Quality Review Report

2016-2017

Luisa Pineiro Fuentes School of Science and Discovery
Elementary 10X307
124 Eames Pl.
Bronx
NY 10468
Principal: Yolanda Valez
Dates of Review:
November 9, 2016 - November 10, 2016
Lead Reviewer: Kevin Bradley
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

Luisa Pineiro Fuentes School of Science and Discovery serves students in grade K through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>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>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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<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>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<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>1.3 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

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

### Findings

School leaders and teachers ensure curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Teachers collaborate regularly to create cognitively demanding curricula and tasks for all learners across grades and content areas.

### Impact

The school is building coherence in curricula that advances college and career readiness and contributes to the development of academic tasks designed to deepen student thinking and learning in all content areas.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula calendars across grades and subjects are aligned to Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and *GO Math!* programs. School leadership and teachers were receptive to adopting the Teachers College curriculum which included professional development conducted by Teachers College, assessments aligned to Common Core Learning Standards, and support for teachers in building curricular coherence across grades. Based on student data, teachers made modifications to the *GO Math!* end of chapter tests to include less questions and more scaffolding for students.

- A review of curricular documents across grades shows multiple examples of the infusion of instructional shifts. In a grade three main idea lesson plan specifically focusing on determining the importance in expository texts, students are asked to use strategies that enable them to teach their partner key details of the story as they support the main idea. A grade four reading workshop lesson plan, Embracing the Challenge of Nonfiction Reading, stated that “students will be able to identify the variety of ways that nonfiction texts can pose challenges and get themselves ready to tackle the hard parts.”

- In a reading workshop lesson plan, students engage in how to learn from the instructional shift involving expository texts, by: pausing after a chunk to grasp the main ideas; if no subheads, chunk the text yourself, find the main idea; teach others what you learn. Translated materials are presented to ELLs in Spanish for this lesson.

- A math performance task builds relevancy for students as they are asked to evaluate an expression figuring out how to calculate a cell phone bill by showing their math work after interpreting the data from a word problem.
Area of Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.2 Pedagogy</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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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. Across classrooms, student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Although the school’s belief system promotes a student-centered environment and in many classrooms, students are strategically grouped, and their work products reflect high levels of thinking, the belief system is not yet coherent across classrooms and teaching practices result in teacher-centered instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, students are involved in turn-and-talks, collaborative group work, student discussions, while demonstrating alignment to the school’s articulated beliefs about how students learn best. However, some classrooms do not provide opportunities for students to be engaged in student-centered instruction as teacher-centered practices prevented students from fully realizing a student-centered environment.

- Across classrooms, students were engaged and conducted targeted turn-and-talk conversations with partners to further their learning. In a kindergarten classroom, students were directed to turn-and-talk about their role as a scientist in determining color, size, and shape of a pinecone. In a grade three reading lesson, students conducted turn-and-talk conversations with partners as they used teaching strategies to inform their partner of the key ideas they learned from the text.

- While the turn-and-talk conversations were evident across classrooms, there were several times when the use of whole-class discussion techniques resulted in students directing responses to their teachers while follow-up questions were directed from teachers back to individual students. Subsequently, all follow-up questions originated with the teacher and were answered by individual students without any discussion between students or ownership of their learning.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and grading policies aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

Impact
Teachers provide students with actionable feedback regarding student achievement. Assessment data is used to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products show actionable feedback written by teachers. Some examples are, “Good job explaining why he should have used cubes. Next time explain why the solution shown doesn’t make sense,” and “Great job estimating the difference in your algorithm to make sure it’s reasonable. Next time please make sure that you write out your equation as an unknown addend to solve ‘how many more’ problems.”

- Across classrooms, rubrics and self- and peer-assessments are used as tools to support student progress. Rubrics are designed to set standards aligned with the school’s curricula for students to self-assess and set goals. For example, a narrative reading self-assessment rubric, asked students to assess their work inferring about characters and other story elements. A grade four Teachers College rubric for information writing aims to improve students’ essay writing such as, “The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers get interested in and understand the subject. She let readers know the subtopics she would be developing later as well as the sequence.”

- Students interviewed came to consensus that teacher feedback helps them improve their work. Students reported that they receive detailed rubrics that include teacher-written feedback with next steps. Students reported they improved upon their work by feedback and self-assessing along with their peers, “With my partner, I found out I made a mistake.”

- Teacher teams have used student work and data to create common rubrics and assessments aligned to curricula. During the interview meeting, teachers noted that they modified the common GO Math! assessments embedded in the curriculum based upon student data analysis to ensure an accurate assessment of students’ mathematical skills.
### Additional Finding

<table>
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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**

School leaders consistently convey high expectations to staff through ongoing feedback and professional learning aligned to the Danielson’s *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and staff convey high expectations to families associated with college and career readiness.

**Impact**

Ongoing communication and support have increased teachers’ understanding and accountability of school leaders’ expectations regarding teaching and learning. Families are provided ongoing information and understand student progress toward goals for all students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing Danielson *Framework for Teaching* as the standard for professionalism and quality instruction. Observation reports include specific language from the rubric, evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating along with actionable next steps so that teachers clearly understand expectations. The *Advance* observations also include evidence of the impact of the school’s work with Teachers College as topics covered during professional development with Teachers College are evident in teacher practice.

- Professional development is aligned through collaborative analysis of the different domains of Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Using this data, school leadership determines whole school professional development. School leaders use this same data to guide their individualized work with teachers in support of their pedagogical growth. Teachers are given the opportunity to attend off-site professional learning and are responsible for sharing what they learned with staff.

- During the parent meeting, parents commended the staff communication via letter, email, phone calls, and homework folders as very attentive to communicate student progress. One parent specifically noted, “They give us workshops on the Common Core to help us understand our child’s individual work and grades, including math workshops and reading workshops. They want to make sure that daddy and mommy can help our children be successful.” Another parent added that, “They teach them how to be responsible from pre-k.” Additionally, parents noted that the principal asks their opinions and takes their feedback into consideration when making decisions to support them. For example, parents requested and attended a Ramapo workshop that was implemented by the school.
**Additional Finding**

<table>
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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 teacher development with effective feedback and next steps from observation cycles. Feedback based upon the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* has been introduced into the additional forum for teacher-created goals and action plans.

**Impact**

Feedback to teachers informs the improvement of instructional practices and professional development resulting in pedagogical growth and reflection.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leadership has created a calendared cycle of observations that is closely monitored by the principal and assistant principal. The frequent cycles of observations are closely coordinated with professional development opportunities from Teachers College and coordinated support from the school's instructional consultants designed to improve teacher practice.

- Teachers respond with professional learning reflections on the frequent cycles of observations, specifying how their instructional practice and student work have improved: “I’ve improved my assessment and language/questioning during lessons.” It was clarified for her after this cycle of observations how to: “Ask proper questions, how to use the language in the equations to help student comprehension.” Another teacher reflected on how the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* cycle of feedback has improved her students’ performance, “I’ve gained insight into creating group-centered tasks to building language by talking with peers.”

- Observations show effective feedback and next steps, with specific reference to domains, such as using questioning and discussion techniques. For example, “As a next step, it is recommended that the teacher include open-ended questions such as, “Can you show me?”, or questions that support application such as, “Can you create a word problem to match the expression you solved?”
### Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote achievement of school goals and implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. Distributed leadership structures are in place.

### Impact

Teachers’ collaborations strengthen their instructional capacity. Across the school, teachers build leadership capacity and have a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Based upon student data, a third grade teacher team modified *GO Math!* and Teachers College assessments so that the questions are more open-ended. They also looked at how rubrics are revised to ensure that all third grade students are being held to the same standards. Teachers reported that they modified Teachers College feedback tools to kids and included a checklist with pictures and without for identified students that needed them.

- Inquiry teams meet four days per week on their own and once a week with literacy and math coach, and aligned with school goals, they look at Teachers College and *GO Math!* curricula and its impact on student learning through the analysis of student work. The grade four teacher team reviewed identified student work samples of a non-fiction essay assignment aligned to the Teachers College rubric. Then they switch papers and go counterclockwise with partner teacher to norm the ratings. Some noticings included, “She’s going back to make the corrections; you’re seeing transference from the earlier lessons.” “What are some of the trends that we are noticing: organization, not indenting, that’s something we will have to address in reading and writing?” For next steps, the group discussed, “How does this work live within the classroom?” The team decided to work on strategic small groupings to address specific student skill needs.

- Distributed leadership structures are in place, specifically with teacher literacy and math coaches supporting the school’s instructional focus by meeting with inquiry teams once per week to lead their efforts in analyzing student work, while facilitating alignment of schoolwide goals. Literacy and math coaches meet with principal and assistant principal on a consistent basis and are the bridge between leadership and teachers, while giving teachers a voice in key decisions and building their capacity as teacher leaders.