Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 253

Elementary 27Q253

1307 Central Ave.
Queens
NY 11691

Principal: Phoebe Grant Robinson

Dates of Review:
November 17, 2016 - November 18, 2016

Lead Reviewer: Luz Cortazzo
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>
</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<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>
<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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school…</th>
<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>
<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</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>Proficient</td>
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<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>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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### Findings

The administration consistently communicates high expectations to all stakeholders regarding their learning that is used as a conduit towards college and career readiness.

### Impact

The ongoing communication around high expectations to staff, students, and families has encouraged mutual responsibility in support of teacher and student improvement efforts.

### Supporting Evidence

- Parents are provided daily feedback on their children’s progress through the ClassDojo, which indicates students’ academic progress or areas in which they need to improve. Teachers and parents expressed how the immediate feedback on homework, assessments, and schoolwork holds everyone accountable for student progress, which has strengthen the home-school connection and partnership as measured by the increase in number of families that use ClassDojo.

- Administrators and staff communicate high expectations to families through monthly newsletters in English and Spanish, SchoolCNXT, Common Core Learning Standards, and ongoing workshops to help their children succeed. Parents shared how teachers and the school staff support them by taking the time to work with them individually or in groups, on understanding information relative to their children’s academic performance, such as regular progress reports, that include reading levels as well as performance on New York State tests, individual student goals, and their progress. One parent stated, “We are always very well informed.”

- The principal provides teachers with very clear expectations around teaching and learning. Following an observation, the principal meets with teachers to engage in a conversation around whether or not the support previously provided is working, using the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric as the basis for the discussion. Teacher support is then individualized and designed by looking at trends in practice and monitored with follow up observations by the supervisor, looking for the implementation of the feedback given.

- Parents also reported that the school administrators have established a successful partnership with families that supports student progress toward college and career readiness. The school administrators use multiple means of communication such as monthly calendars, principal’s newsletter, school’s website, weekly robo-call, where the principal’s message is recorded and received twice on the weekend, Tuesday’s Tea, and Talk with the principal. Parents stated that the different means of communication not only allowed them to be aware of the events that are occurring at the school, as well as be remaineder of the school’s expectations and have a forum to discuss and address any concerns regarding their child’s education.
## Area of Focus

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

Teacher pedagogy, informed by the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and the instructional shifts, reflect the school administrators articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. The use of teacher questioning, student discussions, vary across the school.

### Impact

Varying teaching practices and strategies across the school has led to uneven opportunities for students to engage in and take ownership of meaningful discussions or curricular extensions, thereby limiting all learners, including English Language Learners (ELLS) and students with disabilities, the opportunity to produce high-level work products.

### Supporting Evidence

- The administration and school leaders presented evidence to support the school's work around promoting thinking and rigorous habits. Webb's *Depth of Knowledge* (DOK) and Hess' *Cognitive Rigor Matrix* are used to guide teachers in determining the rigor of their questions and academic tasks designed to engage all students. However, although teachers are supported in their development of designing text dependent questions, questioning across four of the nine classrooms was predominately on DOK, level one with few teachers asking open-ended questions that pushed students to think critically about their work. Questions posed to students to monitor comprehension, required only one or two word responses. For example, students were asked, “Where is Snowshoe Hare’s winter home?” or “What does Snowshoe Hare want to do?” This level of questioning did not require students to think critically.

- In most classrooms visited, teachers dominated the discussions with students asking a few questions. In some other classrooms, teachers circulated the room assessing the students’ discussions as they worked in groups. However, in the majority of the classrooms visited, students had limited opportunities to share their thinking or asked questions of their classmates limiting their opportunity to share or take ownership of their thinking.

- Although there is a school-wide emphasis on the use of academic language in all content areas, only in one classroom visited there was evidence of the teacher demonstrating language using the total physical response (TPR) during her lesson, which is particularly necessary in view of the high percentage of ELLS as well as students with disabilities.
Additional Finding

<table>
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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
Curricula are aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards and address the instructional shifts. Academic tasks emphasize rigorous habits with supports for all students.

Impact
The curricula consistently promote college and career readiness for all students. Academic tasks push students thinking across grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the school, teachers used *ReadyGen* for literacy instruction and *GoMath!* for math instruction. Teacher’s College writing and the scope and sequence for social studies and science with supports and scaffolds, such as differentiated reading and writing activities which are incorporated for students with disabilities and ELLs in all grades.

- Most lesson plans reference the relevant Common Core Learning Standards or content standards and include essential questions, learning targets, and rigorous tasks that incorporate the instructional shifts. A grade two lesson plan requires students to engage in text-based discussions. A math task in a grade five lesson has students comparing mixed number products to determine whether they will be equal to, greater than, or less than the other factors.

- Academic tasks are aligned to the Common Core learning standards and demonstrate rigorous demands such as students solving math word problems, explain their thinking, as well as showing text-based evidenced in their writing. The school adopted a school-wide word in math that has students read, identify, choose and explain (RICE). Students are encouraged to read the problem twice, identify the question, choose a strategy by making a plan, solve, check and explain using words, pictures or numbers. Similarly in literacy, read, infer, cite and show evidence (RICE) is used. Students are encouraged to read text closely, make inferences about the text, write using the source using at least two details and cite textual evidence. Students were observed using RICE during classroom visits and spoke about this schoolwide expectation during the student meeting.

- All unit plans developed by teachers, across subject areas, reflect essential questions, academic language, content, and skills. Additionally, to promote thinking and rigorous habits, text dependent questions and activities are highlighted in all subject areas, as a way to focus on the instructional shifts. Students, across the school, are expected to explain their mathematical thinking when problem solving, as well as incorporate text-based evidence in their writing and discussions.
Additional Finding

<table>
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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 the school, teachers utilize assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school's curricula to monitor and determine student progress.

Impact

The analysis of student performance has provided opportunities for teachers to provide feedback to students and make curricula adjustments in response to learners’ diverse needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration meets individually with each teacher to engage in data chats. Through this process, each student is looked at, teachers are expected to speak to student data they are tracking from unit assessments in ReadyGen and GoMath! Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) reading assessments and the supports being provided based on data results. Teachers stated that the administrators facilitate these data chats, using specific probing questions to help them think strategically about their students and how the data impacts decisions in terms of moving the students along the learning continuum. Each student has an intervention plan that is continuously updated to reflect next steps to support the student to make progress.

- Most student work products and tasks on hallways bulletin boards indicate rubric and task aligned feedback to students that informs them of their strengths and next steps for improvement. During discussions with students, they were able to articulate their progress based on indicators on their individual rubrics that inform them of where they are and next steps for improvement. Additionally, teachers meet with students at least twice a month to discuss their goals, progress, and next steps to move them towards accountability and support in monitoring their own progress.

- All teachers maintain student portfolios with progress on each unit assessment in ReadyGen and GoMath! A cover template shows progress, grades, and various assessments results such as F&P during reading running records and unit performance tasks. Teachers use this information to adjust instruction, organize flexible groups, and create student intervention plans as evidenced during the grade five team meeting.
### Additional Finding

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

#### Findings

Administrators and teacher leaders support teacher development with effective feedback and next steps using the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

#### Impact

Teachers benefit from collaboration, coaching, and effective feedback from administrators and peer teachers that is supporting teacher development.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The principal starts the year by implementing initial planning conferences with teachers and administrators to discuss annual goals, revisit their prior year Measures of Teacher Practice (MOTP) as well as F&P scores and New York State exams. The MOTP data information informs the school's professional development menus, offerings, such that teachers are empowered to direct their learning as per their MOTP and administrator's guidance as well. Professional development initiated and delivered by teachers in cycles of mini professional learning institutes highlight topics such as, differentiation, formative assessments, ELL strategies, lesson study and best practices to enhance teachers’ pedagogical practice and ultimately improve student outcomes. Benchmark data is evaluated to determine the impact of said strategies and best practices, as it is expected that teachers implement their new learning from professional development in both the design of their lesson plans and implementation.

- Throughout the school year, administrators revisit data sources to reflect and refine professional development. The year conclude with end of year conferences discussing teacher practice related to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* and next steps for professional support both individually as well as school wide. In addition, the administration ensures that MOTP feedback is connected to the schoolwide pedagogical practices and instructional frameworks. This promotes an ongoing consistent conversation around best practices and resources throughout the school.

- The school implements Dr. Anthony Bryk's research through The Framework for Great Schools Strategy of plan, do, study, and act cycle. These elements are consistently reflected on and used to refine teacher practices to improve the quality and ultimately student outcomes. For example, in a grade five math classroom visit, the teacher was observed using this instructional model to investigate and multiply mixed numbers. Similarly, his lesson plan, as well as lesson plans reviewed in all classrooms visited indicate the school’s foci of I do, we do, you do strategy, questioning and discussions coherent throughout the lesson, small group tiered instruction, formative assessments, as relevant to the needs of each pedagogue.

- As part of the school's instructional practice, the school administrators have utilized various data sources to inform not only professional development, but also targeted instruction, Academic Intervention Services (AIS) and pedagogical foci. This data is collected and analyzed during instructional rounds, observations, inter-visitations, teacher surveys, assessments, quarterly data chats, and data cycle discussions as evidenced by documentation reviewed and discussions during teacher team meetings.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Team and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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</table>

**Findings**

Teacher leaders across the school, facilitate grade team meetings, where teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations to plan and adjust curricula.

**Impact**

Collaboration across the school has given teachers access to various teaching strategies that support their pedagogical practice and engage them in decision-making that influences student outcomes.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In a meeting with a vertical team, comprised of grade and content leaders, teachers stated that they have many opportunities to be leaders such as leads on grade level teams, and serving on the school cabinet with administrators. Teachers are also encouraged to have a voice in decision making around curricula. They have the opportunity to take part in surveys at the end of professional learning cycles to assess the relevance of the professional development and continued needs of staff. Teachers spoke about their opportunity to identify implications for practice after each professional development session, and how this practice is allowing them opportunities for leverage as they align their new learning with present pedagogical practices and student's needs, to ultimately drive improved outcomes.

- During an observed meeting, grade five teachers engaged in math inquiry with a focus on looking at teacher practice. Teachers utilized the looking at teacher practice protocol (LATP) that allowed them the opportunity to review student work with rubric, identify student misconceptions when using equations and improper fractions to multiply mixed numbers, develop clarifying and probing questions, as well as discuss implications for practice. They charted next steps for teachers and students across the grade and shared various suggestions and implications for teacher practice.

- Teachers shared that they are heavily included in taking on various leadership roles within the school, and that leaders encourage their voice in critical decisions that affect student improvement efforts. Examples included teacher’s responsibility with creating the student portfolio-tracking document used schoolwide. Mini professional earning institutes designed by teachers after the analysis of staff surveys, the implementation of the LATP, in conjunction with the previously existing Looking at Student Work protocol, as well as the implementation of at least one cycle of lesson study in math and English Language Arts.