Quality Review Report

2017-2018

Archer Elementary School
Elementary 12X531
1827 Archer Street
Bronx
NY 10460

Principal: Zakariah Haviland

Dates of Review:
May 15, 2018 - May 16, 2018

Lead Reviewer: Robin Posner
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

Archer Elementary School serves students in grade PK through grade 5. You will find information about this school, including enrollment, attendance, student demographics, and data regarding academic performance, at http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm.

School Quality Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Focus</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 Focus</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>
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### 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 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>Additional Finding</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>
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</table>
Area of Celebration

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

Across classrooms, teacher-created rubrics and assessments offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Classroom assessment practices are ongoing, varied, tailored to student needs and goals.

Impact

Teachers and students receive meaningful feedback. Assessment practices result in effective adjustments that meet student learning needs and students are aware of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses data from performance tasks, running records, unit tests, exit tests and the state assessments to determine strategic groups, refine whole-class instruction and determine student needs for additional instructional support. The analysis of assessment results has led to the development of instructional goals for staff and students and the reinforcement of skills across all subject areas. The use of data to inform and adjust instruction in all content areas is consistent across classrooms and classroom checks for understanding lead to instructional adjustments that support all learners. For example, grade three is always the weakest performance on state tests, so as a whole, teachers and leaders began close attention to the previous year’s grade two performance task data to drive instruction. Close review led staff to see while the grade two performance task was very scaffolded, the grade three task was not. As a result, the grade two task was revamped with gradual release of scaffolding throughout the year so students would be better prepared for the grade three performance task.

- A review of student work and meetings with teachers and students revealed that feedback on student work includes next steps. Comments on an English Language Arts (ELA) task provided students with positive feedback and next steps. One teacher noted, “I like how you gave details in pictures and words. Next time write captions under your pictures to provide your reader with more information.” Across subjects, feedback is detailed and provides students with clear next steps. On a social studies writing piece the teacher offered the following next steps, “You understand how a mind map is organized. We will work together on becoming more specific and digging deeper.” A student shared that at their next conference, the teacher worked with her on mind maps and stated, “This conference really helped me understand that the more specific details I put into my mind map, the more specific my writing can be and the better I am at answering the prompt. Since this conference I always keep this in my mind when I’m writing non-fiction.”

- In all classrooms teachers consistently check for understanding using turn and talks, exit slips, student writing, and student discussion. Teachers use this data to drive changes needed in grouping and instruction, as well as to drive student conferences for goal setting. Each student meets with the teacher during individual conferencing to work on reading and math goals that the teachers continually monitor via formal assessments and informal conferences. Students are well aware of their goals and shared that the goals are written on index cards and posted on charts that the students can easily reference and keep track of. These goal charts were highly visible in classrooms. Students shared that the teachers help them meet their goals by providing them with glows, grows and next steps. One student stated that, “Next steps are often good to use for future goals.” Another student stated that, “We never run out of goals because every time we conference we our teachers we discuss how we can push ourselves further.” Goals shared by students included planning and organizing writing better, using more academic vocabulary, use multiple strategies to solve problems and backing up claims with facts. When students meet goals, the index cards are moved to “I can” charts posted throughout classrooms.
### Area of Focus

#### Quality Indicator:

| 1.4 Positive Learning Environment | Rating: | Proficient |

#### Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support values student voice and aligns professional development, family outreach, and student learning experiences.

#### Impact

A safe environment and inclusive culture are conducive to student and adult learning and student voice is welcome and valued. In addition, the promotion of effective academic and personal behaviors is apparent; however, the results were not yet evident.

#### Supporting Evidence

- Student voice is valued through student council and other student groups. A group of fifth graders, passionate about sustainability came to administration to discuss how to drive the sustainability efforts in the building and have led the charge on recycling at lunch. Additionally, another group of students came to leadership stating most of the books in the school did not have main characters representative of the students in the school. They went through all of the books in the bookroom and discovered there were only 512 out of thousands of books with black and brown kids. The students then put together a list of books, which leadership has since ordered and will continue to order.

- The school’s Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data reports shows a decline in reported incidents this school year compared to May 2017. In addition, a comparison of reports shows a reduction of incidents shows drops in OORS incidents from 2016 through 2018. The Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) action plan drives school culture building initiatives. PBIS includes three clear schoolwide expectations: respect, responsibility, and readiness. Last year the school noted that some of the fourth and fifth grade students were beginning to lose interest in the PBIS rewards. The school did a survey and students expressed they wanted experiences like slime-making or time in the gym instead of things and thus these experiences have been added to the PBIS rewards. This has led to increased buy-in for students, specifically the upper grades. A student shared that he was looking forward to having enough points for the slime experience since some of his classmates had participated and said it was very fun. While these practices support a safe environment and inclusive culture, the school’s area of focus remains to ensure students have the skills to self-monitor and manage their behaviors and emotions.

- The school is rolling out a social-emotional support program for next year to support student adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors. This program includes lessons for students, and professional development for staff and families. In the interim, additionally, there are weekly character assemblies for all students built into the schedule to reinforce academic and personal behaviors including using words to communicate, the ability to self-regulate and self-motivate and complete academic tasks. However, there is not yet data that captures impact on the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.
Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum

Rating: Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills for English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Impact

Purposeful curricular decisions result in coherence and promote college and career readiness via rigorous curricula and academic task that are accessible to all students. Students consistently demonstrate their thinking across subjects and grades.

Supporting Evidence

- Both faculty and administration stated that they build coherence using the Common Core and instructional shifts to promote college and career readiness. The administrative and teaching teams determined that in order to make the progress towards mastery, they needed to focus on the clarity of learning targets and ensuring that students know what they are learning and why. To this end, staff determined that they needed to unpack the Common Core-aligned curricula and make modifications to modules/unit maps, lessons, and tasks to better address the needs of students. Specific steps include creating/revising unit assessments, developing instructional objectives that target standards, and ensuring coherence between assessments, learning targets, and tasks. During horizontal and vertical team meetings, the staff developed the pacing guides for this year. The scope and sequence and lesson plans are focused on the Common Core and instructional shifts. The scope and sequence demonstrates this coherence of the instructional shifts.

- Teachers and leaders ensure that curricula align with the Common Core and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. In ELA across grades, there are tasks that incorporate academic language, evidence-based short response and constructed response, as well as essays that include arguments, literary analysis, compare/contrast, and narrative fiction. In kindergarten students must write an opinion piece about whether fall or spring is better. In grade two students are expected to write a piece on which character in a text displays a specific characteristic and defend their selection with text-based evidence. In grade four, students write about which poem best displays a particular theme using text-based evidence to support their argument. In math across grades there are tasks that indicate real-life application, conceptual understanding, and fluency. Students across grade levels were asked to design an outdoor play space using area and perimeter. Additionally, students across grade levels were asked to do fluency builder activities like math sprints. Indications of the pacing by posting of the flow of the day/week are evident schoolwide.

- Across grades and subjects, the lesson plans include elements such as student-facing academic targets, essential questions, and key academic vocabulary, do now, mini-lessons with guided practice, checks for understanding, and homework. Most lesson plans included differentiation for ELLs, students with disabilities, and independent workers based on need. Additionally, most plans include individual, paired or group tasks that provide access through tiered tasks, leveled readers, and mixed grouping and extensions. Some lessons include the level of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge for the higher-order questions. Students in a math class were using all operations to design an outdoor space. Some students were given a worksheet with some of the playgroup equipment outlined to help them better understand the spatial relationships needed to place the equipment. The teacher worked with a small group of students for further support and within each group of students was a student leader who was able to answer questions and support other learners. All students were expected to create a blueprint of their outdoor space as their end product.
Additional Finding

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

Teaching strategies align to a set of belief about how students learn best and provide entry points through the use of scaffolds so that all learners participate in academic tasks and discussions.

Impact

Students are engaged in tasks that require high levels of thinking and discussion leading to the development of meaningful work products across classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- The instructional priorities for all classes include a focus on student-facing learning targets, small groups, cooperative instruction, student-to-student discussion, actionable feedback, ongoing checks for understanding and making students thinking visible. Most of these adopted priorities were evident throughout classes and provide students with opportunities to produce meaningful work. However, in some classes, a few students were not as engaged as others, limiting their critical thinking and demonstration of thinking. In a math class, students were working on mental math problems. Students worked in pairs to use mental math to solve a word problem. As pairs shared, they were asked to agree or disagree with other pairs and build on to their findings. In a grade five ELA lesson, students spoke with partners using talking prompts to share out imagery from a recent field trip. Students jotted down their answers on an imagery map to use for writing haikus.

- Across classrooms, students were arranged in pairs, triads, or small groups to promote discussion and critical thinking, often strategically to support the needs of individual learner's literacy competency. In a grade three ELA class, students were placed into groups to find poetic language in familiar and unfamiliar trade books. Students had to work together to find and cite specific evidence from the texts. The students engaged in this critical thinking discussions purposefully knowing that it was an instructional focus expected of them as communicated by the teacher. Students were placed together so that each group included either ELLs or students with disabilities so that all students could have the benefit of having rich discussions with peers.

- Multiple entry points enabled learner’s access to the material. During a grade four math lesson on fractions, differentiated supports such as reference sheets, manipulatives, and toolkits were made available for each student group. During a math lesson on subtraction, each group had manipulatives and a whiteboard and markers that everyone, including ELLs and students with disabilities, were to use. In a grade one book sorting activity, each group was given books at their instructional level to sort. In a grade four ELA lesson, students were given differentiated activity cards and differentiated poems to complete an activity on theme.
**Findings**

School leaders and staff systematically emphasize high expectations for professionalism and academic excellence to the entire school community. The school partners with families to communicate expectations for college and career readiness.

**Impact**

Communication structures ensure a high level of trust and mutual accountability between administration and staff. Parents support students in achieving school goals.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers engage in professional development focused on aligning instructional practices with the expectations of the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. Meetings address subject area content, as well as grade level issues. Additionally, expectations are provided through the observation and feedback cycles. Teachers also provide feedback to one another to improve assignments and lesson planning. Warm and cool feedback addresses pedagogical practices, instructional goals and planning and questions. The teacher group believes that the feedback they receive through observations by colleagues and supervisors is meaningful and leads to self-reflection and improved practice. Specifically, teachers state that this feedback specific to the quality of questions being posed during their lessons helps ensure accountability to the high expectations needed to provide the best possible learning experiences for the students.

- School leaders consistently communicate expectations around professionalism and instruction through a staff handbook, emails, professional development, and newsletters. Expectations around what the classroom environment should look and feel like, professional attire, homework and lesson planning are all communicated in the handbook and in an ongoing fashion via weekly memos. It's made clear to all stakeholders that teachers are expected to be reflective and self-aware practitioners who meet students where they are and move them along the continuum. Leadership is diligent about modeling ownership of these behaviors for all and both staff and students expressed that leadership consistently demonstrate behaviors that show they are self-monitoring and showing respect for all in any situation.

- The school effectively communicates with students and parents around high expectations towards college and career. Parents and students expressed the expectation that students will go on to competitive middle schools, high schools, and colleges. Parents stated that the school helps them in meeting these goals by providing support via workshops given by the parent coordinator and the help the guidance counselor provides for the middle school process. Parents praised the school's communication of expectations and stated they always know how their kids are performing and what needs to be done to meet or exceed their goals. Parents also praised the practice of changing classes in grade five. One parent shared, “My son was not overwhelmed by middle school since he spent a whole year changing classes in a safe and nurturing environment.” The school provides workshops to parents monthly as well as during Tuesday’s parent engagement meetings. Workshops included sessions on the school’s mission, vision and instructional focus, an overview of curriculum and each grade level, and state testing. The school communicates in an ongoing fashion with parents via ClassDojo, emails, memos, school website and monthly “tea and talk” with the principal. Parents stated that this is a great informal time to engage with the principal and talk about their children or the school and share their ideas. All parents present agreed that the school leadership valued the ideas of families and often implemented their ideas including providing them with information on outside opportunities for students during the summer.
Additional Finding

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

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. Teacher teams consistently analyze data and student work for students they share.

Impact

Teacher collaborations strengthen their instructional capacity. Teacher team work typically results in progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers strengthen their instructional capacity through team collaborations. In one case, a teacher reported that at a teacher team meeting, a colleague spoke about how students are struggling with reading directions and even understanding how to complete a task independently. The teacher further shared how she now created visual cue cards to help students understand directions. The teacher shared that the amount of students able to complete work independently increased, freeing her up to spend more time on guided reading groups. The idea was written down as a strategy to try out prior to the next meeting. In addition, teachers on this team spoke about having students respond to feedback that is given to them in a written format, to further embed it in their schema. As a result of these conversations, many teachers have implemented this practice, as evidenced by student feedback responses observed in classrooms and on student work.

- Teacher teams partnered up to look at specific student groupings and the differentiated activities being planned for each student group. Lesson plans were presented along with work samples from that specific lesson. Teachers then gave each other targeted, specific feedback, as well as suggestions for different groupings and/or activities. Teachers then went back to their classrooms and tried out the suggestions and groupings and returned to their teams to share out the results. Leadership reported that as a result of these collaborations, there has been an increase in teachers’ performance in regards to planning and preparation, as evidenced in Advance.

- The grade five teacher team reviewed student work and noted that students were having difficulty across the grade with backing up answers with text-based evidence. As a result, they implemented the Restate, Answer, Cite, Explain (RACE) strategy. As a result, there was an increase in students’ ability to support their statements with text-based details as evidenced on the next on-demand writing piece. Additionally, the grade three team focused on looking at data from the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL), specifically trait three, which deals with pulling details from a text. The grade three teachers did a few targeted lessons specifically on pulling supporting details. On a follow-up assessment focused solely on trait three, growth was evidenced for groups of students.