Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 197 - The Kings Highway Academy
Elementary 22K197
1599 East 22 Street
Brooklyn
NY 11210

Principal: Rosemarie Nicoletti

Dates of Review:
October 31, 2018 - November 1, 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

P.S. 197 - The Kings Highway Academy 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

### 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>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>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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations</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</td>
<td>Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school’s instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>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>
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Area of Celebration

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rating:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Well Developed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Findings

School leaders’ observations of classroom practice and peer to peer intervisitations provide teachers with strategies to improve instruction. Teachers receive effective feedback that accurately captures their strengths, challenges, and next steps aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Impact

Feedback articulates clear expectations for teacher practice, supports teacher development, and aligns with teacher goals. All teachers use low inference notes and feedback from observations to engage in reflection and accelerate their professional growth.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders collect and review teacher goals and Advance data at the end and beginning of every academic year and use this information to group teachers for observation and support. They look at teacher strengths and areas of need to inform teacher intervisitation pairs and assign mentors to teachers who are new to the profession. Observation records shared from the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 academic years demonstrate frequent cycles of observation that include an analysis of student work from lessons and use of student data to form instructional groups. School leaders then provide teachers with effective feedback and next steps in the form of glows and grows accompanied by resources to support the next steps identified. As an example, a teacher rated effective in engaging students in learning benefited from a next step, which advised her to give questions back to students and ask them to go back into the text to find evidence to support their argument. The school leader also provided the teacher with a graphic organizer to assist the students with organizing ideas and noting evidence from the text to support a position.

- In initial planning conferences focused on teacher development, at the beginning of the year, a teacher and school leader sit down to review the teacher’s feedback and ratings from the previous year. The school leader guides the teacher through self-reflection focused on an area in which the teacher grew in the previous year and an area that they would like to continue working on. School leaders record areas of growth and goals for individual teachers on a common spreadsheet which allows them to quickly identify teachers across the school who are working towards the same goal, or who might be a support to a peer. Feedback shared in subsequent observations refer back to teacher goals, noting progress on or ongoing challenges within components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. One teacher shared, “One goal for me was to ask higher level questions, and the feedback and resources provided focused on that.” Analysis of teacher goals across the school show that the majority of teachers set goals connected to designing coherent instruction and questioning and discussion techniques.

- Teachers also provide one another with feedback from peer observations. They frequently visit one another on the grade and with lead teachers and coaches, focusing on instructional strategies such as using math stations. Newer teachers visit and are visited by their mentors. Teachers also share glows and grows with one another, in relation to targeted components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. In one peer observation reflection shared, the visiting teacher commended her peer for strategic organization of the learning environment and for effective questioning techniques. The visiting teacher also provided her peer with a next step which recommended using a class data sheet connected to the mini lesson, to improve upon assessment in instruction by tracking what students know and still need to know in relation to the lesson objective.
Area of Focus

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

Although teachers use a variety of scaffolds and strategies, such as models and anchor charts, to provide students with multiple entry points into curricula across grades and subjects, in a few of the classrooms visited, meaningful task extensions and strategic use of high-quality supports were not evident.

Impact

While teaching practices and strategies engage all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners (ELLs), in challenging tasks that reflect high levels of thinking and participation, student ownership of learning is not yet consistently reflected in work products and discussions in classrooms across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers provide students with a variety of scaffolds and supports, including anchor charts, graphic organizers, use of a highlighter in texts, access to thinking of peers, differentiated texts, and math manipulatives. Reading, writing and math folders found in all classrooms included tools for students, such as strategy guides, equations and rules, and helpful vocabulary, such as transitional phrases or words germane to the unit. During an upper grade reading lesson focused on the structure of complex texts, the teacher provided students with a table of text features, as a tool to support them as they engaged in independent text analysis. In a lower grade writing lesson, the teacher provided students with a model, anchor charts detailing use of authoritative voice, and vocabulary charts to support their writing.

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) lesson on area models, the teacher provided students with models of two possible strategies and asked questions of student pairs, to ensure that students were supported by the thinking of a peer. Although this questioning promoted high levels of student thinking and discussion, the students were dependent upon the teacher providing the questions one-by-one, creating a missed opportunity to give questioning and ownership of the discussion over to students.

- In a few classes, extensions and high quality supports for students, including ELLs, were evident in the lesson plan but not in classroom practice. In a science lesson, the teacher posed high-level questions, such as, “How can we describe the structure of an ecosystem?” While some students surfaced nuanced questions and understandings of living and non-living things, other students did not have an opportunity to demonstrate higher-order thinking by answering the questions or engaging in discussion with peers. In a lower grade math lesson on counting, several students in the class finished before their peers and sat waiting while other students worked, as there was no extension activity for them. In another lesson on writing introductions, the teacher gave students the opportunity to turn and talk with peers about a modeled introduction but several students who spoke a language other than English, did not have access to the model or discussion questions. They sat waiting as their peers discussed the text. A teacher supported one group of ELLs by questioning them in Russian but students in another group had limited opportunities to demonstrate higher-order thinking, as they did not have the same level of support.
Findings
Across grades and subject areas, Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts, such as problem solving and writing across the content areas, are strategically embedded in the curricula. Academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
All students have access to curricula that promote college and career readiness and cognitively engage them in learning.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core and strategically focused on the instructional shifts, including writing and building deep understanding in math. In a kindergarten lesson plan on writing informative texts through drawing, dictating, and writing, the task focused students on writing about important places in their classroom and in their lives. In an upper grade lesson plan the task required students to use text-based answers to write about elements of a story, such as the setting, characters, and the development of conflict. Math lesson plans focused on problem solving and on students using different strategies or selecting a strategy and explaining why they chose it. In a fourth-grade lesson plan on place value and operations, students were tasked with illustrating and explaining their thinking, using area models, arrays, and written statements. Similarly, a second-grade lesson plan focused students on different ways to make ten by having students try different strategies and explaining how their methods were similar and different.

- Curricula artifacts, such as pacing calendars, unit plans, and teacher team notes, demonstrate attention to vertical coherence in planning for reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. The pacing calendars indicate that topics build upon one another from grade to grade, as seen in a September reading unit that focuses on students seeing themselves as readers, so that by grade five, the emphasis is on students maintaining an independent reading life. Similarly, in social studies, a grade two unit focuses on what maps are and how they are used, and in the next grade, students are focused on who geographers are and how they see the world. Across the disciplines and grades, teacher teams use a common template for curriculum mapping that includes guiding topics, Common Core standards, and teaching points that result in coherence of instruction across the grades and subjects.

- Lesson plans demonstrate that teachers plan and revise the curricula, using student work and data, and routinely plan differentiation for ELLs and students with disabilities, with differentiated tasks for different groups of students. A reading lesson plan, typical of other lesson plans seen, included adjusted vocabulary and questions for ELLs, text-specific vocabulary guides for students with disabilities, and small group instruction planned for two groups of students; one with students struggling to make inferences and another with students who would extend their learning by supporting inferences with evidence from the text. Often, lessons included assessment data from analysis of student work from a previous lesson or a pre-unit assessment, demonstrating that teachers engage in data-driven planning for individual students, as seen in a fifth-grade writing lesson, where some students were tasked with comparing and contrasting text structure and others with using academic language to identify craft moves. Team meeting notes show that this type of planning is commonplace across the school.
### 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**

Teachers use common assessments to adjust teaching points for small group instruction and to measure student progress towards goals across grades and subjects. Across classrooms, teachers routinely use questioning to check for understanding and students self-assess their work in small groups.

**Impact**

Data from assessments informs adjustments to curricula and instruction, including re-teaching selected students or re-grouping some students for subsequent lessons, to meet their learning needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers across the school use data from on-demand writing assessments to adjust curricula and instruction, including pairing students and refining teaching points and tasks in English Language Arts and social studies, based on student performance on these common writing assessments, where students respond to fiction and non-fiction texts. Revisions of curricula and purposeful student grouping were evident in lesson plans and instruction across the school, including in math where teachers use a similar process of analyzing student performance on end-of-unit assessments to prioritize lessons and group students.

- Teachers and students shared that leveled reading assessments are used to match students to texts and to form reading partnerships in the classroom. In classrooms visited, individual students were observed working with leveled, supplemental non-fiction articles, aligned to their reading levels to support them in independent practice of skills and strategies taught to the whole group. Teachers and students also shared that end-of-unit assessments in math are used to group students heterogeneously so that students can support each other's thinking as they work to solve math problems.

- Across classes, teachers regularly use questioning to implement ongoing checks for understanding and adjust lessons, based on their findings. In several classrooms, as teachers asked questions of individuals and groups of students, the teachers used a tracking sheet connected to the lesson objective, to note student thinking. In a math lesson on area models, the teacher asked a student to share a problem-solving strategy, before having pairs work together on a new problem. As students worked, the teacher circulated, gathering student performance data by asking questions such as, “How can we break this number up?” and “What do you and your partner need to do next to model?” From these questions and notes taken, the teacher moved most of the class on to more partner practice and self-assessment activities and asked a few pairs to return to the rug for further teaching. Teachers shared that data gathered from these types of assessment activities is most often used to re-group students for the next lesson, though in a few classes, such as the one above, teachers used the data to immediately move students to another group or to pull a small group for reteaching in-the-moment.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to all staff, with reference to specific elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Teachers communicate regularly with families about expectations for their children’s progress, through written communication and curriculum nights.

Impact

Using coaching and other tailored professional learning activities, school leaders hold all teachers accountable for understanding and meeting high expectations around teaching and learning. School leaders and teachers support families in understanding student progress towards meeting standards.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders send daily emails called “AM Announcements” to all staff, making professional and instructional expectations clear, such as arrival and dismissal routines, communicating with families, conducting assessments, and participating in professional learning. Often, the content of the emails connects to detailed guidance found in a staff handbook that further outlines expectations for lesson planning, content area instruction, organization of the classroom, and alignment of learning activities to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The school leaders support teachers towards meeting the expectations by providing for ongoing professional learning events and coaching connected to these expectations. There are literacy coaches who work with teachers in different grade bands, to support them in implementing reading, writing, and math workshops, and in providing small group instruction with tailored supports for new teachers. There is also ongoing guidance on curricula planning and use of data.

- School leaders hold teachers accountable for expectations connected to planning and instruction, through the observation process. As the leaders engage in classroom conversations, they collect lesson plans and student work and assess teachers’ use of data in planning and instruction. Along with the Danielson Framework for Teaching ratings, teachers get written feedback from the school leaders, including commentary on feedback given to students, whether verbally or in writing. With teachers also engaging in intervisitations between classrooms, there is added accountability for schoolwide expectations, particularly about how to provide effective feedback to students.

- Through newsletters and blogs, school leaders and staff, including the parent coordinator, consistently communicate to families, expectations around the curricula and grade level priorities. The newsletters focus on academic topics in the classroom for the month and include reminders about school policies, homework, and projects. A teacher blog from a kindergarten class focused on math expectations for the unit, including subitizing, verbal counting, and cardinality. Teachers and staff also host families for workshops and curricula nights for families, with a focus on topics such as expectations in the arts classroom, reading with your child, types of performance assessments, managing disabilities, coping with the demands of middle school and exploring writing publishing parties.

- In separate meetings, teachers and families shared that, through text messages and emails, there is ongoing online contact with families to keep them informed about student progress. Teachers also create interim progress reports between report cards that provide narrative feedback to families about student levels in reading, writing, and math, as well as strategies that students need to continue working on, such as elaborating in their writing or modeling to express mathematical thinking. Families stated that they find these activities helpful in understanding expectations for their children.
Findings
Teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaborations aligned to the school’s goals and focused on implementation of the Common Core, particularly in relation to improving student writing and planning for students with disabilities. Distributive leadership structures are in place across the school.

Impact
Teachers are strengthening their instructional capacity through collaborative inquiry activities with colleagues and have built leadership capacity that gives them a voice in decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers are engaged in curricula development and refinement through inquiry-based activities on teams that meet weekly. During the review, a second-grade team was observed focusing on the narrative writing unit being taught and reviewing unit writing tasks for alignment to the Common Core. Teachers shared strategies in use in their classrooms for addressing writing skills. From their analysis of student needs, teachers also planned additional lessons to the unit. This review of the Common Core through collaborative lesson planning strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers.

- Notes from a special education team meeting demonstrate a similar process for analyzing whether desired outcomes are achieved in specially designed instruction that teachers provide across the school. The notes indicate that the teachers reviewed Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), noting where specially designed instruction appeared and where it did not, with an eye toward improving not just instruction but also the quality of IEPs across the school. These collaborative inquiry activities help individual teachers expand their repertoire of strategies for meeting student learning needs in their own classrooms.

- A review of instructional cabinet meeting minutes demonstrated that teachers participate in the instructional cabinet and have a voice in evaluating instructional and assessment practices across the school. Specifically, the notes indicate that teachers are a part of the discussion about setting schoolwide expectations for assessment practices, particularly in relation to how teachers check for student understanding and how students demonstrate what they have learned at the end of lessons. Teachers also have a voice in the implementation of schoolwide events, such as student clubs, the annual Halloween parade, and the implementation of new schoolwide positive behavior initiatives, including the “Just Say Hi” program, aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion across the school.

- Teachers also serve as peer leaders for their disciplines, attending professional learning workshops at the district office, in literacy, math, social studies, technology and a host of other topics. Based on information gained from these workshops, they develop their own professional learning sessions to turnkey the information to colleagues across the school. Teacher-hosted professional learning activities focus on topics such as the development and refinement of curricula across disciplines and strategies for using data to adjust curriculum and instruction.