “I learned how to break apart a learning objective and the importance of using child friendly words in the learning objectives. I use the Webb’s Depth of Knowledge and Bloom’s Taxonomy verbs to help develop my learning objectives."