Quality Review Report

2016-2017

P.S. 126 Dr Marjorie H Dunbar
Elementary 09X126
175 West 166th St.
Bronx
NY 10452

Principal: Nadine Kee Foster

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

Lead Reviewer: Lenneen Gibson
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. 126 Dr Marjorie H Dunbar serves students in grade PK 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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<tbody>
<tr>
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<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>
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<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>
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<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### School Quality Ratings continued

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

#### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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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>
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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>
Findings
The implementation of a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support program (PBIS), No Place for Hate, the six pillars character traits, and the spirit team provide a safe and inclusive school culture. The school-based personnel team ensures that each child is known well by an adult.

Impact
A safe and inclusive school culture that rewards positive learning experiences, welcomes student voice, and supports students’ learning needs through the coordination of attendance and child/youth development, results in an environment conducive for learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has supports in place such as a PBIS program, a spirit team, and student commendations through award assemblies that emphasize the six pillars character traits. The PBIS team is responsible for ensuring that respect, ownership, attitude, responsibility and safety (ROAR) is implemented through its PBIS matrix to support positive student behavior. Students receive “Panther Bucks” for their good behavior and this reward system incentivizes students who can earn class trips and parties. The spirit team ensures that students are acknowledged for their academic excellence and attendance performance by working with families to celebrate their children’s accomplishments through fall and spring award ceremonies. In addition, the spirit team works on initiatives such as the monthly staff breakfast, the multicultural day event, and the six pillars character traits that laud exemplar students monthly. Bulletin boards in the school also recognize students for perfect attendance.

- The school has adopted the No Place for Hate student program. The committee comprises students of multiple grades who work on anti-bullying initiatives such as anti-bullying poster campaigns. Students during the student group meeting attested to the anti-bullying work of No Place for Hate. Students said they exercise their student voice through their writing pieces called, “Piece of the Week” where they provide their opinions on topics such as, “Should Move to Improve be Included in the Curriculum?” “Is Recess Good or Bad?” and “Chocolate Milk vs. Regular Milk.” As a result of these initiatives, the rate of school incidents has decreased from 104 to 54.

- School personnel coordinate parental outreach through home visits, letters sent to the home, and phone messages made to investigate chronic absenteeism. Guidance counselors conduct mandated counseling for at-risk students and students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The school has an on-site clinic that hosts social worker interns who work with the school’s social worker to partner with families for social emotional support. School staff participation in programs such as the basketball team, yoga, Boy and Girl Scouts, the art club, and the afterschool program, allow for students to be known well by an adult. Students during the student meeting also attested that these programs allow them to know an adult well.
Findings

Teaching strategies, such as the use of questioning, the use of scaffolds, and student discussions, are inconsistent in their application and limit both multiple entry points into the curricula and student engagement in high-level thinking.

Impact

Missed opportunities for high levels of student thinking and participation inhibit all learners’ access to challenging tasks and meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Student discussions reflected uneven levels of student thinking and participation. In a guided reading class with diverse learners, students were discussing the text, Thunder Cake during a discussion circle by responding to the prompt, “What does the narrator fear in the text? How does she overcome her fear?” Students cited evidence from the text and responded directly to one another by providing feedback such as noticing the inflection in a student’s voice when reading specific passages. Students also used accountable talk stems during the student-to-student discussions. In a mathematics class, students were working on a problem of the day that was projected on the Smartboard. Two students went to the board to show their work on the problem. Students then engaged in a turn-and-talk to discuss their observations of the students’ work and noted that the totals for a number sentence were not equal. Students provided one another feedback on the approach to accurately solve the number sentence; however, in another mathematics class, students were tasked with solving the problem, “If Valerie has 11 apples and Rachel has one more what is more than 11?” The teacher posed questions to extract the students’ approach to solving the problem. Using dry erase whiteboards, students showed their process for solving the problem. Questions posed were from teacher-to-student and not student-to-student. Students also were not provided an opportunity to discuss with one another their processes for solving the problem, thus limiting opportunities for students to actively participate in the lesson.

- In a reading class with diverse learners, the learning target stated, “I can explain the relationship between two concepts in a historical text, by drawing on specific text information.” Students read informational texts on Ruby Bridges and Jesse Owens and the discrimination they both faced. Students used graphic organizers to capture pertinent information from the text. In their student groups, students explained to one another their text details and made connections between the two texts. A student also explained his work under the document camera. In a guided reading class, the learning target stated, “I can analyze the text structure using details that show cause and effect.” Students were simulating a mini Socratic seminar. Students were responding to one another using evidence from their article entitled, “The Night the Martians Landed;” however, all students did not participate in the activity; therefore, all student voices were not heard during the activity. As a result of lack of student voice, there were missed opportunities for students to participate in the lesson.

- In a guided reading class with English Language Learner (ELL) students, the teacher discussed an article with the students about the nutrient content in certain foods. The line of questioning was low level in nature and, in some cases, required one-word answers. For example, “How much sodium is in the cheese?” “Does the article mention junk food?” One question asked the students to use evidence such as, “Find a place in the article that has an impact on you?” Student engagement was largely compliant; however, in a math class with diverse learners, students used the appropriate formula to find the perimeter of an object. All students were engaged in the lesson by posing questions to one another in their groups and prompted their group members to correct their mistakes by asking appropriate questions using a math discussion scaffold.
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

School leaders ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Academic tasks incorporate rigorous habits.

Impact

The integration of the Common Core Learning Standards and the consistent emphasis on higher-order thinking skills ensure coherence and the promotion of college and career readiness for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional focus of the school emphasizes shared reading across the grades. There are five phases to the shared reading approach with fluency and vocabulary being a focus in the lower grades, annotation, questioning and discussion, and responsive reading being a focus in the upper grades. For all of the grades, making inferences has been a focus. In a fifth grade English Language Arts (ELA) lesson plan for diverse learners, students were tasked with explaining the relationship between education and discrimination by examining the experiences of famous African Americans such as Ruby Bridges and Jesse Owens. Afterwards students had to craft a short response to the prompt “How did discrimination impact Jess Owens as a black athlete?” Students had to make inferences and use evidence from the text to draw conclusions. A scaffold such as a graphic organizer was used to organize student thinking. Similarly in a third grade lesson plan for diverse learners, students had to make connections to the text and draw inferences based on the text, *Thundercake*. Students were required to respond to the prompt using an accountable talk prompt that asked them to address how one overcomes or helps someone overcome their fear.

- A kindergarten through second grade ELA academic task required students to produce a narrative writing piece that responded to a scenario of a student walking to school and encountering a scary dog. Students were tasked with creating a well-sequenced story with supporting details and an ending. A third through fifth grade ELA academic task asked students to respond to the same prompt but with sophistication such as the use of transition words/phrases to depict their story. In addition, students had to use the skill of elaboration as another strategy to help readers depict their story.

- A first grade interdisciplinary unit plan on narrative writing demonstrates alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and integrates the instructional shift of fluency across the grades. The school has an instructional focus of math discussions. A first grade lesson plan references that students are to use their math discussion prompts and stems as they decide if a number sentence is true or false by adding and subtracting on each side of the equal sign. In a fourth grade lesson plan, students were required to use their mathematical discussion prompts to apply the appropriate formula when finding the perimeter of an object. Discussion builds coherence across the curriculum and promotes college and career readiness for all students.
## Findings

Teachers create assessments that are aligned to the school’s curricula. Teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and of student self-assessment.

## Impact

Teachers' feedback to students is meaningful and actionable in increasing student achievement. Ongoing checks for understanding result in on-the-spot adjustments to the lesson to meet the needs of all learners.

## Supporting Evidence

- Teaching practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding. In a reading class with diverse learners, the teacher circulated around the room and captured student responses. The teacher used a student’s misinterpretation of his text detail to adjust the lesson. The teacher asked the class, “Why is there an issue with …detail?” “What relationship are we analyzing?” A student corrected the first student's text detail to align with the expectation of the assignment. In a math class, the teacher used a checklist to collect student data as they completed the problem of the day. The data collected was used to select a student to demonstrate his process for solving the problem of the day to the class. In a guided reading class that simulated a Socratic seminar, the teacher captured the students' responses during the seminar. Students also used a checklist that required them to use “glows and grows” to self-assess their performance on how well they identified structures of the text, how they described causes and effects using details from the text, and how they made inferences.

- Teachers create assessments that are aligned to the curricula and that provide actionable feedback to students. A second grade writing performance task required students to write an opinion piece on whether chocolate milk or regular milk was more nutritious. A teacher-created, second grade, four-point opinion rubric was used to assess the student work. One student was commended for using research to support his opinion. The next steps instructed the student that, when giving a reason, there must be an explanation as to why the reason supports the opinion. A student’s math work commended the student for stating the prior knowledge needed to solve the math problem. The teacher’s feedback instructed the student to use the CUBE strategy to unlock the math problem.

- A math problem-of-the-day required students to use the information provided in the word problem to calculate how many potatoes a supermarket crate can hold. The feedback commended the student for using math vocabulary and details in his explanation for solving the problem. The next steps warned the student about confusing mathematical terms such as “divisor” and “dividend.” The task also incorporated a student checklist for students to self-evaluate their work. An English Language Arts task required student to produce a writing piece that responded to the impact of advertisements on children. Student checklists were used for students to self-evaluate, and teacher comments were included in the feedback; such as, one student was commended for providing two impacts of advertisement on children. The feedback further stated that the topic sentence stated the two impacts, but the ideas needed to be separated into two body paragraphs. During their future conference, they will work on developing a conclusion.
## Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

High expectations for instruction and professional development are aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and staff consistently communicate high expectations to the families that are connected to college and career readiness.

### Impact

School leaders hold school staff accountable for high expectations through inter-visititation and the classroom observation process. School leaders provide feedback to families to help them understand student progress toward those expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders articulate high expectations to the staff through a defined theory of action that delineates the school wide instructional focus of engaging students in rigorous activities through questioning and discussions. Through a five-tiered approach to the shared reading strategy at each grade level, students are exposed to complex texts that prepare students for questioning and discussions throughout the grades. Additional instructional expectations, such as the establishment of the reciprocal teaching strategy, further support the school’s instructional focus. All expectations are grounded in the different components of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Professional development topics such as, “5 Practices for Mathematical Discussions,” “Questioning and Discussion through Shared Reading/Obtaining Big Ideas,” and “Models for Co-teaching” all further support the schoolwide expectations for instruction. Accountability for the expectations is upheld through intervisititation and the classroom observation process.

- Expectations to the staff are communicated through a bi-weekly newsletter entitled, *The Scoop*, through memos to staff on professionalism, classroom environment, through a learning target rubric, and through communication portals such as the school’s own Google Drive account. New teachers are provided mentors for instructional support and participate in a new teacher induction meeting that communicates expectations for assessment, record keeping, and communicating with parents about promotional decisions.

- Parents are apprised of their child’s academic performance through portals such as *Class Dojo*, report cards, interim progress reports twice a school year, weekly parent engagement meetings, and weekly newsletters from the principal and the literacy coach. Phone calls are made to the home to communicate their children’s performance, and teachers send home progress reports daily requiring the parents signatures with categories such as: needs improvement, good, and excellent. Monthly calendars are also sent to the parents to inform them of school wide parent initiatives such as the national read aloud event. During the parent meeting, parents stated that the school hosts workshops educating the parents on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, online programs such as *iReady* and *myOn* to support their children at home, and events such as meet the teacher night to learn about their children’s curriculum. In addition, parents stated that the school has an open door policy as it pertains to communicating with the families and is very supportive.
## Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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### Findings

Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work and unpack the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributive leadership structures are in place.

### Impact

The assessment of student data typically results in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students. Teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### Supporting Evidence

- A first grade teacher team was observed engaging in inquiry work by looking at Fountas and Pinnel (F&P) reading assessment data to note any changes in student reading levels. The goal of the meeting was to devise strategies for students to attain higher reading levels in F&P. Using a prescribed protocol, teachers analyzed their classes’ F&P data to note any trends and patterns within the data. The teachers identified strengths such as students' knowing their letter sounds, successfully demonstrating letter recognition, and knowing short vowel sounds. Challenges that the students demonstrated included not using their prior knowledge and having a lack of sight word recognition. Next steps were devised such as creating a checklist for guided reading, re-introducing new sight words weekly, and always modeling a strategy. As a result of the team’s analysis of student work, students are consistently moving out of the Level F and below reading group. During the teacher meeting, teachers stated that they have seen improvement in the students’ F&P data, and prior to their meeting, there were more students in the lower performing reading group than currently. Teachers also stated they are learning strategies from one another.

- A third grade team unpacked a Common Core Reading Standard that required students to distinguish their own point of view form that of a narrator or those of the characters. In addition, teachers also discussed how to align their learning targets and learning activities during a reading block. The teachers decided that there would be four lessons delivered in order to teach this standard. In the meeting, two lesson targets were devised as well as the accompanying strategies to deliver the lesson, such as, modeling a think aloud with a paragraph in first person, creating a checklist, and designing vocabulary activities. The third grade teacher team unpacked another Common Core Reading Standard and aligned the learning target to the standard. Observations made during the meeting were that the learning targets were too broad. Going forward, teachers decided to use the pertinent components of the standard for the learning targets and place more emphasis on the student learning outcomes. In addition, it was established that lessons will not be in isolation and will connect previous learning targets to current targets to ensure rigor.

- Distributive leadership practices ensure that teachers have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning across the school. The math curriculum team has created and implemented a schoolwide alternative approach to conducting math discussions in classes known as the “Five Practices for Conducting Mathematical Discussions” that is in alignment with the school’s instructional focus. Teachers have conducted workshops and used their classes as lab sites. Each grade team has a grade team leader who meets with the assistant principals regularly to share the work of the teams. In addition, teachers serve in the role of peer leadership coach whose role is to support new teachers and to unpack curricula and new initiatives such as shared reading. Within the team meetings, teachers have roles such as facilitator and presenter.