Quality Review Report

2018-2019

Brooklyn Brownstone School
Elementary 16K628
272 Macdonough Street
Brooklyn
NY 11233

Principal: Alexander Brunner

Dates of Review:
May 9, 2019 - May 10, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Glenda Esperance
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

Brooklyn Brownstone 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

### Instructional Core

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To what extent does the school...</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>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>
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<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 Focus</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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</table>
### School Culture

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<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>
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<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...**

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<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>
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<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>
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<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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Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through instructional checklists, professional learning (PL) and ongoing feedback. In addition, school leaders and staff successfully partner with families to effectively communicate expectations connected to a path of college and career readiness.

Impact
School leaders and staff have established a culture of mutual accountability derived from clear expectations, customized PL and effective parent outreach which supports student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year the school leader and teacher leaders meet with staff to unpack the faculty handbook, review schoolwide instructional goals and discuss selected elements of the *Danielson Framework for Teaching*. There are established environmental and instructional checklists to clearly communicate high expectations to staff. These documents provide staff with requirements pertaining to lesson plan design and execution and classroom environment including bulletin boards, display of student work, classroom library set-up, and classroom artifacts. These checklists have also been tailored to include subtle grade-specific expectations. There is a weekly newsletter, *Principal Post*, emailed to ensure that high expectations are clear to staff. This document highlights best practices and provide pedagogical resources to faculty. In one edition of the newsletter, the principal shared tips on how to effectively welcome students into a classroom and included a live link of the article entitled, *Welcoming Students with a Smile* by Youki Terada to provide research-based insight on the practice. Teachers are actively encouraged to share educational texts or ideas they wish to include in the newsletter.

- The school’s instructional cabinet creates a PL plan entitled, “Professional Journey Map”, to support staff in meeting high expectations. Staff members are surveyed and their feedback is used to plan schoolwide PL and supports for the year. Customized PL is provided to all faculty members and the activities are aligned to school goals and support the initiatives used to drive student achievement. For example, a PL series on Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) was designed to build capacity among classroom staff. The participants learned about the flexible roles and responsibilities of teacher pairs and provided in depth insight on ICT teaching. PL is monitored on an ongoing basis and adjustments are made accordingly. Additionally, mentors have been assigned and actively work alongside all new staff members to onboard them to the high academic standards of the school. PL materials are maintained in a common drive to which all staff members are provided with access to ensure that expectations are known and shared and reciprocated amongst staff.

- School leaders use a variety of modalities to communicate and support the community in meeting the set expectations of the building. The school community has an online platform utilized by all parents and teachers to ensure the entire school is actively informed about schoolwide programs and student progress. It also provides its users with an outlet to maintain constant communication with staff. Teachers consistently communicate with parents to share pertinent information regarding their child’s academic and behavioral progress. The school created progress reports for families that provide written documentation of their students’ academic and social progress every 6-8 weeks. The strong partnership between parents and school staff contributes to an increased number of students making progress towards grade level mastery leading to a path for college and career readiness. A parent shared that the school has an open door policy and that they are welcome to come and visit classrooms anytime.
Area of Focus

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

The use of rubrics is developing and grading policies are loosely aligned to the curricula. Ongoing common assessments such as running records, reading tests and unit diagnostics are aligned to the curricula and are given across grade levels.

Impact

Although common assessments are administered, they are inconsistently used to measure students’ growth. Furthermore, feedback given to students based on rubrics is not yet actionable.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders indicate that teachers have begun to take criteria from rubrics and craft student-friendly checklists to guide students’ performance on learning tasks. Several student work samples included a rubric highlighting the expectations of the task. In these rubrics, teachers indicated at least one specific area which needed improvement. However, this practice is not yet occurring across all content areas. For example, in a grade four class, students were given feedback on an essay on my favorite trip. The teacher provided a grade on categories such as organization, proofreading and writing mechanics but did not provide tangible next steps that could be used to improve students’ performance on the task. In a grade five class, students conducted a research project on bridges. Students created models and wrote research reports. The teacher provided a final grade, however, there was no rubric attached to the writing identifying the grading criteria for the assignment. Therefore, there was limited evidence of rubrics being used to provide actionable feedback to students.

- Schoolwide common assessments include beginning-of-year benchmark assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics. In addition to these tools, staff utilize content-specific assessments to track student learning. In English Language Arts (ELA), teachers are trained on the Fountas and Pinnell assessments that are administered quarterly. School leaders organize and review reading levels and produced data charts that highlight students reading levels. Teachers also utilize an additional reading test to track student decoding skills. In mathematics, beginning, mid, and end-of-unit assessments are aligned to the schoolwide math curriculum. However, despite the use of these common assessments, the school was unable to clearly articulate how the data from these assessments is used to determine student progress towards goals across grades and subject areas or how the information is used to adjust curricula and instruction.

- School leaders indicate that teachers have begun to craft student-friendly feedback to guide students’ performance on learning tasks using common rubrics. For example, a review of several math constructed response work samples included teacher comments specific to areas which needed improvement. Sample feedback included, “Good Job. You multiplied the number of beads on one necklace,” and “You used details and evidence to answer your questions...You used information from the class discussions and the book to back up your answers.” However, this practice is not yet happening across all content areas. There were multiple occurrences of students receiving feedback without the presence of a rubric or vice versa thus limiting actionable feedback and next steps. For example, feedback provided on a science work sample stated, “You demonstrated partial understanding of the question being used.”
Findings
School leaders and faculty integrate instructional shifts into Common Core Learning Standards-aligned curricula. Unit plans and lessons include academic tasks that are accessible to a variety of learners.

Impact
Across grade levels a diverse group of learners are cognitively engaged in standard-based curricula that promotes college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Analysis of curricula reveals the inclusion of several instructional shifts across content areas thus building coherence. Across grade levels, literacy units include a balance of informational and literary texts. In a grade five ELA unit plan, students read a variety of texts to obtain information for their writing assignment that required them to choose an example of inequality or injustice either from the selections read or their own lives to create a speech that cited facts and details from multiple texts. Additionally, the math curriculum was revised this school year and all units now include activities designed to promote fluency and basic skill acquisition. Students are now assigned multi-step problems that support a deeper understanding of math concepts and require them to demonstrate their thinking. In a third-grade math lesson plan, the students were assigned an application problem that required them to solve two-step word problems using multiple operations and show their thinking with model representations.

- Across most content areas, teachers create unit and lesson plans that cater to the instructional needs of diverse learners. Lesson plans are designed to include scaffolds that provide accessibility to the curricula for students in need of supports. For example, a grade five literacy unit incorporated adjustments such as word banks, visual aids, graphic organizers and sentence starters for students during independent reading. A grade one math plan included the creation of two versions of the class activity worksheet through the use of math manipulatives, visual models and reteaching. According to the plans, these features were included to ensure the cognitive engagement of students with disabilities and the lowest performing students.

- Curricular documents include evidence of adjustments made based on student data thus promoting cognitive engagement. Math lesson plans include student independent work activities and groupings being determined based on exit slips, which allows for students to be assigned to either one of three groups: intervention, on grade level, or enrichment in subsequent lessons. For example, in a grade four math lesson plan the teacher creates three groups to support the wide range of performance levels in the class. Group #1 includes students who obtained correct equation and angle measurement, Group #2 includes students who had an incorrect measurement, but correct angle measurement and students assigned to Group #3 had an incorrect equation and angle measurement. Each group receives work tailored to address their learning needs. Literacy lesson plans include student groupings determined according to reading levels derived from running records. In a second-grade science lesson plan, students are grouped based on their performance and the task assigned to each group was differentiated based on student needs.
Additional Finding

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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

Across classrooms, teacher pedagogy reflects a set of beliefs that students learn best when there are opportunities for student voice and targeted small group in place. Teaching strategies consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula.

Impact

Teacher pedagogy that is aligned to a set of schoolwide beliefs and lessons is designed to meet the learning needs of a variety of learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms teachers provide students with opportunities to talk with their peers reflecting the school’s beliefs in best practice learning. In a grade five literacy class, students read the text *Heart and Soul* by Kadir Nelson to gather information to create an opinion writing piece on the African American migration from the south to the north. Students reviewed the text and jotted notes and questions they formed in relation to the text. They worked in groups and discussed such questions as “How were the life of African Americans in the north different from the south?” Students worked collaboratively and took turns discussing noticing and wonderings. In a grade one math lesson, students used non-standard measurement items such as pennies and paper clips to measure selected items. Prior to the start of the activity, the teacher facilitated turn and talk talks about measurement. The teacher asked questions such as “What does non-standard measurement mean?”, “Do you agree or disagree ...why?” She encouraged students to share with their partner. The teacher reinforced the use of accountable talk stems and phrases such as, “Do you agree? ... Let’s have a conversation...What could you say?... Can you explain?”

- Across classrooms, teachers incorporate small groups to support targeted instruction. For example, in a grade five ICT math class students were divided into groups to complete the day’s learning objective of using additive relationships to construct angles and find the measurement of missing angles. Each group had a specific focus. There was a group of students on laptops working on a web-based program that reinforces math concepts. Another group worked with the special education teacher and she reviewed steps for adding a ray and calculating an angle with the students. The general education teacher conducted check-ins and monitored the progress of groups, supporting the students based on their needs. In a third grade literacy class, the teachers divided the room into stations to address the variety of learners in the room. The students were revising their fairytales and incorporating descriptive language into their pieces. There was a group of students working on their first draft. Students who completed the task early were encouraged to create a second fairytale.

- Across classrooms, teachers design lessons that provide support for students, including students with disabilities. For example, in a grade two ICT math class, students were divided into three groups based on ability to address the variety of learners in the classroom. While in groups, students rotated between three stations. In station #1, students worked with the teacher to unpack a multi-step equation. In station #2, students worked with the other teacher utilizing manipulatives to demonstrate and discuss the difference between a rectangle and a square. In station #3, students worked independently on fluency worksheets focused on calculating sums to the teens as well as a multi-step equation that required them to show their work, draw a visual representation of the problem and write a statement explaining their answer. Students were allotted 10 minutes at each station. However, the teachers allowed students more time to work at a station if necessary.
Additional Finding

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.1 Teacher Support and Supervision</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
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Findings
School leaders provide feedback to teachers that accurately captures strengths, challenges, and next steps. School leaders have a system that uses teacher observation data to effectively design and facilitate PL for all.

Impact
Feedback in observation reports includes clear expectations for teacher practice and supports teacher development. School leaders are making informed decisions to implement strategies that promote professional growth and improved teacher performance.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders conduct frequent on-going classroom observations, and the feedback provided to teachers is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Next steps offer suggestions for improvement in pedagogy. Feedback included in observation reports revealed a recommendation for teacher intervisitation, an excerpt from an educational text, and tips on how to assess students during instruction. Clear expectations are also articulated. For example, one observation report states, “Allow students wait time for thinking during discussions review pg. 52 from the text "Thinking through Quality Questioning" for a description of the benefits of wait time." Another report advised the teacher to utilize assessments when planning to group and address the needs of all learners. The school leader recommended homogenous small group instruction for struggling students and independent extension opportunities for students who have demonstrated mastery of the skill or standard.

- Targeted PL topics are derived from trends identified across classroom observations. The principal has an observation tracking sheet that lists completed observations and next steps. The principal also created and conducts non-evaluative classroom visits and check-ins with staff. Teachers are grouped for mini-series of intervisitations and/or PLs facilitated by peers, instructional leads, or the principal. Mentors have been assigned and actively work alongside all new staff members to support development. Selected teachers have professional plans to help guide them in their professional growth. The plan includes action steps for areas of targeted internal and external professional development, such as coaching visits from teachers rated highly effective or effective, self-assessment and reflection opportunities, mentoring, check-ins and adequate resources. The plan is revisited formally with the teacher after each observation cycle.

- School leaders customized a self-reflection tool distributed to school faculty and guides discussions on effective teacher pedagogy. At the beginning of the year, teachers answer questions embedded in the tool to self-reflect. Upon completion of the tool, teachers work collaboratively with the principal to establish a professional goal for the year. During their meeting, they review the goals from the prior school year, discuss student data, and set new targets. Teachers also discuss the PL needed to help support them in meeting their objectives. For example, a teacher selected goals concentrated on increasing student engagement and deepening her content knowledge. Based on these goals, the teacher was then provided with opportunities for classroom intervisitations that had an emphasis on establishing protocols that would promote active engagement. In another example, a teacher selected goals centered on using questioning and discussion. The teacher was provided with detailed feedback from school leaders following each observation. Thus, school leaders effectively link observation data and PL to promote teachers’ professional growth.
Additional Finding

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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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Findings

Distributive leadership structures such as a Principal Cabinet and the District Charter Collaborative team are in place and the majority of teachers engage in inquiry based professional collaborations.

Impact

Teacher collaborations promote the achievement of school goals and improved pedagogy. There are opportunities for teachers to have a voice in schoolwide decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- In addition to grade-level teacher teams, there is a Principal Cabinet comprised of the school administrator and teachers representing a variety of grades and content areas. The team works collaboratively to foster curriculum alignment across grade levels and evaluate schoolwide systems and structures. The members serve as liaisons between the school leader and their respective teacher team thus promoting leadership capacity-building. This structure serves as a platform for teacher voice in key decisions such as schoolwide Academics Intervention Services and ICT best practices. School leaders also encourage teachers to join committees that oversee schoolwide initiatives that support PL. For example, and District Charter Collaborative team includes teachers across grade levels focused on sharing best practices with neighboring schools to ensure equitable education to students.

- The second-grade teacher team was observed reviewing students’ math work products. The purpose of the meeting was for teachers to look at Common Core-aligned exit slips and compare it to an exemplar model so that they can identify learning gaps in order to improve student outcomes. The group used the See it, Name it, Do it protocol to analyze samples of student work related to a specific Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers looked at the work of all students to evaluate how they performed on the selected math standard across the grade. A team member served as a facilitator to ensure norms were upheld and the professional collaboration was completed with fidelity. A teacher read the standard and the team worked collaboratively to highlight the actionable steps and identify the specific skills students had to show to demonstrate mastery. They then discussed the misconceptions of the students that did not demonstrate mastery. The team facilitator made a list of possible next steps which would be used to determine growth and activities for independent practice and small group work. Some strategies included: reteaching students with the misconceptions and allowing students the opportunity to correct their errors. During a teacher meeting, a participant stated, “Teacher Teams have helped. Teaching has become a little more targeted. Become more purposeful instruction”. These meetings aim to ensure the implementation of the Common Core across classrooms and contribute to progress towards goals for students.

- Teacher teams exist from pre-kindergarten through grade five and teams meet to discuss the curriculum, review data, create lesson plans address the immediate concerns of the grades. For example, the kindergarten team met to discuss common benchmark logistics for math and literacy. The group also worked collaboratively to select text to read with students for the month. The pre-kindergarten team researches strategies that will help improve reading, with an emphasis on sight words. Each team meets on an on-going basis, sharing student work among its members and making recommendations to one another for improvement that will lead to implementation. Earlier in the school year, school leaders facilitated a PL session on the expectations for common planning meetings. During the training, teacher teams were provided with resources, such as a teacher team meeting template to guide their efforts for data collection, analysis and links for video exemplars of model teacher team structures. Teachers indicated their instructional practices are being strengthened through these team-based collaborations.