Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 035 Nathaniel Woodhull
Elementary 29Q035
191-02 90th Ave.
Queens
NY 11423

Principal: Mark Dempsey

Dates of Review:
January 12, 2017 - January 13, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell
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. 035 Nathaniel Woodhull 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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Developing</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>Developing</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...*

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<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>
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching, providing a staff handbook, weekly emails, monthly newsletters, and training for those expectations during weekly professional development. Leaders and staff consistently provide families with communication connected to a path for college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback about student progress.

Impact
The administration has a system of accountability for high expectations, using ongoing communication, walkthroughs, and targeted professional development. Families understand their children’s progress toward meeting those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- A staff handbook outlines expectations across the school, as well as academic expectations aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. For example, in order to support the school’s goal for 3b, effective questioning, and all teachers are expected to engage students in student-to-student discussions. The staff handbook outlines the components of an exemplary lesson plan, aligned to the Danielson Framework. A “Daily Happenings” binder is kept on the counter in the main office which captures the daily happenings within the school. The leadership holds all staff accountable to read and respond to the notes in the binder through ongoing communication with the staff.

- The assistant principal conducts informal walkthroughs at the beginning of the school year. As a result of this, professional development is provided to support specific needs identified for individual teachers before the official cycle of observations begins. Two examples of these were training in effective classroom management strategies and in using modeling during the lessons. All teachers receive training during “Marvelous Mondays” professional development on topics such as Mathletics training and Response to Interventions (RTI).

- The principal sends weekly emails to the staff to review the implementation of the instructional goals. Areas of focus include adding details to writing and solving multi-step math problems. In addition, the principal disseminates the PS 35 Nathaniel Woodhull School Newsletter monthly. This newsletter provides all staff with notes on the expectations for the month. The focus for January is on text-based evidence in writing. The newsletter also provides expectations for each grade in mathematics. For example, in grade four students will begin to explain why a fraction is equivalent to another fraction by using visual models.

- Families receive midyear progress reports that keep them informed of their children’s progress toward college and career readiness skills. Teachers also communicate with parents via ClassDojo, email, and phone calls. During back to school curriculum night, families are made aware of monthly online school calendars which provide them with information on events such as trips, workshops, and breakfasts with the principal. Parents also receive information on instructional websites such as BrainPOP, which gives them access to tools to support their children at home.

- Ongoing workshops provide parents with information on math, nutrition, technology, and middle school admissions. Some classes produce class newsletters and electronic class web pages which outline units of study for the month, trips, and other class events.
Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are becoming aligned to the curricula and beginning to reflect beliefs about how students learn best, aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of student participation.

Impact

Teaching practices do not consistently reflect a shared belief around how students learn best to support increased learning outcomes for all students. Limited student participation reduces critical thinking across classrooms as reflected in some student work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal shared that students learn best when teachers model the skills and concepts that students are expected to apply independently in their work. While this belief was evident in some classrooms, it was not evident in the majority of classes visited. For example, in a first grade classroom, the teacher modeled the concept of place value and stacked ten craft sticks together to demonstrate what one ten looks like. She drew one ten and four ones on chart paper to illustrate fourteen. The essential question posted on the board for the lesson was, “How do you show a number as 10’s and 1’s?” The teacher provided the students with manipulatives to build numbers at their tables showing tens and ones. The students viewed a video and practiced making new numbers as the video prompted them to answer questions. In an upper grade class, students had to apply the skill of making inferences at their tables after reading a selection with the teacher. The teacher gave a word card to each group and instructed each group to make an inference or draw a conclusion about the word on their card. However, the teacher did not model the task for the students and many stated they did not know what to do.

- In another classroom, students were asked to write a constructed response explaining whether the solution to a problem indicated in the text they were reading was good or not good. However, there was no modeling for the students on how to write a constructed response before independent practice. In an upper grade classroom, the students worked on writing a persuasive essay in response to “Should Schools Give Rewards for Perfect Attendance?” A student working alone at his desk was struggling with how to start his essay. While there were structures on chart paper for the parts of an essay, such as introduction, body, and conclusion, there was no text to model effective writing for each part of the essay and the students did not participate in a discussion about how to create an effective essay.

- In an Integrated Co-teaching (ICT) classroom, students engaged in looking at different types of shapes as they rotated from different centers. When the students gathered with the teacher, they were asked to share the attributes of the shapes at each table. While selected students were able to name the shapes and their attributes, there was no discussion about similarities or differences among the shapes to support critical thinking skills. One of the teachers shared that a student noticed that a cube was the same on all sides. However, the student was not called upon to share this information, thus limiting the student’s opportunity to build language skills as well as the class’s opportunity to engage in a discussion to encourage participation among all students. In addition, essential questions were not posted for the lesson to guide student thinking and participation.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Standards and integrate the instructional shifts, with a schoolwide focus on building literacy and math skills through interdisciplinary connections. Most curricular and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills to support all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

Lessons and curricula build coherence and promote college and career readiness skills for all students. The curricula provide opportunities for students to engage in higher order skills by using a variety of challenging programs.

Supporting Evidence

- The school is in its sixth year implementing the Reading Street literacy program across the school to support students in building proficiency skills within the English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. The principal and staff shared that this program provides their students with college and career readiness skills through the integration of the instructional shifts, such as academic language, the use of passages that provide real world experiences, and a focus on informational text. Math in Focus is in its fourth year of implementation as the schoolwide math curriculum. The leadership shared that students are developing an understanding of multi-step math problems, through the integration of the mathematical shifts. Both programs are aligned to the Common Core Standards.

- The curriculum provides all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, with additional literacy support through the Junior Great Books program. In addition to addressing the New York State standards for social studies and science, the school celebrates students' writing skills by selecting a Writer of the Month from each class, and each grade participates in the Book of the Month activity. BrainPOP, which augments the curriculum, supplements content reading in science and social studies. The school has a new science lab and conducts two Saturday science fairs each year. The arts curriculum exposes students to music as well as the visual arts.

- A review of curricula maps across the grades reflects that most of the maps have implemented essential questions in units of study to support students' critical thinking. For example, “What inspires others to act courageously?”; “How do we face personal challenges?”; and “What challenges do immigrants encounter?” were included on the grade five literacy curriculum map. In a grade three literacy unit of study on realistic fiction, a focus question was “How do you know if a solution is a good solution?”

- The first grade Math in Focus curriculum provides students with cross-curricular connections to literacy to extend critical thinking. For example, teachers review with students that a sentence is a group of words that expresses a statement. An “addition” sentence makes a statement, but it uses numbers and symbols. The curriculum provides students opportunities to give examples of “addition” sentences. Another literacy connection noted in the grade one math curriculum was to provide students with a vocabulary word on an index card and have the students make a comparison statement with numbers or objects through the number ten.
Additional Finding

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

Common assessments are in place, but results are inconsistently used to adjust curricular and instructional practices. Across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

The lack of ongoing curricular and instructional adjustments limits opportunities to support identified needs for all students. Teachers inconsistently make effective adjustments to meet all student’s learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, teachers use common assessments such as Developmental Reading Assessments (DRAs), unit tests, and baseline assessments from the Reading Street and Math in Focus programs. In addition, the Data Specialist has provided teachers an item analysis of skills needs based on the results of New York State assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math. However, a review of curricula maps across all grades and subjects reveals no adjustments or modifications made to support students in the areas where they are struggling or for students who are excelling. Thus, the absence of curricula revisions aligned to assessment results limits the instructional supports for all students.

- A review of student work products reflects the use of some self-assessments. For example, in an upper grade classroom two students were assigned a task to critique each other’s writing. However, the students were not able to provide actionable reflections to support next steps. On the “Critiquing the writing NOT the writer!” section, a student responded to the question, “Are you convinced? Explain,” by writing, “Yes I am convinced, and I also think the same thing.” In response to “Positive Feedback,” the student stated, “I agree with ____ and her wonderful info.” On a math self-reflection sheet, a student responded to the prompt, “What really worked” with, “I show my work and I got a lot of points.” In response to the “Next time” prompt, a student wrote, “I will tell the teacher when I need help.”

- The leadership shared that students in grades four and five need additional support with fractions. In grade three students need more support with numbers and operations. They also shared that across all grades there is a need for additional vocabulary support. The administration noted that teachers conduct conferencing as well as thumbs up and down to assess students’ comprehension. Sometimes students use their fingers to indicate the degree of their understanding; however, the leadership indicated that the thumbs up assessment is not a reliable indicator of students’ comprehension. During classroom visits, there was no evidence of teachers conducting conferences with students. In the science lab, the teacher asked the students to put their thumbs up if they understood when a circuit is closed or open. All of the students put their thumbs up. However, there was no follow-up request to show the degree of understanding with their fingers.
Additional Finding

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

School leaders support the development of teachers, with effective feedback and next steps from observations and data. Feedback to teachers supports professional growth aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Classroom observations and an analysis of student data promotes professional growth. Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practices in alignment to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year, the administration conducts individual planning conferences (IPC’s) with all teachers. Using the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric as a guide, teachers reflect and engage in a discussion with the administration around their areas of success and areas of challenge. An analysis of students’ performance data and a discussion of projected outcomes are parts of the IPC. The leadership conducts informal and formal classroom observations throughout the school year and shares effective practices and next steps with teachers during post observation conferences and written feedback in observations. Teachers complete a form in which they state their instructional goals and objectives for the lesson. One of the questions on the form states, “What do you expect your students to learn, and how will they demonstrate their learning?” aligned to 3d, “Using Data,” on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- Feedback from the observations provides teachers with areas of strength and clear expectations for next steps, with examples to support teacher practice and growth. Comments to one teacher indicated, “The lesson was well paced and had an organized structure as a strength.” A next step noted in another observation referenced student engagement: “You have to find a way to involve him in the learning process. If he has challenges working with the group, related independent work should be given, followed by a one-to-one RTI session with you while other students work independently.”

- Feedback to teachers is used to identify best practices across the school and targets trends that require interventions. For example, the principal states that 3b, “Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques,” is an area on the Danielson Framework for Teaching which has been identified for more teacher support across classrooms. The administration states and teachers confirm that the principal and assistant principal guide them to support their professional growth by engaging in intervisitation with colleagues who are demonstrating best practices, such as student-to-student discussions. Teaches also shared that they do intervisitations with their colleagues on their own to learn new strategies to improve their professional growth.
Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured inquiry-based professional collaborations. Teachers on each grade take part in decisions with the administration to select instructional and social programs, such as Positive Behavior Intervention Strategies (PBIS) across the school, which support distributed leadership structures.

Impact

Most structured inquiry promotes school goals, including the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts to improve students’ writing. The inclusion of teachers’ voices in decision-making with the administration resulted in Mathletics and PBIS for improved student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers on each grade engage in collaboration on a weekly basis. The grade five team shared that their students have problems identifying the theme and main idea in a story. In addition, their students need strategies for answering multiple choice questions. One of the teachers shared that she is working on helping her students pull out necessary information in the story (PONIS) to identify the theme. Another teacher shared that she uses vocabulary from state assessments to develop higher order multiple choice questions for weekly reading tests, so that the students become familiar with the language of the test.

- A strategy to improve students’ writing on constructed response questions is to develop questions resulting in short written responses to help students become more proficient in writing responses to literature. Another strategy discussed for helping students with constructed response writing is developing rigorous essay questions so that students become proficient at looking below the surface of the text to make inferences about the evidence as they work independently. For example, a teacher shared a checklist with several questions that students use as they review their writing to ensure they have included details to support their main ideas. An essay shared by the teacher during the inquiry meeting showed the improvements a student had made as a result of using the checklist. The student’s essay included several details to support the main idea.

- Teachers from each grade meet with the administration to discuss concerns on their grade. The selection of the current literacy and math programs was a shared decision between the leadership and teachers across the grades. In addition, four teachers in the school are a part of the Leadership Team and are involved in surveying the staff for professional development topics to support professional growth and student learning. These topics are discussed with the administration, and schoolwide professional growth results from a balance of data gleaned from observations and teachers’ requests, such as to develop proficiency in technology. The adoption of Mathletics was an outgrowth of teacher input. Teachers also state that they have a voice in implementing schoolwide programs to motivate positive behaviors to support students’ academic and social learning outcomes, such as the implementation of positive behavior intervention strategies (PBIS), which is limiting classroom interruptions.