Quality Review Report

2017-2018

P.S. 205 Alexander Graham Bell
Elementary 26Q205
75-25 Bell Boulevard
Queens
NY 11364

Principal: Karen Piazza

Dates of Review:
October 10, 2017 - October 11, 2017

Lead Reviewer: AJ Hepworth
The Quality Review Report

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

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

Information about the School


School Quality Ratings

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Area of Focus</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>Additional Finding</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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Systems for Improvement

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</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>
</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>Area of Celebration</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision | Rating: | Well Developed |

Findings

School leaders and teachers support the development of all teachers with effective feedback and next steps from frequent observations, peer intervisitations, and analysis of student work samples. A strategic and transparent system for managing professional development and succession plans exists.

Impact

Teacher support and supervision has elevated instructional practices and professional growth leading to improved quality of student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers conduct intervisitations on vertical teams purposefully to identify the level of effectiveness of targeted areas of their pedagogy. During a pre-visit, the host teacher informs the group about what they are working on and provides background information related to the unit, lesson, and relevant student sub-group needs. During the visit, teachers take low-inference notes to support a post-lesson collaborative conversation grounded in the teaching and student learning that took place. The host teacher records peer feedback following the visit to determine the extent they met their instructional goals for both themselves and the students. School leaders will often participate in the post-observation meeting to support requests for professional development or the allocation of resources from the school leadership. Several teachers in grade two and three were able to establish practices leading to more cohesive use of language and writing pathways across their classes resulting from these observations. Teachers in the upper grades stated their involvement in a recent intervisitation improved their development of student writing checklists and charts for students to use when they address transition words. Student writing has significantly increased in quality and quantity from the prior year because of the intervisitations that are an established schoolwide instructional practice.

- Feedback from the principal on Annual Professional Performance Review evaluation forms consistently includes additional notes identifying a priority area of strength with evidence, a priority area of growth with evidence, and next steps. All teachers agree the feedback and the additional evaluator notes act as specific growth tools regarding areas of practice that need improvement. One teacher noted he now looks at his lesson planning and materials more intentionally through the eyes of the students to develop higher-order thinking questions. Another teacher shared she often hovered and guided her students with disabilities through their learning tasks. Now she consciously provides verbal encouragement while moving away and checking back with the student for comprehension later, thus leading to their improved ownership of learning.

- Analysis of classroom observation trends by school leaders and teachers has led to a strategic alignment of professional development by grade level that supports the instructional priorities in writing and math. Improved overall scores on student writing responses with opinion, argument, information, and narrative essays has resulted from the systemic use of writing toolkits. Additionally, protocols, such as checklists for problem solving, have led to improved student application of mathematical computation. These tools for students were developed from professional collaborations following informed decisions to elevate the quality of designing coherent instruction. Specifically, their focus was on the appropriate materials and resources that would target student’s specific learning needs.
Findings

Rigorous habits are consistently emphasized in curricular documents and academic tasks across grades and subjects, which have been refined using student work and data.

Impact

As yet, lesson-planning documents do not coherently embed strategic opportunities for the highest-achieving students and all students with disabilities to demonstrate critical thinking skills and rigorous habits across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson planning documents consistently ensure students are engaged in rigorous curricula and academic tasks, however, higher-order skills are not coherently embedded across all grades and content areas. For example, the structure of a lesson plan for a music class consisted of three acts. The acts included review of rhythm chant, reading, singing, using call and response, and students practicing a classical piano piece by Bach while referring to a checklist and providing peer feedback. Similarly, a physical education lesson plan included student choice to make the task more challenging while also creating structures for students to serve as assistant coaches to their peers after demonstrating competency. However, a lesson plan designed to teach the spelling of words with /k/ sounds, that included strategies for students to use magnetic tiles and letter boards, did not provide opportunities that would support those students already capable of demonstrating the skill. Additionally, a math lesson plan did not include tasks to challenge the advanced students, since all students were assigned the same problem, independent of previously established benchmark scores, limiting these students from increasing their thinking and learning.

- Lessons are designed to follow the workshop model so students are actively engaged in their learning which is one of the school’s instructional priorities. Teachers plan lessons incorporating Webb’s Depth of Knowledge questions and utilize protocols to engage students in discussion. Partner discussions are consistently planned for students across grades and content areas yet, not all of the turn and talks are planned to ensure students are also demonstrating higher level critical thinking. For example, a lesson on interpretation of a character includes two differentiated task checklists that require students to hold conversations and jot down details; however, it does not reflect the quality or understanding of the conversation held with their partner. Similarly, a science lesson provides differentiated investigations for all students to read and identify variables; yet, structures are not in place to ensure all students are provided an appropriately challenging investigation.

- Each six-week inquiry cycle culminates in teacher teams sharing findings from the prior unit to plan for adjustments and develop next steps. For example, several Problem Based Learning (PBL) activities were planned in math to ensure students who demonstrated above grade competency would be cognitively engaged. The revised tasks were developed for students to use critical thinking skills in creating a small business and apply real world applications. Another PBL task was designed for students who demonstrated mastery on an end of module assessment in grade three. Although a few students benefitted from the revised enrichment activities, similar PBL opportunities do not exist across all grades and subject areas for each six-week cycle.
Additional Finding

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

Instructional strategies reflect questioning techniques and assignments with worksheets containing scaffolds that engage students appropriately with their classwork and discussion across classes.

**Impact**

Teaching practices during instructional delivery reflect conscious efforts including paired conversations to engage all learners in appropriately challenging tasks and high levels of thinking and participation.

**Supporting Evidence**

- In grade three math classes, teachers provide students with worksheets containing scaffolds to read, draw, and write the assigned math problem from the interactive white board. Teachers challenged students to draw and label all aspects of the math problem, after highlighting or underlining important numbers or information, even if they were capable of solving it without this protocol to reinforce good work habits. Additionally, teachers asked students to write the equation that helped them solve the problem. In preparation for their engaging in a discussion, students were to write a statement to answer the problem so they would be able to demonstrate what they know and the strategy used to solve the problem. Although students initially spent several minutes copying the problem, they engaged in meaningful calculations and demonstrated their understanding using critical thinking skills.

- Across classes, teachers appropriately challenged students with disabilities to complete their work through purposeful questioning and discussion so they would communicate their understanding. For example, in a grade four class, the teacher asked several students she was working with, “What do you think he [the character in the novel] wants because he is not going out?” After a student explained that the character wants to remain in the lunchroom so he can eat, the teacher posed an additional challenge in asking the student to identify the big picture. Ultimately, the student reached the conclusion that the deeper meaning for the boy not going out was, “since his mother died, he wants his mom’s food because it is really special and delicious.”

- Students engaged in paired conversations about a fictional scene they wrote in a grade two class. The writing reflected the action in the form of a dialogue the characters took to address their feelings and thoughts. Students also explained to their partners how they built the story to incorporate a problem that would have a turning point. Similarly, in a grade four class, students wrote about the obstacles and motivation a character experienced using details from a novel. The ongoing work products demonstrated coherent shared ideas with a partner containing comparative perspectives and insight of the character.

- During a reading workshop, second grade students volunteered to stand in front of the classroom and share the theme they learned from their self-selected fictional book. The teacher would ask follow up questions such as, “What was his problem?” to allow the student to express more detail. One child explained that the character, named Froggy, kept on forgetting stuff, so the lesson is “if you are going somewhere, then you need to prepare, otherwise you won’t be ready.”
Additional Finding

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

Teacher assessment resources align with the school's curricula while providing ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment during instruction.

Impact

Actionable and ongoing feedback incorporating a growth mindset for students and teacher alike provides effective adjustments to instruction that meets all student-learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classes, students receive feedback from the use of rubrics to assess their understanding. In English Language Arts, rubrics are employed when completing narrative writing tasks so students understand grade level expectations and expectations above and below grade level. Teachers provide students additional next steps regarding their achievement connected to structure, development, and language conventions. Several samples of feedback reviewed suggest that the fifth grade students need to show the reader what is happening more explicitly so the reader feels as if they are in the story. Other feedback advises the writer to be more purposeful with their use of transition words so the reader understands passage of time. Student-friendly rubrics are created and modified in younger grades. For example, rubrics used by kindergarten students may include only three criteria and contain pictures to explain the feedback such as, one to three scoops of ice cream to communicate success.

- Students use checklists in all classes to be aware of their achievement when completing tasks. An emphasis is on the growth mindset, which centers on the theme of not accepting failure and teachers understanding students may not be at that point yet. In one class, a mini lesson supporting students’ ability to debate perspectives with evidence from the text to explain their opinions included a self-assessment checklist. The form was completed as students engaged in the debate. They also took notes that led to their developing opinions that support their position with evidence while including perspectives from their counterpart. Likewise, students used a math checklist to ensure they completed all the steps correctly and if they supported their answer with work, diagrams, and an explanation that makes sense. Similar levels of feedback assessment existed for students throughout all classes so they understood their learning.

- Teachers often tracked student progress during instruction to guide and provide feedback that would lead to timely lesson adjustments to clarify concepts for individuals or groups of students. For example, in a physical education class, the teacher noted on his checklist several students struggling to throw a ball correctly. He took those students aside and assigned another student who demonstrated the skill correctly to work with his peers and provide instructional support using a diagram and modeling the correct style. This resulted in their improved ball throwing skills.

- Students and teachers provide feedback on assignments in all content areas, often using sticky notes or purposefully designed feedback forms. Students stated they use the feedback their partner gives them to do better and add more important details. Samples of revised student work drafts demonstrate the application of the suggestions leading to improved student performance.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<td>3.4 High Expectations</td>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to teachers connected to social emotional learning and a Growth Mindset philosophy. Staff communicates similar expectations to students.

Impact

A system for accountability exists along with training for staff to realize those expectations. Ongoing and detailed feedback and advisement are provided and students are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders clearly communicate expectations for classroom practice to all staff through the use of four lenses, which address critical thinking, formative assessment, workshop structures, and supportive learning. Observations and inter-visitations by teachers purposefully focus on these areas. Staff values the professional support and expectations provided to them as a community and apply those expectations to their individual instructional goals that are generated in conjunction with the principal. Additionally, a charter pact was generated with all school staff to ensure they are working effectively as a community with a specific focus on ensuring a positive learning environment and that professionalism permeates the learning environment continuously.

- A primary goal for all school staff is to implement a growth mindset approach towards social emotional learning. Professional learning that incorporates the Framework for Systemic Social and Emotional Learning, which identifies five core competencies that educate hearts, inspire minds, and help people navigate the world more effectively is regularly provided. Staff engages in weekly discussions and workshops that are monitored and tracked via surveys or group discussions to achieve these expectations. Results from teacher, student, and parent surveys and interviews, demonstrates the growth mindset has permeated the school culture.

- Staff has generated student led conference protocols for all students in kindergarten through grade five. Protocols are designed with the student ability and age in mind so they can appropriately communicate their learning expectations to their family members. Students in kindergarten share with their family what areas they do well in and those areas that need improvement. They refer to a checklist during the conference to ensure they have communicated information related to all their core-learning areas. Similarly, students in grade one, identify what they are good at while also including a future goal in reading, writing, and math, along with self-reflection of their work habits. Students in grade three share their self-evaluation and learning goals in terms of behavior, work habits, reading, and writing. They further explain strategies they will use to demonstrate pride, perseverance, improvement, and creativity. Students shared that they understand that the student led conferences are valuable in their ability to provide them with information that help prepare them for the next learning level.

- A focus on appropriate academic vocabulary exists throughout all classes to prepare students for their learning. Teachers regularly model questions and offer feedback to students using content and above grade level terminology to encourage the precise use of language and establish high expectations for expression work products. As such, students are able to articulate themselves in a manner that supports their preparation for the next grade.
Additional Finding

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

Findings

The majority of teachers are engaged in weekly inquiry-based professional collaborations that includes consistently analyzing assessment data and student work using a specific protocol and document trackers.

Impact

Teachers strengthen their instructional practice while promoting the realization of school goals and students' progress towards those goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers engage in weekly inquiry collaborations by looking at student work to develop instructional strategies they can uniformly implement across grades and content areas. One school goal is to increase student engagement in the classroom. Several math teachers met to generate a template for use with problem solving which requires the student to write the question, draw a picture, and identify the conceptual strategy to be used to reach a solution. Additionally, the template requires students to build their math language. Similar professional collaborations regarding how to clarify student misconceptions by ensuring students can explain their thinking and how to apply concepts, across the grades have strengthened the instructional capacity and cohesiveness of teachers. Several teachers noted that as a result of their inquiry investigations students’ use of checklists and charts have resulted in some increases in academic performance. Other teachers noted, their consistent use has contributed to their observations resulting in more effective ratings according to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

- A vertical inquiry team observed focused on analyzing student work using a protocol to determine strengths and weaknesses addressing math proficiency. All teachers reviewed copies of the targeted student's work using a looking at student work protocol document. Individually, teachers identified what the student was able to do in relation to the learning target, what the student appeared to struggle with, and possible Universal Design for Learning strategies that could help address student needs. Teachers provided several suggestions to target those student deficiencies, including using talking prompts and unpacking how the student could solve the problem during number talk activities or Socratic seminars. Another suggestion included a checklist for each problem on the cover of the worksheet to guide the student. One teacher shared she recently incorporated the guide with her targeted students and she has had success with increased student engagement and their understanding of the tasks.

- Teachers engaged in identifying a problem of practice to increase the level of student engagement in all content areas. Through inquiry work, they were able to strengthen their awareness of structures that have potential to raise the level of student involvement, thus enhancing students’ higher-order cognitive skills needed for college and career readiness. Student survey results validated their complete enjoyment in the lesson and an overwhelming agreement that the work was more enjoyable because they were able to work in groups while annotating, which led them to better understanding and comprehension of the assigned reading.