Quality Review Report

2016-2017

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Elementary 29Q015
121-15 Lucas St.
Queens
NY 11413

Principal: Antonio Ktori

Dates of Review:
November 15, 2016 - November 16, 2016

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></th>
<th><strong>Area</strong></th>
<th><strong>Rating</strong></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>Well Developed</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>
</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>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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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 Focus</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>
Quality Indicator: 3.4 High Expectations  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

High expectations, connected to a path towards college and career readiness, are communicated to the entire staff regularly, verbally and in written form, and shared with families regarding their children.

Impact

Teachers support and have created a culture of mutual accountability with high expectations which support their development and progress towards college and career readiness with families.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff attends several days of professional development over the summer prior to the beginning of school. Trainings during the week of professional development offer support regarding learning expectations, adoption of new curriculum, and classroom non-negotiables. Classroom non-negotiables and best practices are valued by teachers and school leadership as extremely important and to be visible in classrooms where appropriate. For example, the mission and vision statements are placed on chalk boards in the upper right corner. Flow-of-the-day is clearly displayed so all students are aware of the learning objectives and the virtue of the month is labeled on each classroom door. Teachers use the virtue of the month to communicate expectations between themselves and among the students. Students and teachers alike are easily able to explain how the virtues gratitude and appreciation, gave them the opportunity to challenge themselves as members of the school community. Teachers referenced the virtue when discussing the book of the month with their classes, Mo Willems, The Thank you Book.

- A monthly bulletin for faculty and staff is generated by the principal and used to inform and prompt discussions between staff and school leadership. Expectations are explicitly stated such as, “it is expected that all children will be academically engaged each and every day through the 28th of June 2017.” Additionally, communications related to lesson plans following protocols, homework being differentiated, bulletin boards decorated appropriately, classroom rules and regulations be designed and discussed, and classroom environments should be conducive to teaching and learning and regularly conveyed with expectations monthly.

- The guidance counselor offers various opportunities for families to be informed and prepared for middle school in conjunction with teachers. She attends and conducts staff trainings supporting the whole child, de-escalation, and social-emotional behaviors. Parent orientations are offered and well attended to build capacity for families from school to college and career readiness. Students are asked what their aspirations for college or career are, especially those that are identified as at-risk or mandated. A student government led college fair is organized for all grade three through five students to inform them of what to expect.

- Workshops are held for parents to review their child’s strengths and where college and career readiness begins. Parents value the opportunities, assemblies, and activities the school offers their child in preparation for middle and high school. Several parents appreciated how events are communicated with their child regarding all the information necessary in getting prepared for middle school and they said how they regularly talk about the process at home. Workshops also are designed to build strong parent community ties by explaining the Common Core Learning Standards and shifts in English Language Arts (ELA).
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development | Rating: | Proficient |

Findings

Teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations and use team time to analyze assessment data student work. Leadership structures are in place for teachers.

Impact

Teacher collaborations promote school goals and strengthen instructional capacity, and use analysis of data to improve pedagogy, however, teacher voice although present in decisions supporting curriculum, is building towards progress for decisions that impact school improvement and culture.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teams meet weekly to discuss noticing’s from student work based on shared samples. A note taking guide is provided for teachers to follow a protocol in four parts. Part one includes identifying what students are to know and be able to do, such as multi-step math problems or read and process word problems. Part two is a diagnostic of what the students demonstrated including any misconceptions. Most teacher findings were limited to identifying only what the students demonstrated they knew. Teachers then had to suggest instructional next steps in part three, however, many of the suggestions are vague and not clearly deliverable. Written next steps included, teach key words, reteach, label, and work on stamina. As such, grade-wide trends, part four, were omitted from the majority of note taking guides. Although the use of a note-taking guide supports the teacher inquiry review of work, the omission of grade-wide trends, limits the ability to have shared improvements in teacher practice and mastery of goals for groups of students based on examining student work.

- Teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that have promoted their own instructional capacity, independent of feedback provided from building leadership. Several teachers noted they are far more prepared for their instructional delivery on a daily basis as a result of their professional collaborations. Teachers highlighted how they mentor one another formally and informally using various approaches, including looking at lesson plans and visiting each other’s classroom. Specifically, "if something is not going right in my room, I can come in and the staff have suggestions for things I can try."

- School leadership allows staff to be included in choices related to the instructional core, especially curriculum resource content. For example, teachers were involved in the adoption of new English Language Arts curriculum and the modifications to lesson planning documents which they deemed were too rigid. Most community members, such as parents, feel their voice is valued and issues are dealt with timely and professionally. Although opportunities for teachers to play an integral role in decisions that impact school culture, teacher supervision, and action planning, teacher voice is stymied. Teachers overwhelmingly feel they are limited in school improvement plans and decisions regarding school improvement and the decision-making process, especially as it is related to their promotion of professional growth and reflection from cycles of inquiry.
Additional Finding

Findings
Curricula is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts while emphasizing rigorous habits and higher-order skills in academic tasks across grades and subjects through consistent formatting of planning documents.

Impact
All subject areas coherently promote college and career readiness and push student thinking, including English Language Learners (ELLS) and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers collaboratively ensure their curriculum align to the Common Core Learning Standards and an emphasis on the instructional shifts throughout all planning documents. Each grade and content area has a unit plan with modules focusing on reading, writing, and clearly detailed lesson objectives. The adoption of new curriculum which purposefully aligns to key standards has resulted in coherence across grades promoting college and career readiness for all students in planning documents. All curricular planning documents are considered living documents by faculty and referred to daily when instructing and reflecting. Trade books and online resources are included with each lesson to further promote real-life application.

- Support for the Common Core Learning Standards is promoted in lesson planning through a school adopted lesson plan protocol with seven attributes all teachers adhere to. Components include; engagement and motivation activity, mini lesson with modeling, active engagement through independent practice, student sharing, teacher summary and evaluation, and differentiated homework. These components are noted on all lesson plan documents and building leadership is able to recognize where in a lesson, a teacher is at most points based on adherence to the protocol. Staff was involved in the development and revision of some components of the seven protocols to an effective lesson.

- Rigorous habits are embedded coherently into the majority of lessons including opportunities for various leveled learners to have access with the content to demonstrate their thinking. For example, tiered articles on “Election Day” are included with a lesson plan. Each article is formatted identically with the similar four paragraphs, however, the content is modified and vocabulary is appropriate for low, middle, and high achievers. Additionally, the activity associated with the reading is tiered and scaffolds for citing evidence are appropriate. Similar strategies were used across grades and content areas to promote student thinking and higher-order skills.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching practices consistently provide multiple entry points into curricula and support engaging students through their work products and discussions.

Impact

Students produce meaningful work products by engaging in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher-order thinking skills and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Teaching strategies across classes offered scaffolds consistently to those students identified as low achieving, however, most scaffolds did not provide extensions for those students prepared to engage with the content in a more rigorous manner. For example, during a science lesson, students were tasked with creating a four-square map using a purposefully assigned vocabulary word. However, all students were expected to create the same four-square model, even though some were able to demonstrate they fully understood the meaning and how to use the word correctly. Although in a social studies class one student took the initiative to share some findings about how the map of landmasses formed Pangaea he read in a book he purchased recently at the book fair. The majority of classes did not demonstrate similar extensions or opportunities for students to demonstrate higher-order thinking through purposeful entry points.

- A key instructional priority communicated by school leadership and teachers alike, is a focus on designing instruction around seven protocols designed to engage students in the lesson in a meaningful way. In all classes, teachers effectively incorporated a mini lesson to prompt their thinking and participation at the beginning of the lesson. A grade one class which had just returned from lunch, sat on the floor attentively, and participated in a discussion about the five senses and how animals communicate. Although much of the discussion was teacher to student and student to teacher, when students appeared to struggle the teacher had the students turn and talk with a partner. Similarly, in a grade four class, students collaborated in small groups of two or three and discussed their thoughts on who the hero was in a tale using appropriate and relevant vocabulary, including those listed on the word wall.

- A dance class, specifically for students with disabilities, involved all students and instructors. Students participated by positioning themselves correctly according to the teachers modeling. The students had opportunities to share their observations of one another and thoughts about if they were in position correctly. After completion of various positions, students were challenged with writing a sentence about their dancing. Some supports were provided, such as a vocabulary list of position names on a front board, lines to neatly write on, and a pretend microphone to engage the students in sharing out their thoughts. However, sentence starters or transitional word banks were not provided, limiting some of the student’s ability to further demonstrate their understanding of the positions. For example, one boy who enthusiastically stated “I can balance,” did not know how to spell balance, so stated he would try to use a different word that he could spell.
Additional Finding

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

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas, while teaching practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Curricula and instruction is adjusted based on assessment results, including teachers making instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Checks for understanding during instruction are ongoing throughout classes. However, teachers do not regularly use the information to make students aware of their next steps. During a kindergarten math lesson, students were all fully engaged in the lesson following clearly established routines. The teacher while moving between groups noticed one group was counting their blocks of ten very easily in varied combinations, as an adjustment, the teacher provided two additional blocks to challenge her students thinking. However, students shared there were few opportunities to self-assess their work and move ahead without direct teacher support in this class and others.

- During a social studies lesson, students investigated continental boundaries and plate tectonics while the teacher moved around from group to group and asked questions to analyze their understanding. However, the teacher did not use her checklist (tracker) to retain her student’s information based upon their performance or lack of. The use of checklists was observed in few classes, thus limiting the ability of the teacher to make effective adjustments to meet the needs of all students during the lesson or retain for successive lessons.

- Progress monitoring occurs through a variety of assessment tools which are administered and analyzed so results can be used to adjust curriculum and instruction regarding student achievement. In addition to Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments, a variety of online resources are used to determine student achievement. For example, the newly acquired ELA curriculum includes digital assessment and online content. The online content is differentiated for students based on assessment results and input from the students’ teacher. Similar differentiation and assessment results from online content are used in science and math.
Additional Finding

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

**Findings**
Feedback to teachers accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps from observations. School leaders also have a system that uses observation data to design professional development and plans to support teachers.

**Impact**
Observation feedback clearly articulates expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and professional growth.

**Supporting Evidence**

- A review of teacher Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluator forms used during cycles of observation highlight a focus on evaluator notes which include commendable aspects, lesson planning, formative assessment, summative assessment, and references the Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. Suggestions are written with language to ensure “fidelity in order to be effective.” Further recommendations may include references to the teacher’s guide which has clarity related to the use of acquired curriculum for differentiation, rather than outside materials.

- Feedback provided to teachers on APPR evaluator notes refer to specific elements of Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching* rubric. Several reports addressed a primary goal embedded with a school goal of improving questioning and discussion techniques. Clearly written and deliverable feedback articulated expectations to improve instruction on many reports. Feedback included suggestions “to encourage students to challenge their classmates while promoting problem solving discussions,” and “Students should become facilitators of the morning routines allowing you to step aside.”

- Teacher observation data is used to guide professional development and APPR evaluator notes which often include references to those opportunities. Many APPR reports include the attachment of specific professional development as it relates to that teacher. Examples include an article provided to one teacher regarding how she can engage students in skills to be taught during her monthly meetings, or a strong suggestion that another teacher attend some of the Department of Education free professional development workshops, or view a recently shared webinar.