Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 040 George W. Carver
Elementary 16K040
265 Ralph Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11233

Principal: Louise Antoine

Dates of Review:
March 8, 2018 - March 9, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Debra Tasioudis
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>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
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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>
</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>Proficient</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### School Culture

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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**Area of Celebration**

Well Developed

### Systems for Improvement

**To what extent does the school...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
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</table>

Proficient

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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<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>
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</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, including student clubs, 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

- A variety of enrichment clubs are offered so that all students are able to participate in learning beyond the classroom. Chess, math club, dance clubs, jump rope club, jewelry, art, tech, and arts and crafts are part of the menu of extra-curricular activities from which students can choose. Student clubs meet at various times throughout the school day and students sit together by clubs at lunch. Students select a club depending on their personal interest. High-need subgroups are able to choose but sometimes they are guided into particular groups. Each club has an adult that serves as a leader and advisor to the group ensuring that each student is known well by an adult who provides guidance. Students articulated that they have an adult that knows them well and whom they can go to with any issue. The school has created a buddy system for newly enrolled and incoming students. They are matched with a student volunteer who helps to translate and ensure they understand the culture of the school. School leaders shared they ensure that new comers are a visible part of the school and are included in clubs like safety patrol. Teachers and staff praised the clubs as a time when they can really get to know students, and have opportunities to engage with students through games and in social settings which open the lines of communication between students and staff.

- Parents praised the school for their family outreach, especially for providing supports to meet the needs of students and their families. In a meeting, a parent shared and others agreed, “I really like how everything here is very individualized. My daughter is very shy, and I was worried. They worked with me, and put her in positions of leadership. They reward her with responsibility, like being on the safety patrol, and she is changing and becoming a leader. It’s great how they look at your individual child and figure out how to support them.”

- Across classes students worked on skills such as collaborating with one another and self-regulation. In a discussion of what their school does well, students explained that their teachers give them many opportunities to partner and work together. As one student shared, “When we do work, the teacher always checks on us to see if we are doing it correctly. If we aren’t, that’s okay. She gives us a reteach to tell us more, and eventually, we get it. If I have a problem, the teacher will ask what I did wrong, and what I will do differently next time. I don’t get punished; I just have to stop and think.” The school leaders and staff have created Fun Fridays, a morning celebration ritual of students, staff and families where there is live drumming and festivities to celebrate students with perfect attendance, or students who are “reaching for the stars,” who are students with disabilities, English Language Learners, or other students who are making social and academic progress. Data on school discipline indicates that students are adopting effective academic and personal behaviors, evidenced by the zero percent student suspensions for the second year in a row.
Area of Focus

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: | Developing |

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies inconsistently provide multiple entry points for students to access the content and engage in the performance tasks. Students are provided opportunities to have peer to peer discussions.

Impact

Opportunities for all students to actively engage in higher-order thinking are inconsistent. Across classrooms, there is uneven participation in learning as evidenced in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classes, teachers provide students with scaffolds and supports intended to ensure that all learners, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) are able to engage in appropriately challenging tasks and demonstrate higher order thinking. The work flow of the period is made clear to students. Opportunities to access to the thinking of peers, anchor charts, math manipulatives, and vocabulary support were present in most classes visited throughout the review. However, teacher-led instruction, or excessive scaffolding of tasks made it difficult for students to demonstrate higher order thinking in their work products. In an English Language Arts (ELA) lesson addressing the use of context clues, students were given low-level vocabulary words, and asked to write their meaning on an index card. In talking with students as they worked, many were already familiar with the words leading to varied levels of engagement in the task. In a science class addressing the spread of pathogens, the teacher created a task sheet to guide students through the learning process so that students could work independently or in small groups to engage in learning. However, as the lesson was teacher directed and the answers were given to the students, the scaffolds were not utilized and critical thinking by the students was not in evidence.

- In some classes, student work products did not reflect the grade level standards. In a fourth grade reading class, students were given index cards and asked to write the main character’s personality trait from a story that their group was reading in a literary circle. The grade level standard requires that students go beyond naming the character trait, and describe a character in depth, drawing on specific details in the text. In a first grade class, students were asked to identify the main idea of a text, and then write sentences identifying five facts and details that describe the events in the story. The students were given a bubble-map graphic organizer to complete. While the organizer helped students to list details, it was not effective in helping students to demonstrate their thinking in their work products.

- In some classes, lessons were teacher-led limiting the opportunities for student discourse. In a few classes, students engaged in turn and talk or partnered work, as observed in a fourth grade Integrated Co-Teaching class. In this class students talked with one another and shared high levels of thought. In a technology class, students were given task cards, and vocabulary booklets that promoted the students to work independently and without interruption. Students were able to give evidence of their participation and critical thinking. However, this level of participation was not consistent across classrooms.
## Additional Finding

### Quality Indicator:

#### 1.1 Curriculum

| Rating: | Proficient |

### Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula across grades and content are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. Curricula units and lessons are planned and refined using student work and assessment data.

### Impact

The integration of the instructional shifts promotes college and career readiness for all learners with a focus on discourse, ensuring student access to rigorous curricula and tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula are aligned to the Common Core, and integrate the instructional shifts, particularly text-based answers, and academic vocabulary. There is a schoolwide focus on student discourse. Most lesson plans aligned to a content standard, as well as a speaking and listening standard to help students make connections between content, speaking, listening, and writing. A fifth grade reading lesson focused on understanding figurative language and included opportunities for student teams to engage in effective collaborative conversations. Similarly, a second grade math lesson plan addressing the understanding of the value of money aligned to the solving of real world problems and included activities to promote student discussion using mathematical thinking. Additionally, they were required to enter thoughts in their math journal thus, promoting student writing in math. This purposeful alignment to select Common Core standards, with attention to standards that also help to build student discourse was typical of other lesson plans shared across the grades and subjects.

- Yearlong curricular maps evidence a focus on the Common Core standards across the grades and subjects. The math curriculum’s scope and sequence demonstrates adjustments, such as the grouping of Common Core standards into clusters to focus the work of the teachers. This also was to ensure attention to those standards to be taught later in the year to support student understanding going into the next grade. Individual units, such as a fourth grade social studies unit on the colonial and revolutionary periods, and a first grade science unit on animal diversity share a common unit-planning template. Units illustrate student objectives and instructional tasks, teacher resources, academic vocabulary, and assessments with uniformity that builds coherence across the grades and subjects.

- Lesson plans reflect refinement based on student work and data. Re-teach groups are developed based on common assessment data and/or teachers’ checks for understanding and tracking in the classroom. English Language Arts lesson plans include differentiated texts and learning groups based on leveled reading assessments. An upper-grade coding lesson includes planning for students with disabilities and ELLs, including purposeful pairing of students, and task cards to support students. Units reflect refinement using student work and inclusion of specific accommodations, such as graphic organizers, and scaffolds such as vocabulary cards, highlighters, color-coded sentences, checklists, and technology-based resources for students to ensure that students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs) have access to the curricula and are cognitively engaged.
Additional Finding

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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

Common assessments are used as the foundation for data chats, to note student progress towards meeting goals across grades and subjects. Across classrooms, teachers use frequent checks for understanding and students self-assess their work.

Impact

Effective adjustments to curricula and instruction are made to meet all students’ learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Through data chats, the school uses their common assessment data to note student progress toward goals and to make adjustments to curricula and instruction. The teachers administer benchmark assessments in ELA and math, leveled reading assessments, and end of unit assessments across the grades and subjects. These chats, between the school leaders and teachers are used to isolate those skills, which indicate that students are making progress. They identify new strategies to implement in the areas where students are not making progress. The principal regularly meets with teachers, individually, and in teams at the end of units to discuss assessment trends. Additionally she looks at student work with the teachers to identify standards for re-teaching as well as to identify new skills or strategies to be included in lesson plans and units. As a teacher explained, the principal talks with teachers regarding the instructional strategies used during instruction, and they decide together the adjustments to the tasks or instructional grouping of students that would be implemented. Planning documents shared by the school leader and teachers demonstrate that teachers and school leaders use a data analysis organizer and they note the adjustments in red ink, and in plans across the grades and subjects.

- In units and lesson plans, teachers plan differentiated texts for students to use as they practice skills and strategies in ELA, social studies and science. Plans often include two to three texts, noting their reading level, and the texts assigned to students based on their reading levels. Grade level teams create differentiated weekend homework packets for students based on their reading levels. Common in lesson plans are differentiated tasks for re-teach groups or small group instruction based on the analysis of reading levels or unit assessment data.

- Common across classrooms, teachers’ assessment practices consistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding usually through observation and questioning. Teachers take notes or using a tracker to note student thinking and understanding of the task. Students often used checklists or other self-assessment tools during the lesson, making it easy for the teacher to uncover student misconceptions. During a reading lesson, as students read together in small groups, the teacher walked around observing students reading. She took note of the reading habits of students, occasionally stopping a student to ask a question to uncover their understanding of the text. This was noted and then she moved on to the next student. This practice of checking for understanding and the recording of student thinking was common across classrooms. In a few classes, as observed in a math class, the teacher observed students completing a do now activity early in the lesson, and used that data to pull a small group for further instruction, before they engaged in independent work, making an effective on-the-spot adjustment to meet student learning need.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training within peer learning communities (PLCs). Additionally, school leaders and staff effectively partner with families around expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness.

**Impact**

Teachers benefit from a culture of mutual accountability related to high expectations. Strong communication and workshops empower families to academically support their students’ progress.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders consistently communicate expectations for teaching and learning aligned to the Common Core, particularly targeting literacy instruction, student discourse and teacher use of data. Clear guidelines as to what is expected are provided through whole staff professional learning sessions, staff bulletins and a faculty manual. Through the work of teacher teams and teacher leadership, teachers take ownership of this work. There are teacher leaders in each of the school's PLCs, who liaise with the school administrators and external coaches, to provide teachers with training aligned to the school's goals. Intervisitations for teachers addressing literacy aligned to their team's inquiry work are provided. Through the intervisitations, teachers meet to agree on strategies to be implemented in the classroom that align to expectations. Teachers then visit one another to hold each other accountable for implementation, providing feedback and next steps to their colleagues.

- The school has a data team comprised of teacher leaders, administrators, consultants, and coaches that meet regularly to monitor teacher teamwork and student data across the grades. The data team serves as the structure through which student assessment data is analyzed. Teacher observation data is reviewed and schoolwide expectations are refined. For example reading and math teaching strategies are designed and staff is then held accountable for the implementation accelerating student progress.

- In a meeting, parents shared that school staff, such as the parent coordinator and the guidance counselor effectively communicate expectations and build one-on-one relationships with families. They ensure that they understand expectations, how to support students at home, and are aware of student progress. Parents also praised the availability of school staff expressing that they are always available to talk to about issues, academic and otherwise. Parents explained that they are in constant communication with teachers through calls, texts, and emails. In most classes, the teachers use a web-based application to give parents real-time feedback about student performance and topics being covered in the classroom. As one parent shared, this online site creates a portrait of classroom life so they know how to support their child at home. Parents explained the guidance staff provides individualized support in selecting middle schools, including private, magnet, and specialized schools.
Additional Finding

**Quality Indicator:** 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development  
**Rating:** Proficient

**Findings**
Structures are in place for teachers to have leadership opportunities, including leading professional development sessions. Teachers engage in inquiry-based collaborations during common planning time.

**Impact**
Inquiry-based collaborations, led by lead teachers, strengthen teacher instructional capacity and the promotion of school goals. Teachers’ voice is reflected in key decisions that affect student learning.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school’s three inquiry teams, referred to as professional learning communities (PLCs), meet weekly, one a vertical literacy team with a focus on literacy circles, another focused on student discourse, and the third on teacher use of data to make instructional decisions. The teams include teachers and paraprofessionals. The focus areas for their work are selected to align with the school’s goals, and the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. The vertical literacy team was observed during which they focused on deepening their inquiry concerning the implementation of literature circles in the classroom. Through the use of an agenda and protocol for looking at student work, the teachers focused on the standard connected to determining the main idea of a text and explaining how it is supported by key details. The teachers reviewed the text that the students read in their literature circle, and then looked at student work, noting the strengths, such as organization of their written responses and use of punctuation. Additionally, teachers surfaced gaps in learning related to the use of transitional phrases and the use of the information from students’ graphic organizers in their writing. The focus on students’ ability to summarize directly connected to the grade level standards, and the instructional focus in literacy.

- In question and answer sessions with the team, and with other instructional staff, teachers shared that the work of the teams is improving their practice. Being part of their team gave them additional resources, such as graphic organizers, and new strategies for teaching skills. The opportunity to talk through challenges, such as meeting unique individual student needs, added to the benefits of the teamwork. Other teachers shared that teacher teamwork has helped teachers to be more reflective, and less reluctant to ask a peer for help, or to ask a peer to observe their practice and provide next steps that would support their improved teacher practice.

- There are distributive leadership opportunities for teachers that give teachers a voice in decisions that affect student learning. Structures, such as participation in the School Leadership Team, allow them to work alongside administrators and parents to make decisions about the school’s goals and budget. The school has an instructional team, comprised of the United Federation of Teachers representative, and teachers from each grade. The team makes decisions about professional learning topics and are involved in the selection of the school’s curricula. The school leader has the curriculum program representatives sent to the team to review sample program materials and decide on the resources that best meet the needs of their students. Teachers praised having teacher leaders that run the teacher teams. As one teacher shared, “We are able to run our own meetings. The principal comes and gives us feedback, but they are our meetings. We are not micromanaged here.”