Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 228 Early Childhood Magnet School of the Arts

Early Childhood 30Q228

32-63 93rd St.
Queens
NY 11369

Principal: Olga Guzman

Dates of Review:
April 25, 2017 - April 26, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Thomas McKenna
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. 228 Early Childhood Magnet School of the Arts serves students in grade PK through grade 2. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### School Culture

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

### Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

Structures are in place so that each student is known well by at least one adult. The school community strategically aligns professional development (PD), family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports.

Impact

Personalized interventions, routines, celebrations, and supports help students learn positive behaviors and result in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- Students are greeted by name at the entrance of the school each morning by a rotating member of the school staff. Advisory is embedded in each class through the primary teacher, with supplements provided by the school guidance counselor, and provides the opportunity for students to develop and maintain strong, trusting relationships with adults. The personalized nature of the small classes allows each student to be known well by an adult and receive supports and guidance as well as feedback on academic and personal growth. There are also clubs, chosen by students based on interest, which provide a secondary small community for them and allow another adult to build strong relationships and foster trust. These arts-focused clubs, which include visual art, theater, dance, and music, also strategically offer a different outlet for student voice.

- Community outreach and events occur on a regular basis and are rooted in the academic and personal behavior expectations for the students. Explicit events and workshops such as Build Your Go Math Skills, Understanding Speech and Language Delays, Your Child’s Emotional Well-Being, and multiple arts-based workshops for parents are offered on a regular basis and in a number of languages. These activities reflect the needs of the school community while incorporating the school’s focus on an inclusive culture and an integration of family and community commitment. Agendas and attendance sheets show a high level of parent involvement, and parents agreed that the school supports families and fully integrates them into the school community.

- Regular celebrations and recognition ceremonies engender a sense of belongingness among students that contributes to the positive survey results the school enjoys in their monitoring of school culture. In addition to the Principal’s Honor Role, students can be recognized for the Character Award of the Month and the Good Citizen Award. The principal reports a culture of recognizing growth and effort in the pursuit of increased academic achievement, and students, staff, and parents all describe the school culture in a similar way. Collaborations within the community, including the local political officials, police and firefighters, also serve as opportunities for educating and recognizing students.
Area of Focus

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

Findings

Across classrooms, teachers use rubrics and assessments aligned with the curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

Ongoing assessments provide actionable feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. While many teachers demonstrated effective feedback practices to meet students’ learning needs, some missed opportunities were observed.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, rubrics and assessments aligned to school curricula and are cited in giving students feedback. Students and staff spoke to the use of a schoolwide common feedback structure that includes next steps for students and encourages student reflection. Although many examples of feedback were clear and next steps were evident, some examples seen in the school were not of high quality. For example, while some feedback to kindergarten and grade one students indicated that they needed additional detail to support their arguments or should use classroom anchor charts to assist with a particular component of a task, other feedback simply stated, “write neater” or “watch spelling.”

- Across the school, starting in pre-kindergarten classes, students use checklists and rubrics as self-assessment tools during the completion of work. Examples were posted on classroom walls, hallway bulletin boards, and within student work portfolios. Though in most grades the rubric is posted and explained, a checklist based on the rubric is also used by some students for self and peer assessment. A kindergarten self-assessment checklist offers guidance by asking the students, “Did I use context clues?” and “Was I able to recognize important information?” Many checklists include visual cues to better support all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

- Across classrooms, checks for understanding were used for in-class adjustments as well as planning. Either exit slips or conferencing notes are found in almost all classes, and teachers use that data for the next day’s student groupings, pacing adjustments, or individual supports. Several teachers observed at the start of their periods referenced the previous day’s exit tickets in their do-nows and opening activities and were clearly using that data to form student groups. A number of teachers used additional checks for understanding, including a red/green/yellow card set which students used both when working independently as the teacher circulated the room and when teachers would look to survey the entire class for understanding. Other teachers observed performed more cursory checks through a thumbs-up or down assessment and failed to note some students who did not respond.
## Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts into lesson planning. Across grades and subjects, rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized for all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

## Impact

Curricular decisions such as the incorporation of instructional shifts in literacy and academic vocabulary build coherence and rigorous habits for all learners, especially ELLs and students with disabilities. Academic tasks as written in lesson plans clearly incorporate opportunities for strategic and extended thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers can articulate how they ensure curricula is aligned to the Common Core for kindergarten through second grade. Teacher team-based planning and revision using common school planning documents include modifications to meet the needs of all learners in the school, with particular attention to the large ELL population. Staff can also articulate their strategies for incorporating the instructional shifts within lessons, focusing on using an early childhood learning station inquiry approach across classes that includes building academic vocabulary and emphasizes students’ building knowledge about the world around them through text.

- A review of curricular documents across grades evidences purposeful decisions to implement Common Core-aligned curricula and ensures integration of the instructional shifts. In a grade one social studies lesson plan addressing measurement, the primary task involved students circulating through four workstations which include paired work, small group work, independent work, and a higher-level enrichment activity. All stations include both exploration and experimentation components, reflecting the schools focus on application of math concepts, and related to the essential question, “How can we measure objects using non-standard units of measurement?” In addition, that lesson and all others reviewed contained specific lesson components on academic vocabulary building.

- Essential questions and tasks within lesson plans demonstrate alignment to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels 3 and 4. Lessons at all grades, including kindergarten, featured some level of citing evidence and drawing conclusions, and many reading classes included analyzing author’s purpose. In a grade one science lesson, students were asked to create a hypothesis about the design of the perfect nest for a specific species of bird assigned by the teacher, and then were later asked to build that design. The plan reflected questions such as, “What is the purpose of a nest?” and “What challenges do birds face when building their nests outdoors?” After building the nest, the lesson called for students to perform a multi-step experiment against their “perfect nest” hypothesis. The lesson included specific strategies for differentiation and grouping, as did all other lesson plans reviewed.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs informed by the instructional shifts that fosters higher order thinking. Teaching strategies, including a school-wide incorporation of inquiry-based station learning, provide multiple entry points into the curricula through challenging tasks, many of which are hands-on and interactive.

Impact
Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts, as well as by discussions at the team and school levels. All learners, including ELLs and students with disabilities, are engaged through multiple entry points and have the opportunity for thoughtful extension activities to further apply their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers guided students through activities requiring that students develop academic language to support arguments in discussion and writing across content areas. A grade two reading lesson on the biography of John Chapman included a Socratic Circle in which students used textual evidence to support their arguments while students outside the circle composed and posited questions to the participants, challenging their arguments and interpretation of text.

- Anchor postings detailing how the school’s instructional focus is reflected in all subject areas are in all classrooms. These postings were all individualized to the classroom, connecting academic vocabulary use and accountable talk structures. In addition, students in all classrooms were able to quickly identify the specific posting that applied to the lesson in which they were engaged and were eager to demonstrate their ability to use those words appropriately. When asking a student pair in grade two how they were creating questions for each other in their collaborative analysis of a non-fiction text, both students pointed to the “Non-Fiction Question Starters” poster in the corner of the room, which contained model questions and question stems for students to use in support of peer discussions. Teachers facilitated lessons in which students were highly engaged and actively participating in cooperative learning, student-to-student discussions, and projects, embodying the coherent set of beliefs that students learn best through collaborative inquiry and learning station-based instruction.

- Teaching strategies across classes offered scaffolds, including visual cues, strategic groupings and pairings, small-group and individual conferences, technology assistance, and language supports for ELLs and those students identified as low achieving. In addition, most of the teachers planned for and provided extensions for those students in classes ready to engage in more rigorous content and tasks. When a grade one student was asked what she would do once she was finished with the assigned writing task, she responded, “I will take another task from the extensions folder and try to challenge myself to do even more.” The student then retrieved the extension folder and shared with the reviewer, showing additional writing prompts. Most classes observed had a similar system.
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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 communicate and model high expectations for staff through use the Danielson Framework for Teaching, with a focus on engaging students in learning. Teacher teams and staff communicate and support high expectations for all students across the school.

Impact

Communication structures around high expectations and training result in a system of accountability. High expectations for all students are maintained and supported through effective guidance and feedback so that students are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal uses the Danielson Framework for Teaching to inform classroom instructional practices and communicates expectations regularly to teachers and staff via email, memoranda, and individual and group teacher conferences. Expectations are also outlined in the faculty handbook. PD workshops have focused on Domain 3 of the Danielson Framework and the Common Core Learning Standards, questioning and discussion, while other sessions have emphasized strategies to provide support for potentially at-risk student subgroups, including ELLs and students with disabilities. These strategies are evident in a majority of classes. In all reading classes, ELLs received targeted assistance while students with disabilities had portions of the text reread to them.

- Frequent classroom observations and feedback from administrators based on the Danielson Framework contain specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating, alignment to instructional shifts and the school’s instructional focus, and actionable next steps. These are then addressed in subsequent classroom observations. Support for teachers takes place through content specific coaching, designated intervisitation opportunities within the school, and daily opportunities for debriefs with school leaders where actionable feedback for shifts in teaching practice is provided. Teachers report, and observation documents support, that the principal frequently frames interactions as “What can I do to help you in best serving the students?”

- The school systematically communicates a unified set of high expectations for students through a focus on community building and connections to college and career readiness, preparing them for higher grades and high school. As an early childhood school terminating after grade two, these preparations include an articulated relationship with the local elementary school which receives the majority of the school’s graduates. This relationship includes facilitated school visits to the receiving elementary school by all students in grade two for presentations on the transition process and a specialized orientation. In addition, alumni visit to share with students information about and experiences from high school and beyond. Moreover, there is a K-2 schoolwide “college day” each year in which school staff and parents present on their college experiences and engage students in college-related and age appropriate activities. To better integrate guidance supports for students, the guidance counselor pushes-in to classes and supports the schoolwide mindfulness curriculum.
### Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations focused on student achievement. Distributed leadership structures are embedded into the school, resulting in effective teacher leadership.

### Impact

Collaborations within grade teams and the vertical inquiry team have strengthened teachers’ instructional capacity, established a level of school-wide instructional coherence, and improved student performance and achievement. Across the school, team structures have built leadership capacity and given teachers a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- In staff interviews, most teachers spoke about the benefit of the multiple team opportunities within the school. A primary benefit noted was the coherence across classrooms in their instructional practices, such as the focus on student discussion. Three teachers spoke to the opportunities with their teams to experiment, inter-visit, and both provide and receive feedback from team members. Grade teams focused on horizontal alignment of curricula and pacing as well as vertical teams focused on sequencing and schoolwide instructional coherence have dedicated meeting times embedded in the schedule, and leaders of those teams actively meet and plan in collaboration with school leaders. Schoolwide gains in literacy have been made, including growth of 12 percent in students scoring at level 3 or 4 on state ELA assessments.

- School leaders and teacher leaders, including team, instructional, and department leaders, identify distributed leadership practices and structures that are deeply rooted in the school’s day-to-day operations and foster a culture in which teachers provide continual input into strategic decisions affecting student achievement. For example, each grade team is facilitated by a teacher, the school offers monthly teacher-led professional development and workshops, and two teachers share the responsibility for schoolwide data management. Interviews with administration and staff, as well as a review of agendas and planning documents, reveal that distributed leadership is built into all key decisions.

- During a kindergarten team meeting, teachers reviewed student performance data and running records from small-group reading tasks completed earlier in the week to assess which strategies led to the most growth with ELLs and those in the lowest-third of the class. The findings of the meeting resulted in a grade-wide adjustment in the learning station design for the current unit. A share-out of strategies for multiple-entry points at the end of the meeting resulted in two of the six teachers present volunteering to test a new strategy in their classes and report back at the following meeting.