Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 021 Philip H. Sheridan
Elementary 11X021
715 East 225th St.
Bronx
NY 10466

Principal: Joyce Coleman

Dates of Review:
April 27, 2017 - April 28, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Joan Prince
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>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</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>Area of Celebration</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>
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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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</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>Proficient</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>
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### Systems for Improvement

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<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>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 Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:** 1.1  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula is aligned to the Common Core Standards, integrate the Danielson Framework for Teaching and offers meaningful learning experiences that promote college and career readiness for all students.

**Impact**

Students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, are consistently engaged in a coherent and rigorous curriculum. Academic tasks that push students to demonstrate their thinking, are embedded into the curricula across grades and content areas.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Purposeful decisions to build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all students are embedded into the curriculum. Reading, writing and content area units integrate the Common Core and the instructional shifts. There are weekly curriculum meetings to support academic intervention work. At team meetings areas of weakness are targeted for increased instruction and curriculum is adapted with supplemental materials to assist in specific strategies. The school participates in Instructional Focus Collaborative, a teaching program along with other schools from within the district. Imagine Learning, an online English Language Learners reading component, is used along with the Wilson reading program in upper grades and Fountas and Pinnell in lower grades. myON libraries, an on-line reading program that offers personalized reading selections based on students’ interests and reading levels, is used in school and at home by teachers, students and families to encourage reading.

- Kindergarten through second grade use the Superkids Reading Program recommended by the Right to Read program as an effective ways to teach reading using direct, explicit, sequential and systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, fluency and comprehension with the development of vocabulary. ReadyGen is used as a resource in upper grades with adjustments for ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, teachers are engaging in breaking up complex texts into smaller units to reinforce comprehension and promote higher order thinking skills. Writing is incorporated into units of study requiring students to write opinion pieces on topics supporting a point of view with reasons and information. For example, in the grade four and five bridge class for students with disabilities, students had the choice of responding to 18+18 in different processes. Some students used addition, while others used a common multiple such as 9 to determine the answer. F&P leveled reading assessments are implemented to establish each student’s independent reading levels in kindergarten through grade five and to guide the formation of reading groups.

- Math teachers use a variety of resources including GO Math! to ensure coherence and that attention is paid to the instructional shifts. Modifications to incorporate higher order thinking skills and questions into lesson plans across content areas use Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions, Bloom’s Taxonomy and Hess’ Cognitive Rigor Matrix as resources. Teachers utilized the GO Math! baseline and mid-year assessments and from the resulting data determined that fractions and multiplication word problems were a weakness. The curriculum was changed to extend time in these areas and add a tracking tool to see what students already know and where they need to go. There is clear curriculum mapping to support content area instruction in all subject areas. Students participate in a rich, coherent curriculum and performance based tasks that promote college and career readiness skills, participating in discussion groups, organization of skills and academic vocabulary.
Area of Focus

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

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work products and discussions reflect uneven levels of participation.

Impact

Uneven learning and higher order thinking skills are reflected in student work products. Student discussion and challenging tasks are missing in most but not all classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- In many classrooms teachers provide small group instruction. Students participated in discussions by responding to teacher-generated questions, but in-depth analysis was not clearly required of all students in a vast majority of classrooms. Students sometimes used research skills to uncover text-based evidence as they worked in small groups. In a grade one-two bridge, self-contained special education classroom, while students were working on math, there were four groups: some had tiles, and others had workbooks in order to provide differentiation and multiple entry points. In group work there was peer assisting and use of strategies that involved addition and subtraction and students looked at different ways to find the answer. The teacher reminded the students to revisit the vocabulary chart and made conferring notes while circulating. However, in a grade one general education math class, the lesson was not differentiated; the students were measuring pencils and the lesson highlighted vocabulary on order and length but did not require them to do any measuring while drawing their pencils. In addition, there was no discussion about length of the pencils and, although there was a video on garden tools of varying lengths, there was no follow-up discussion.

- There is a math performance task rubric which asks for level 1-3 responses so that the student are asked to reason abstractly and quantitatively, but this appears not to be used across grades. Math classes observed demonstrated students making responses that showed only basic understanding and recall. In a grade four English Language Arts (ELA) lesson there were four groups discussing imagery in poetry. The overall goal of the lesson was, “I can read and understand with purpose and understanding.” Students were using chunking skills were working on powerful words. The overall tone of the room revealed the teacher’s organizational and managerial skills, and the teacher responded to students’ needs by circulating and taking notes. However, student-to-student discussion in a large group setting was limited.

- It was identified at professional development meetings that the school needed to focus on questioning and discussion and student engagement domains of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers have received professional development on the writing workshop and how to provide multiple entry points and varied tasks in lessons. Questioning and discussion techniques have been emphasized in lesson plans and are comprehensive, incorporating higher-order questions and multiple entry points for all students. In some classrooms, there were regular checks for understandings including think-pair-share, and activities tiered to address individual student needs, however they did not occur within the majority of classrooms observed.
### Findings

Teachers have a set of assessment strategies providing ongoing checks for understanding, however actionable feedback to students is not commonly used. Some teachers employ assessments and rubrics that are utilized and aligned to the school’s curricula and clearly highlight student progress toward mastery.

### Impact

There is inconsistent use of varied checks for understanding in most lessons. Teachers check in at tables to assess student understanding but do not prompt questions to push student thinking.

### Supporting Evidence

- There are end-of-unit assessments along with Measure of Student Learning (MOSL) performance tasks and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarks. Pre- and post-assessments are used including check-ins allowing students multiple ways of expressing knowledge. Questioning stems aligned to Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* chart and the use of Common Core Learning Standards inconsistently support discussions and facilitate deeper understanding. Tiered question wheels and visual cues are used in some classes to assist in supporting conversations and guiding students to make connections and integrate new learning with previous lessons.

- There is a schoolwide grading policy, along with common rubrics and feedback forms that highlight student strengths and areas of focus as evident in a majority of classrooms, however in classrooms visited feedback to student on their work was not actionable. Some teachers embed assessment into units and use the resulting data to create ongoing adjustments to lessons, such as thinking maps and differentiated graphic organizers, to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers are working to have students meet benchmark levels and student data and performance trends are shared schoolwide to support this understanding. Regular check-ins with students, both formal and informal, were seen in some classrooms, including hand signals in the lower grades, stop-and-jots, exit slips, think-pair-share, and cold calls with no opt out option. Formal assessments used in *iReady* assessments and Fountas and Pinnell as seen in classroom visits, and as discussed during teacher team meetings, are being used as pre- and post-assessments within unit cycles.

- Teachers discussed at teacher team meetings that they are beginning to make strategic adjustments to lessons to provide additional support for students at all levels, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners. In addition, they are aiming to apply complex concepts and include elements that explore students’ metacognition in lessons. Through formal and informal assessments some students have demonstrated a deeper understanding of content with literary and informational texts. Opportunities for students to work collaboratively and independently to complete tasks and to engage in self-reflection using rubrics, checklists and reflection journals are present. Teachers in some classroom prompted students to identify next steps in learning, which included reading excerpts, annotating language and analyzing the text.
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

The school promotes a culture of high expectations around a path to career and college readiness for staff, student and families.

Impact

As a result, all constituents contribute to a culture of learning. There is a sense of mutual accountability and students are supported by teachers and family to progress towards those goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Staff, administration and parents accept responsibility for, and have a mutual collective understanding of, doing what is necessary to meet the school’s high expectations. Structures and systems are in place with increased opportunities for teachers to meet during multiple common prep periods and during debriefing sessions after teacher observations, where there is ongoing and detailed feedback provided in a timely, explicit and constructive manner. There is extensive teacher modeling of best practices and intervisitations to support improved pedagogy. There are formal and informal teacher meetings with walkthroughs, professional articles and professional teaching resources to support the tailoring of lesson plans to meet the needs of individual students across grades. Students at the student meeting were able to articulate how ready they are for the next level and how they set goals for moving forward. Teachers stated, “expectations are set high throughout the entire school.”

- Communication is provided to all staff and parents informing of school progress, adjustments to schedules, clear expectations of the day, and assessment results. Parent workshops on state exams, literacy and math curricula, and health and nutrition are well attended. Parents are informed of relevant websites to use such as Superstars in Kindergarten phonemic awareness and the PBIS program. Every classroom has multiple systems of accountability in their classroom for behavior and learning. Some examples are classroom rules, behavior charts related to character education, goals, accountable talk prompts, checklists and attendance rewards. Rewards are also associated with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), where tickets are given to students as a result of positive behavior. Students are involved in this program daily and the behavior matrix for reporting is displayed in hallways, classrooms and the auditorium. Involvement occurs weekly with the Competent Kids, Caring Communities (CKCC) program, which is taught once a week with lessons involving reading with social-emotional overtones so that all expectations of students are met. Clear expectations for instruction and classroom environment are consistently discussed along with academic rigor.

- One student shared at the student meeting, “the teachers are good and provide me with a good foundation for learning.” Another student stated, “Teachers help you and simplify lessons so we understand better.” All students knew their reading level, set goals and like having peer helpers to help with their goals and grades in all subjects’ areas. Parents were articulate about the support the school provides in academics, social-emotional development and behavior. It was stated that there was a clear path to college and career outlined for their children through classroom organizational skills and values set, along with specific visions and schoolwide goals and programs that establish partnerships with families to support student’s progress toward college and career. These programs involve book baggies that are sent home on a daily basis and writing checklists for parents.
Additional Finding

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<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 and provide actionable feedback along with next steps for improved practice. An effective system of teacher observation is in place along with professional development strategies.

Impact

The school has systems in place with a clear focus on improving instruction. Ongoing communication throughout the school reinforces the school's high standards, draws attention to students' needs and assists teachers in setting goals and priorities.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Advance to track observations and monitor trends to define professional development that specifically targets the teacher competencies that received low ratings. Teachers receive feedback in person and via email within 48 hours after an observation. The principal is able to make precise teacher performance evaluations, provide specific feedback that informs the quality of each teacher's work and suggest highly tailored next steps to improve professionally. During observations, administrators take pictures of student work and have teachers bring examples of student work to ensure that the outcomes of the lesson were met and effective feedback is provided.

- Noticing that rigor was absent from some instruction and student work samples, it was determined that a shared understanding of what constituted rigor was missing. As a result, the principal revised the professional development (PD) schedule to address these needs. Each week of PD is devoted to enhancing professional practice and provides teachers with tools to obtain item level analysis at the end of each unit of study. The administration was able to identify areas of needs, such as low-level feedback to students, and planned a professional development session where teachers used rubrics to understand actionable feedback.

- Teachers are provided with mentors and there is a schedule of intervisitations to see best practices that is both vertical and horizontal across grades. Common planning times are scheduled during the day for teachers to meet in different team configurations, both within and across grades to share insights on learning styles and needs of individual students. The school staff handbook focusing on students with special needs is used to build support for a common understanding of the social-emotional needs of all students. Provided in the handbook are differentiated professional opportunities to engage all teachers and address inquiry work using data to address instructional and curricular issues. The school works collaboratively in teams and special staff cohorts to continuously review and refine curricula and practices to address all learners.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured, professional collaborations that systemically analyze key elements of teacher work including classroom practice, assessment data and student work. There is a process of distributed leadership fostering teacher growth.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in schoolwide instructional coherence, improved pedagogy, and has strengthened teacher instructional capacity. Leadership structures provide a means for teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades there is a common prep time which is used to discuss practice with peers and make timely adjustment to curriculum and instruction. There is extensive collaboration and it is the driving force in the school. Teams work together, and often share out with the entire staff. Google Docs are beginning to be created to serve as a resource for best practices. Practice and curricula are adjusted as needed. Vertical alignment has been a schoolwide focus. Teachers at grade team meeting look at rubrics, checklists and compare the standards with student outcomes. Across the school teacher teams look at student work and content goals focusing on what students need to know, be able to do and be able to explain to highlight their needs and inform teacher practice. Teachers stated at both meetings that they have the opportunity to discuss both skills and strategies to improve lesson planning, share best practices and plan for class assignments across content areas with strategic groupings. There is a professional learning calendar with teacher presenters and subgroup leaders to facilitate student progress and improve teaching and learning.

- Opportunities and roles are assigned allowing teachers to engage in, and make school-wide instructional decisions such as PD opportunities and structured intervisitations tailored by teacher leaders to support specific practices. Lead teachers facilitate professional learning workshops and ensure that teacher teams use protocols in order for all members to participate. Teachers go to outside venues for workshops and subsequently turn-key training to the school staff. Leadership roles are on every grade level and at each grade level meeting there is an agenda, roles are delegated and next-steps notes are taken. Teachers are collaborative and within this framework lead teachers are given autonomy. This structure promotes teacher leadership and decision making capacity to plan academic tasks that improve classroom instruction. Shared leadership that focuses on improved student outcomes is seen in agendas and goals, resulting in school-wide instructional coherence. Teachers in teams are systemically analyzing key element of lesson planning, assessment data and student work. Teachers discussed that there is a risk-free environment and this is starting to impact their teacher practice.

- At the grade one teacher team meeting, which meets one time a week, there are protocols in place with an agenda and assigned roles. Teachers review data from Superkids Reading Program progress tests and looked at students’ use of decoding words. Patterns and trends were looked for to see if punctuation was an issue and if words in isolation could be understood. It was determined that a template for spelling and encoding patterns for writing would be created. They agreed, after a productive discussion, that testing words and words with the same family of meaning, such as author’s purpose and the main idea, should be incorporated into future lessons. There was a collaborative inquiry process where the implications of instruction were addressed through next steps and an action plan.