Quality Review Report

2016-2017

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Elementary 02M198
1700 3rd Ave.
Manhattan
NY 10128

Principal: Katharine Macmanus

Dates of Review:
October 18, 2016 - October 19, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Robin Cohen
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


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<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>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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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 Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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<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>
<td>Proficient</td>
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## Systems for Improvement

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<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
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<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 Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</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 Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Proficient</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 Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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 Findings</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
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Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
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</table>

Findings

School leaders ensure all teachers receive effective feedback, next steps, and clear expectations, from frequent cycles of observations, aligned to teachers’ professional goals for growth. Observation data aids in the plan for professional development opportunities.

Impact

Systems and structures are in place to support staff’s new understandings and to deepen the impact on teachers’ self-reflections and professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers experience ongoing cycles of supervision, which results in actionable feedback from school leaders, depicting pedagogical strengths and next steps so that the quality of instruction continues to evolve. The principal stated that certain teachers needed additional support around designing coherent curricula and instruction as aligned to the Common Core and instructional shifts. As a result, targeted professional development was added to the professional learning calendar. In addition, school leaders encourage peer-to-peer intervisitation with colleagues, based on their area of strength. Teachers stated this form of professional development provides them with concrete modeling in an area of need based on self-reflection and feedback from school leaders.

- The school maintains a rigorous schedule of observations and walkthroughs, with immediate actionable feedback, both verbally and in writing. The principal provides clear expectations for pedagogy, as noted in the staff handbook, and her weekly messages titled *Weekly Notes* to support best teacher practices and promote quality teaching. The staff handbook delineates the school’s expectation in areas such as, classroom and school environment, assessment driven data, instruction, use of resources, communication with families, and professional development and learning. For example, after a walkthrough the principal suggested the delivery of instruction be more student centered by having the engaged students bring classmates into the whole class discussions and asking questions to peers. In addition, the principal suggested the teacher continue to incorporate “turn and talk.” Teachers stated that the feedback they receive from school leaders, along with their participation in teacher teams and professional development opportunities on the use of data, has helped their pedagogy and resulted in student progress.

- School leaders believe that teachers and mentors play an important role in developing and supporting all teachers. The principal meets with various teams such as the grade team leaders, Special Implementation Team, and school culture and climate committee to discuss curriculum, pedagogy, and social/emotional learning. These teachers then serve as a support to their colleagues on the grade. The principal obtained the services of a literacy consultant to support and enhance teachers’ understanding of the fundamentals of reading. With the support of the consultant, teachers engage in a “lab-site experience” where they discuss specific instructional support strategies, often based on a professional text that helps to focus the conversations. The consultant models reading strategies, such as modeling how to analyze a picture for context clues, using illustrations from a story to teach predicting and/or inferring, and stop and jot when looking for evidence in text but also, pedagogical structures such as one-to-one conferencing or strategy groups. In one class, students were using the “stop and jot” strategy to retell the story “Praise for Skinny Bones.” Teachers stated they analyze the student work after the introduction of a new strategy, to see similarities and differences in classes, which broadens their scope of teaching. In addition, teachers received training in administering and utilizing *Scholastic Reading* assessment effectively, and utilizing additional data sources.
Area of Focus

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based teams for collaborative planning, data analysis, and examining student work that promotes the achievement of school goals. Teachers take on leadership roles and give input in key school-wide decisions, showing their empowerment.

Impact

Professional collaborations strengthen a cohesive curriculum and instructional practices ensure a shared commitment to teacher growth and student progress, which promotes the achievement of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. While there is evidence of teacher voice, embedded leadership structures have not yet been actualized.

Supporting Evidence

- Existing and newly established teacher teams each have specific goals and responsibilities outlined in the 2016-2017 Staff Handbook. All team meets on Mondays and during the grade’s designated common planning time. There are designated grade team leaders and meetings follow defined protocols. For example, the teacher designated as recorder takes attendance and documents the focal topic, assessment used, student work analysis, and proposed next steps. There are grade team leaders representing all programs and grades. Their responsibilities include ensuring the curriculum and performance tasks are rigorous and aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards.

- The fourth grade teacher team did an end of unit writing assessment to evaluate student growth in narrative writing. The unit was not from Expeditionary Learning but instead, a unit the teachers created by pulling together a variety of resources during a series of collaborative meetings. The final student work samples were scored on a narrative writing rubric (Continuum for Information Writing – TCRWP) showing the grade made gains in the area of craft and development. Teachers stated that explicitly modeling habits of good writers, their teacher practice has improved.

- The school is strengthening the instructional capacity through vertical teams that form self-guided study groups. One group focused on writing, which helped to improve instruction in that area as demonstrated by their increased use of writing rubrics. In addition, teachers attend off-site writing workshops, then turnkey the information to their colleagues. For example, teachers shared writing strategies, such as the use of sentence stems charts to support students struggling with using varied sentence starters. In addition, teachers are modeling habits of good writers, such as the writers’ notebook, as evidenced in classroom visits and artifacts seen on bulletin board displays.

- Teachers state they have input into school improvement initiatives and they feel “listened to” by school leaders. School leaders and teachers offer specific examples of teacher leadership that indicate how teachers and mentors play an important role in school level decision making. Teams have collaborative conversations to help staff develop a better understanding about teaching and learning, which has been an ongoing process that directly contributes to student achievement. Teams expressed pride of their collaborative efforts to have a voice in decisions about curriculum and instruction. One of their most successful accomplishments has been the revamping of the math curriculum to align to the standards per grade.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and staff ensure the school’s Common Core-aligned curricula with integration of the instructional shifts. Analysis of student work and data inform curricula modifications, which facilitate access and cognitive engagement for a diversity of students.

Impact

All students, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged. The school’s decisions build coherence around the instructional shifts and promote college and career readiness skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use Common-Core aligned Core Knowledge, Expeditionary Learning, and Go Math. Units of study are developed for each grade and content area. The curricular mapping in all grades and subjects are guided by the content standards and tailored to meet the needs of diverse learners. The school created a unit plan template in June 2016 based on their new understanding of Universal Design for Learning, a heavy focus of professional learning in the 2015-2016 school year. This year, teachers utilize this planning template in grade teams to analyze the units as written in Expeditionary Learning, Core Knowledge, and GO Math). The template includes unit rationale, key understandings, essential questions, academic vocabulary, prior knowledge, content knowledge, social knowledge, routines, and resources. This document is aligned to the school’s instructional focus to ensure that everything students are being asked to do has three child-centered components: the “what” (skill), the “how” (strategy), and the “why” (purpose).

- At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) team facilitated learning opportunities across the school and unpacked each curriculum to determine its relative strengths and weaknesses. Significant school-wide beliefs started to emerge, such as, no curricula can be implemented “as is”. For example, the teachers determined that Go Math needed to be modified to better meet the needs of the students in their classrooms. Teachers stated some of the units needed more rigor in the tasks. In addition, changes were made to the pacing within each grade and a differentiation plan was created for whole group, small group, and enrichment. Teachers implemented the various curricula with revisions of performance tasks, refining lessons to accommodate all students, and creating standard-aligned rubrics. Teachers identified school-wide key focus standards to incorporate along with instructional shifts.

- Curriculum maps and unit plans reviewed across content areas provide evidence of alignment to Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers design and review learning opportunities, with the purpose to strengthen the connection between vocabulary development, reading and writing, as well as content knowledge. Across lessons, including integrated co-teaching, gifted and talented, and general education classes, there is evidence of the instructional shifts, specifically finding text-based answers, vocabulary use, and writing from different sources.

- Common language is used among staff and the modeling of this practice ensures students are building their English Language Arts and math academic vocabulary. Unit plans in literacy, writing, and math illustrate multiple ways to present academic tasks with a variety of entry points for all students. For example, one lesson plan called for students to cite evidence from a text and use graphic organizers and a sight word list to accomplish their assignments.
Additional Finding

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings
Teaching practices across the school reflect a coherent set of beliefs that students learn best when being engaged in purposeful and productive lessons that directly relate to students’ lives and provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact
Across classrooms, there is evidence of a variety of appropriately challenging texts and learning tools to assist students in developing meaningful work products and promoting deep reasoning in tasks and work across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers and administration believe that students learn best by being engaged in purposeful and productive lessons that directly relate to the students’ lives. The school utilizes the Frayer Model, which supports vocabulary development to help students demonstrate comprehension and communicate specific and technical language for content area learning. This methodology helps students tap into their prior knowledge and experiences to understand ideas and vocabulary. In a fifth grade class, students were learning about the different types of communication we use daily. Students spoke about body language, passive communication, assertive communication, and aggressive communication. Students demonstrated what this looks like in the “real world”.

- Teachers use UDL methodology creating opportunities for students to engage in guided and independent practice. Multiple entry points to lessons and tasks are provided for students through the use of technology, visual aids, manipulatives, and graphic organizers. Activities allow students to work in groups. During a third grade ICT class, students were asked to describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contributed to the sequence of events. Students were asked to refer explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. The teacher modeled the activity by providing procedural step-by-step instructions of the task, reviewed the academic vocabulary, provided individual copies of the text, and an anchor chart naming “Character Traits.” The teacher pulled a group of students identified for support to guide them through the task. In a second grade gifted and talented class, students worked in groups to categorize and organize facts and information. Students had access to the Smartboard, copy of images if needed, graphic organizer/T-Maps and domain-specific vocabulary.

- Teachers are incorporating the instructional focus into their lessons. Students are aware of their individual goals and the strategies they are utilizing. Across classrooms, teachers use a schoolwide chart that identifies the “what”, “how”, and “why” of the new skill being taught. Students were observed using a variety of problem solving strategies in an early childhood math class. Students were illustrating addition by modeling the problems on a wipe off board while other students used different colored cubes. The chart reflected: “what” — counting out objects, “how” — I can touch one at a time and push it away from the group as I count, and “why” — counting will help me find out how many objects I have. In a fourth grade ICT class, students were using a narrative checklist to check their writing for sequential order, character action and feeling, and details that hook the reader. Results of this strategy have yielded writing gains based on improvement in focus, organization, and framing conclusions.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

Across classrooms, teachers create and use curricula-aligned rubrics that provide guidance for students and standardize assessment criteria for teachers. Student progress towards goals is measured through the administration of common assessments, which inform curricular adjustments.

Impact

Curricula-aligned rubrics support actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Common assessments are used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses common assessments to determine individual student progress towards goals and adjust curricula and instruction. Teachers continue to formally assess students’ reading level using running records in the lower grades. For students in upper grades and reading at levels K and above, the school has introduced the Scholastic Independent Reading assessment, which focuses on comprehension.

- The school develops Common Core-aligned assessments, rubrics, and grading policies consistent across grades and subjects. Rubrics are age-appropriate. In early childhood classes, rubrics are written in student-friendly language. Teachers design and use multiple assessments and track data to impact instruction. Data from running records, conference notes, end of unit assessments, and pre-and-post writing tasks are used to identify specific student academic levels to inform flexible student grouping and tasks. In a second grade class, lesson plans stated, “Based on students’ level, groups will be formed to either create a poster of the story with retell elements, write a retell, or write a script and act out the story.” In addition, students stated their teachers share their work and assessment results in writing or during their 1:1 conference time, so that they are aware of their “next steps.” For example, one student said, “one goal I need to work on is to include more details from the text.”

- Through the use of checklists, teachers capture anecdotal information about student academic progress and behavior. For example, during guided reading lesson, a kindergarten teacher used a checklist to note students’ ability to retrieve information and point to words and pictures. In the early grades, teachers maintain daily reading logs of students, including the books title, author, and time spent reading.

- In math, GOMath! assessments are administered at the end of every unit. Teachers shared that the analysis of the end-of-unit assessments has informed curricular changes in subsequent units. Strand and skills in which students are deficient are spiraled into the next unit for targeted intervention. Across the school, teachers administer the Beginning of Year, Middle of Year, and End of Year GOMath! assessments to determine individual student progress towards goals. Staff uses a shared online-tool to collect data.
Findings
School leaders have created a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all constituents and families, and college and career readiness skills for students. The use of Danielson’s Framework for Teaching ensures best practices for all learners.

Impact
Professional development opportunities for staff ensure progress towards the expectations and a system of accountability for the communicated high expectations. Ongoing feedback helps families understand student progress towards expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- High expectations are consistently communicated to staff through a variety of means, both verbally and in writing. At the beginning of the school year, school leaders distributed and reviewed the staff handbook, which delineates expected school policies, procedures, and professional and instructional expectations for staff. High expectations are communicated through trainings, for both staff and families. Coaching and mentoring around best practices aligned to Danielson’s Framework, individual planning conferences with staff, and Weekly Notes emailed to staff outlining big ideas or schoolwide goals around instruction, planning, and collaboration. The principal communicates with families via several methods, including quarterly newsletters with new initiatives, instructional priorities, “coffee chats” with class parents, and monthly PTA meeting with a focus on progress towards goals and further expectations of all stakeholders in the school. Teachers are encouraged to attend professional development opportunities, and then share their new learnings. Teachers complete a school-designed document entitled “Turnkey PD” for sharing new knowledge. The principal stated this document might be used when considering Component 4e: Growing and Developing Professionally.

- High expectations for classwork and behavior are modeled by all staff members for students, as seen in classrooms visited. Students are reminded of academic and social/behavioral expectations for instructions as lessons are introduced. Skills such as self-management, self-awareness, and respect are actively taught, addressing college and career readiness skills. Students were consistently asked to “turn and talk” to their partner and explain their findings. Students also worked in small groups, listened to one another, came to consensus, and then shared their findings as a team. Staff developed a schoolwide protocol called “ask three, then me.” Across the school, students ask three classmates for help before they ask the teacher. This has led to increased student-to-student communication and raised the level of student independence.

- The New York City School Survey reveals that in the category of Strong Family Ties, ninety-seven percent of families agree that the school’s staff communicates with them concerning how families can help our children learn in comparison to ninety-one percent citywide. In the category of Trust, ninety-seven percent of families agree that teachers and parents/guardians think of each other as partners in educating children and ninety-nine percent felt respected by their child’s teacher. Parents stated there is consistent outreach and support from all staff members including related service providers. Monthly “Family Fridays” provide opportunities to understand the expectations of the school. Student Plans for Progress, aligned with the “what”, “how”, and “why” approach to instruction, are distributed twice yearly in addition to the traditional report card. Parents stated they feel “listened to, supported, valued, and informed” by all staff members and school leaders. The school’s open-door policy affords all members of the school community the opportunity to discuss concerns, fostering a culture of accountability.