Quality Review Report

2018-2019

P.S. 372 - The Children's School
K-8 75K372
512 Carroll Street
Brooklyn
NY 11215

Principal: Rosa Amato

Dates of Review:
May 22, 2019 - May 23, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Kimberly Bradley
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>To what extent does the school...</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>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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<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>Area of Celebration</td>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Systems for Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Well Developed</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>
<td>Proficient</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>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Morning meetings and Responsive Classrooms are structures in place to maintain positive attitudes across the school. The school community strategically aligns professional development, family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports.

Impact

All students are known well by at least one adult and have access to social-emotional learning and the specific supports that align with their learning needs resulting in the adoption of effective academic and personal behaviors.

Supporting Evidence

- Students reported that there is at least one adult that knows them well. The incorporation of Responsive Classroom structures such as assigning students various responsibilities including book monitor, attendance monitor, computer technician or librarian enables personal growth. Everyday class begins with a morning meeting and parents are also invited to participate each week. School staff review Individual Education Plans (IEPs) every ten weeks and the Communication Review team meets monthly to monitor the progress of specific students who are being supported in their communication development through the Pictures Exchange Communication System (PECS) that allows students with limited verbal communication to communicate using pictures. As a result of these structures, students’ academic and behavioral needs are well known and they are supported by at least one adult as evidenced in an increase in Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) math and reading scores.

- There is a student council that makes decisions regarding student participation in schoolwide and community events. Students are able to select two Studios in which to participate each year, which include the school newspaper, team carpentry, American Sign Language, Lego Exploration, Monologue Studio, and Playwriting. A partnership exists with parents and community organizations to support the development of positive academic and personal behaviors. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) funded the One School, One Book initiative that provided a read-aloud book to every classroom each month. The Wellness Committee comprised of parents and staff organizes an annual Health, Wellness and Happiness fair that provides workshops and sessions for students regarding different topics pertaining to wellness and healthy eating. Local businesses donated their time and food to the event. These varied learning experiences positively impact students’ academic and personal behaviors as evidenced in the increase of the number of students moving to a less restrictive environment and a reduction in the number of level four and five incidences at the school.

- The staff participates in professional development on Responsive Classroom strategies led by one of the school’s teachers. There is training for Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Supports. School leaders and staff are working with an equity coach from New York University (NYU) in revising their units of study to incorporate culturally responsive practices. Members of the school staff offer workshops at parent share fairs to provide strategies they can use to support the growth of students’ academic and personal behaviors at home. A presentation made by the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Speech Team provided visual materials to parents as a way to communicate and support students over the summer and other school vacations. The school building has a sensory area for students who are over stimulated by large groups of students during lunch and recess times. Through these supports and effective professional development sessions for staff and workshops for parents, students demonstrate positive academic and personal behaviors.
Findings

Across most classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best through student engagement and small group instruction. Teaching strategies across most classrooms provide multiple entry points into the curricula for all students.

Impact

While teaching practices reflect the school’s belief of supporting student engagement in most classrooms and most learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks as demonstrated in student work products, it is not yet evident across all grades and content areas.

Supporting Evidence

- During a fifth-grade math lesson, the class was divided into two groups that worked with one of the two teachers. One group of students was working in pairs and had a choice of tasks to complete related to collecting data and analyzing ordered pairs to create line graphs or line plots. Students either created a line plot using data selected by the students, or data from investigating the population growth in two different states for every tenth year. Students created posters for their presentation that incorporated two-column tables, ordered pairs, and a double-line graph. This group of students group were asked to assess their understanding and mastery of the lesson by using a scale of one to four. In contrast, the other group of students worked individually or in pairs and completed a worksheet on monomials and polynomials. Every few minutes the teacher would bring the class together to check on their progress. The majority of questions were teacher generated and the teacher primarily called on the students in the front of the room limiting student engagement across the vast majority of this group.

- During a fourth-grade writing lesson, students were providing feedback to their peers on their realistic fiction drafts. Students who were further along on their draft worked independently on laptops to read and assessed the work as they referenced the task’s rubric. Other students received support from the adults in the room either individually or in a small group, which gathered in the front of the room. The teacher circulated throughout the room to monitor the progress of the students and remind students to use language from the rubric while providing glows and grows. When students were done providing feedback, they gave the laptop back to the student. Some students were not clear about switching computers with another student and it was not evident that the teacher had provided supports addressing the writing of grows or glows. A review of student feedback on computers showed feedback such as, “I love it, but maybe you can add some feeling.” or “I like how you develop plot.”

- In one class as part of an academic rotation, students worked one on one with the adults in the room or, on their own based on their IEP goals in math or English Language Arts (ELA). Some students were working on number sense, place value and equations while others worked on vowel sounds and comprehension. Walking around the room revealed that the majority of students were engaged, on task and understood the established routines. While the use of teaching strategies such as scaffolds and routines were used in this lesson, these specific supports were not evident across all grades and content areas.
Additional Finding

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

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks consistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher order skills with careful attention to access including embedding specific performance tasks across grades and subject areas. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact
Individual and groups of students, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, have access to a rigorous curricula and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of lesson and unit plans demonstrates an emphasis on higher-order skills such as questioning and discussion. In an ELA lesson plan addressing the concept of change, students are asked to think of changes they may face in the upcoming year and what effects these changes may produce. In a science unit addressing the idea of force, one question asked, “How can I move this box?” In a reading plan, the lesson objective stated that students would be able to identify and make text-to-self connections after listening to a read aloud of *Chrysanthemum*. This level of emphasis on rigorous habits and higher-order thinking for all students is evident across the vast majority of grade and content area curricula plans.

- Unit plans describe the skills students will be able to demonstrate by the conclusion of the unit. For example, a science unit plan states that students will be able to, “Determine which boxes are easy to pull and which are harder to pull while learning about the different directions and strengths needed when pushing or pulling items up and down a ramp with independence or with prompts with 80 percent accuracy.” A literature unit plan has the objective of having students understand theme, character traits, the relationship of a character's action to events in a story and supporting claims with specific details and textual evidence. A social studies unit overview indicates that students will cite text evidence as they study Denmark. The majority of unit plans embed academic tasks that prompt students to demonstrate their thinking.

- Unit and lesson plan modifications contain tasks for a diversity of learners to become cognitively engaged in rigorous tasks. In a math plan on analyzing ordered pairs and creating a line plot or line graph, the use of visual supports such as models, graphic organizers and manipulatives were specifically noted. A lesson plan for academic rotations lists each student in the class and the type of thinking map they use. For example, one student would complete a double-bubble map comparing two bubble maps as he worked on matching items and colors while another student would be given a blank double-bubble map as he placed the correct events or character in the proper place on the map. A science plan specifically outlined differentiated tasks where some students would push different objects down the ramp at the red table, at the blue table bricks would be pushed, and a beach ball would be pushed in different directions at the yellow table. As a result of curricula, planning and refinement, a diversity of learners, including individual students are supported to be cognitively engaged.
Findings
Across classrooms, teachers use assessments, rubrics, checklists, and differentiated grading policies for kindergarten through second grade and third through fifth grade in alignment with the school's curricula. Common assessments are used to determine student progress toward goals across grades and content areas.

Impact
Actionable feedback supports students in their academic progress. Teachers use common assessment results to adjust curricula and instruction.

Supporting Evidence

- Across grades and content areas, rubrics and checklists are utilized and are aligned to the school's curricula. One example of a rubric used to assess projects and tasks focuses on the criteria of communication, participation, and demonstration of a skill. An informational writing checklist focuses on the criteria of teaching writers different writing components including facts, details, specific quotes and ideas and the use of a lead sentence, transition words, and an ending were part of the support document. A three-point holistic rubric used in math outlines the criteria for grading a response. An answer is judged as to whether a student has completed the task correctly using mathematically sound procedures, contains sufficient work to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the mathematical concepts and procedures, and that errors do not detract from the correct answer. Consequently, through the use of rubrics and checklists such as these, students’ academic progress towards goals is consistently measured by teachers.

- Teacher feedback to students enables them to understand how to improve their work. A review of one task’s feedback stated, “You’re off to a great start. You were able to address most concepts. What might help: Circle your numbers and units, Underline the question, Box math “action” words, and Evaluate and Eliminate (CUBE) your word problems and organize your thought process.” Another example states, “Glow: You cited specific details from the text. Grow: we will work on incorporating more details in your responses and include more text to support your answers.” During the student interview, students shared that in most of their classrooms, they received either verbal or written feedback on their assignments or the teacher uses a rubric, circles the descriptors, and assigns a score. Students shared they can always ask the teacher why they received a particular grade on an assignment. As a result of the actionable feedback from teachers, students understand their next steps and are demonstrating progress towards their goals.

- The school handbook includes the school’s grading policy that describes the formal use of assessments. In kindergarten through second grade, formal assessments count as 50 percent of the grade while in third through fifth grade, formal assessments count as 70 percent of the grade. When using alternate assessments such as Student Annual Needs Determination Inventory (SANDI) and Formative Assessment of Standards Tasks (FAST), staff is expected to provide parents with a written narrative of the results and these results will count as 50 percent of the student’s mark. Informal assessments such as classwork, warm-ups, notebook checks, quizzes and homework are to be incorporated into the grade. Common assessments, including Fountas and Pinnell, Leveled Literacy Intervention, and the New York State test in math and ELA and the New York State Alternative Assessment (NYSAA) are reviewed and analyzed during team meetings throughout the year. The use of the findings based on teacher analysis of common assessments results in adjustments to the curricula and instruction that best supports the progress of students toward goals.
Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations utilizing a staff handbook and an instructional priorities thinking map. School leaders and staff effectively communicate to families the expectations for students for a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
Communication and professional development, which stress high expectations results in a culture of mutual accountability for staff. Effective partnerships with families support students in preparing for the next grade and progress toward college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Frequent classroom observations provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and quality instruction. Observation reports include specific language from the rubric and evidence from the classroom observation that supports the rating along with actionable next steps so teachers clearly understand expectations. The staff handbook, instructional priorities thinking map and professional development throughout the year is focused on the school’s instructional priorities. The instructional priorities thinking map outlines the school’s focus on designing rubrics that establish learning expectations, assessments that are used to inform instructional decisions, the use of small group instruction to target individualized skills, selecting appropriate materials to promote deeper thinking, and planning meaningful and motivating lessons for all learners. This is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching rubric addressing designing coherent instruction and student engagement. As a result of the specific, clear feedback and professional learning provided teachers they are able to meet the expectations of school leaders.

- School leaders consistently communicate the school’s instructional priorities that support student engagement. Posters of the school’s instructional priorities are posted throughout the building and are frequently referred to by school leaders and staff members. The school staff also communicates about their core values of Scholarship, Citizenship, Relationship, and Leadership. The staff handbook outlines the use of instructional time including a focus on word work, writing, the use of collaboration and communication, and the environment of the classroom. One of the principal’s newsletters reminded teachers about the second round of observations, and to make sure that all adults in a class review the IEPs to be able to speak to the management and learning needs of all students. This clear and frequent communication enables staff to understand and be accountable for implementing the high expectations of school leaders.

- Parents spoke of the partnership they had with the school and specifically referenced the school’s communication with them through the school’s website, class newsletters, text messages, phone calls and emails. Parents spoke positively about the availability of the principal, other school staff and the collaboration between staff members to ensure students receive their related services without losing instructional time. Parent meetings and workshops support them in their understanding of their child’s progress, preparing for the next grade level and the middle school application process. School leaders attend PTA and School Leadership Team meetings and inform parents of the progress the school is making toward the school’s goals. Thus, the school staff is successfully partnering with families to support students in achieving the school’s expectations.
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
All teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based collaborations across content areas and use student work and performance data to inform teacher practice.

Impact
Instructional coaches and school leaders support the instructional and curricular capacity of teachers across the majority of content areas positively impacting the school’s instructional priorities around student engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- All grade-level teams meet once a week to work on the development and implementation of thinking maps, analysis of student work data, and scoring assessments. Teachers also participate in professional development related to thinking maps and Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) that is aligned with the school’s instructional priorities focused on student engagement. School leaders and teachers shared that instructional coaches set the agenda for the meetings with input from teachers. Teachers explained that they are provided time at the end of the year to plan for the following year and that curriculum files are shared electronically and accessible to all staff members providing opportunities for virtual collaboration. As a result of the supports provided by school leaders and instructional coaches, teacher teams engage in inquiry-based collaborations.

- During a teacher team observation focused on the work of incorporating thinking maps, the coach facilitated the meeting utilizing the learning walk protocol and focusing on questions that were displayed on the screen in the classroom. Each teacher shared how they are incorporating thinking maps into their instruction. One teacher is using them to help students in the organization of ideas when writing a piece with the facilitator. Comments on the student work related to thinking maps included thoughts regarding the purpose of color and ensuring it is about communication and not just making the writing pretty. Other feedback included reminders not to let the use of the maps get in the way of supporting the strategies and ultimately student thinking. The coach ended the meeting encouraging the teachers to continue with their work and reflect on incorporating scaffolds such as sentence stems or visual labeling in the maps. The coach supports teachers when they analyze the impact of thinking maps on the level of student thinking and organization of their ideas promoting improved student outcomes.

- A review of teacher meeting agendas and notes provide evidence that grade-level teams participate in cycles of inquiry throughout the year. The second-grade team analyzed data from running records, conferring, observations, and checklists. The analysis revealed that students are finding difficulty with reading comprehension, making inferences and explaining their mathematical thinking in their own words. Suggested next steps included placing students in small groups, using picture cues, stressing the identifying of key details in a text, reading fluency support and making learning targets specific and attainable. Minutes from the kindergarten team described where they are in the curriculum but sustained inquiry or next steps is not clearly evident. Most grade-level teams are reviewing student work and it is resulting in improved teacher practice and progress for students.