Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 174 William Sidney Mount
Elementary 28Q174
65-10 Dieterle Crescent
Queens
NY 11374

Principal: Karin Kelly

Dates of Review:
November 9, 2017 - November 10, 2017

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Terrell
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Celebration** to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the **Area of Focus** to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as **Additional Finding**. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</strong></td>
<td>Area of Celebration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>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</strong></td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through daily bulletins, letters, a staff handbook, classroom intervisitations, and training aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. The school leaders and staff partner with families to communicate high expectations through progress reports, newsletters, conferences, and classrooms visits connected to college and career readiness skills.

Impact

There is mutual accountability between the staff and school leaders on achieving high expectations across the school. Families are supported in helping their children at home achieve the expectations for success in their work.

Supporting Evidence

- During the summer, the principal sends a “Welcome letter” to all staff members outlining the expectations for the school year. This year, the instructional expectations are to continue developing critical thinking, collaboration, communications, and the community. In addition, each staff member receives a staff handbook which provides specific information related to bulletin boards, observations, lesson plans, and the grading policy across the school. There are also numerous other expectations, such as the Chancellor’s Regulations and homework assignments for each grade. The principal shares daily events happening within the school daily, which are posted on the message board in the main office for the whole staff. Teachers also receive information through Google Drive, which is accessible to all teachers, such as best instructional practices.

- Teachers shared that they engage in intervisitations with staff members who have expertise in instructional practices such as using technology to differentiate tasks or engaging students in critical thinking discussions. Teachers also have a “model” classroom teacher, whose classroom is open for ongoing intervisitations to view instructional practices around designing effective questions using the Webb’s *Depth of Knowledge* matrix. The model teacher also sets up visits at the teacher’s request to visit them in their classroom. A list of professional intervisitations note teaches on each grade who have demonstrated expertise in using multiple modalities to support student learning, planning and the use of rubrics to increase rigor. Professional development during the extended day provides opportunities for teachers to gain additional training on norming student’s work to rubrics and using technology for enrichment activities.

- Teachers provide parents with four progress reports during the school year to inform them on their child’s progress in school. During “Back to School Night,” teachers review the curricula with families so that they understand the expectations for their children to be prepared for the next grade level. They also receive a colorful school pamphlet which highlights the school’s mission and instructional programs. Parents use the REMIND online tool to communicate with teachers and the Sign-Up online tool to volunteer for events in the school, such as helping out in the cafeteria and going on field trips. A monthly school calendar is sent home to all families and they have opportunities to visit their child’s classroom to view instructional practices. The school staff partners with families to support college and career readiness through the arts with Carnegie Hall, the Hall of Science, Inside Broadway, and residences with *The Nutcracker*. The Cultural after School Adventures (CASA) program, as well as parent and child visits to the school library on Tuesdays, has improved engagement for all students.
## Area of Focus

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

### Findings

Across classrooms, most teaching practices are aligned to the school leader’s belief that students learn best with multiple modalities. Most students have differentiated tasks, however, do not have ongoing opportunities to engage in strategically extended learning tasks.

### Impact

Most students have opportunities to use technology or other modalities to support their learning. Lessons provide few opportunities to engage all students in appropriate and strategic extensions to push higher-order thinking, in order to support meaningful work products for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal articulated that students learn best through multiple means and modalities, such as videos, technology, dancing, singing, writing, and listening. In many classrooms, students used computers to support their learning. For example, in the science technology engineering and math (STEM) classroom, two students were observed using the computer to answer questions related to a video. While the teachers offers students opportunities through the art and music programs, these modalities are not used within regular classroom setting or discussed at teacher teams so that all students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities have avenues to expand their learning throughout all lessons.

- Most lessons have differentiated tasks to support students at their learning levels. For example, in a lower grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom, students were exploring math in different groups. Some used cards to learn multiplication facts, and some groups used white boards to record the operation from a word problem. However, students were not asked to extend their understanding by creating their own problems. In a grade five classroom, students responded to a scenario in which they had to take a position. However, the students were not offered an opportunity to create a different scenario as an extension in order to push their thinking.

- In a lower grade classroom, students with disabilities were working on a math task with the teacher into two groups. In one group, the students were asked to show their understanding of the number ten by placing counters in a container, which they did correctly. The teacher proceeded to give a verbal number problem and asked the students to state how many balloons would be left if two popped. The teacher recorded the problem on the white board and a student solved it. While the students were engaged in using manipulatives as they moved from the abstract to the concrete, there were no opportunities for the students offer their own story problem, thus missing a chance to extend the learning experience.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

Teachers on each grade work collaboratively to plan, ensure units of study incorporate the instructional shifts, and are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards; using Department of Education (DOE) approved instructional programs and Balanced Literacy. Teachers analyze students work samples and assessment data to inform modifications to the curricula to support a variety of learners.

Impact

Student are provided with curricula that builds coherence across grades and promotes college and career readiness skills. A variety of students has access to the curricula.

Supporting Evidence

- The curricula offers students opportunities to explore a variety of reading genres using informational texts, as well as literary selections. Writing samples require students to provide evidence to support their opinions. Balanced Literacy and Fundations are used to develop reading comprehension, phonemic awareness and writing skills, with an emphasis on academic vocabulary to support coherence across contents and grade level text at different levels of complexity. For example, in a grade five Social Students unit on “Geography and Early Peoples of the Western Hemisphere” the unit academic vocabulary listed the words such as, land bridge, latitude, equator, longitude fossils, and artifacts. GO Math!, a DOE approved program aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, is used across classrooms to develop math proficiency in problem solving skills and fluency. The units of study integrates the instructional shifts and are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, which builds coherence across grades and offers opportunities for all students to have access to college and career readiness skills.

- The curricula provides students with a STEM lab. Upper grades in the gifted program have access to the Stock Market Game, where they learn how to purchase stocks. In addition, students have access to a physical education, music, and visual arts programs. Students perform various plays taught through the performing arts program, thus providing real world opportunities for a variety of learners, in order to promote college and career preparation.

- Teachers adjust the curricula based on an analysis of data from assessments, such as exit slips and conference notes, as well as students’ work samples. For example, in a grade two writing unit plan, strategies for extensions included, orally touching the page and saying what the student would write. Another strategy allows the students to orally rehearse as they write in the air. In a math unit, the students targeted for extra help would have access to vocabulary cards, manipulatives, and a reteach sheet to support learning. In a grade four social studies unit on the Thirteen Colonies, students were required to construct a cultural project based on their background, and how it represents early New York. Modifications for students would include a teacher-made two-page booklet comprised of a one page summary of cultural beliefs, traditions, and customs, and a one page submission of various illustrations that depict elements of the summary. These refinements allow all students to have access to the curricula and tasks, so that they can be cognitively engaged in the learning process.
### Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>2.2 Assessment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Findings**

The school leader’s grading policy provides a breakdown on student performance specific to each grade that is aligned to the curricula with a four point rating scale, along with rubrics. Teachers use exit slips, quizzes, and unit tests to assess students’ work.

**Impact**

Teachers provide feedback to students on their performance and next steps. An analysis of student work informs adjustments to instruction and curricula.

**Supporting Evidence**

- The school leader’s published grading policy incorporates an analysis of assessments, student participation, homework, along with assignments and projects. Across grades students receive a designated percentage, for each of the components above, in writing, math, reading, social studies, and science, which add to determine the proficiency level they will receive on their report card. For example, the reading grade for students in grade five is 20 percent for classwork and participation, 10 percent for homework, and 70 percent for benchmark assessments. Kindergarten students are assessed in writing, math, and reading. The grading policy is shared with the entire school community, in order to support understanding of how students are assessed across grades.

- Teachers provide students with feedback using rubrics to share areas of celebrations and next steps. For example, the teacher’s feedback complimented a grade one student for elaborating on the topic by using many interesting words that made the text a pleasure to read. Next steps for the student was to reread the text and consider some words that could be taken out. Feedback for a grade two student writing assignment gave the students “glows” using details that created a movie of the story in the teacher’s mind. The next steps for this student were to incorporate the “comeback” throughout the story and to check for paragraphs for breaks and paragraph structure.

- Common assessments such as exit slips, quizzes, unit tests, running records, and conference notes are used to inform teachers’ decisions in making instructional and curricula adjustments to support students in meeting their goals. For example, teachers use pictures to support vocabulary development for ELLs Read Alouds to build vocabulary in small groups for upper grades. Research-based technology programs are use as small group interventions to support reading comprehension skills and move students toward their goals. A review of a grade five literacy progress report from September 2017 to November 2017 reflect a 17 percent increase in comprehension for grade level vocabulary, which supports students’ understanding of literary and informational texts.
Findings
School leaders have developed a strategic observation calendar for classroom visits and provide targeted feedback to teachers, along with model teacher support for teacher development. Data from the Advance teacher evaluation system is used to inform decisions around professional development and assignments.

Impact
Feedback to teachers guides their professional growth and improves the quality of student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The administration has designed an observation calendar that outlines a focus on supervising the instructional goals highlighted for the staff, such as developing critical thinking, differentiation of instruction, and project based learning. A review of the schedule reflects grades and classes that are scheduled for observations in the area of writing. Writing samples across grades are collected to review with the teachers during the feedback conference. This year, the staff has a model teacher who works with teachers in developing best practices. For example, the model teacher sets up visitations for teachers to observe the implementation of differentiated group tasks. In addition, there is modeling of critical thinking questions to encourage student discussions. The model teacher’s schedule allows her to visit teachers and engage in a collaborative discussion around their lesson. During the teacher meeting, teachers stated that they feel supported in their professional development with opportunities to engage in intervisitations with their colleagues and to have a model teacher available to demonstrate best practices in classroom management, differentiation of tasks and facilitating student discussions.

- A review of observations shows that teachers receive feedback and next steps to support their growth and push student achievement. For example, during a review of teacher observations the following was noted as a next step for a teacher after the observation of a writing assignment in a social studies lesson, “Consider preparing and posting the guiding questions. This will provide additional support for content with a framework their essays and presentations.” Another teacher received the following feedback to increase student discussions as a next step after a review of a writer’s workshop lesson on developing an opinion essay, “Try to extend the students’ discussions by encouraging unsolicited comments and ideas from other students.” During the teacher meetings, teachers shared that they welcome feedback from the administration, which supports their professional growth, as well as student achievement.

- The principal uses data from the Advance teacher evaluation system to inform decisions around professional development. This year the focus is on developing rigorous questions (Danielson’s Framework for Teaching 3b). The professional development calendar reflects extended day workshops for teacher teams on developing this area. In addition, the model teacher meets with teachers on a one-to-one basis to provide professional supports in the areas targeted for next steps. The principal stated that she uses the Advance system and low inference data from observations to make decisions about assignments. This year, teacher intervisitations are specifically designed to support the development of students by setting up teacher schedules so that they are free to visit each other to support the development of schoolwide goals. For example, teachers in kindergarten and grade one visit each other to focus on developing student discussions. This is leading to more details in students’ writing and speaking as indicated in work samples and discussion in a grade one class.
**Additional Finding**

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

**Findings**

The majority of teachers participate in horizontal and vertical teams to collaborate on best practices that promote school goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teams consistently meet weekly to analyze student data and share strategies that are uploaded onto an online document sharing site, Google Drive.

**Impact**

Shared strategies are leading to improved outcomes for targeted groups of students and teacher practices.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers on each grade participate in weekly horizontal team meetings to analyze student work samples and discuss strategies they are using to support student development in writing and math problem solving. For example, teachers are using Max Scholar to support students in problem activities. In order to build vocabulary and language skills for ELLs and students with disabilities, teachers are using pictures and a research based computer program designed specifically for this population of students. Vertical teams, which consisting of one teacher from each grade, meet bi-weekly to share data trends and strategies across the school. The work of these teams informs strategies teachers use in the classroom to improve learning outcomes.

- During a grade four inquiry session, teachers discussed the math data they reviewed for ELLs, students with disabilities, and at-risk students. They agreed that the some students were successful with one and two step problems, but were challenged with problems that required additional steps. ELLs were having difficulty understanding the math vocabulary and basic multiplication skills. The teams engaged in a discussion of strategies to use to help move students toward the goal of completing multistep problems and understanding basic multiplication facts. Consequently, all students, including ELLs and students with disabilities are afforded opportunities to engage in learning activities which promote problem solving skills and vocabulary comprehension.

- Strategies shared for ELLs included providing a vocabulary chart with key words and the operations that are required for those words. For example, if the key words are “altogether,” “how much,” “in all,” the operations are listed as add or multiply. If the key words are “how many more” or “take away,” the operations listed will be subtract or divide. Other strategies required the student to draw a picture of the problem, look for patterns, re-read the problem or work backwards. The teachers shared that they will upload the strategies discussed onto Google Drive to share across the school to support teachers and improve student achievement. The team discussed using the model problem to reteach strategies as well as using videos, Think Central and TenMarks. In addition, the use of manipulatives such as math mats and to discuss specific strategies for targeted students with their parents during the Parent Engagement sessions on Tuesdays during the extended day, so that they know how to support their children at home in building math fluency and how to understand key words and operations. These strategies typically improve teacher practices and support all students in moving towards reaching their instructional goals.