Quality Review Report

2018-2019

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Elementary 03M199

270 West 70 Street
Manhattan
NY 10023

Principal: Louise Xerri

Dates of Review:
March 7, 2019 - March 8, 2019

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Kortright-Torres
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>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<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>Well Developed</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>Well Developed</td>
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</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>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</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>Well Developed</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>
### Area of Celebration

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>1.4 Positive Learning Environment</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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#### Findings

The school’s approach to building culture is through the use of a social emotional program. The school community strategically aligns professional development (PD), family outreach, and student learning experiences and supports.

#### Impact

Recognition of students’ emotional needs by the school staff results in a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where student voice is valued and has been integral in decisions that lead to school improvement. PD, family outreach, and student learning result in effective academic and personal behaviors.

#### Supporting Evidence

- The school adopted a social-emotional program four years ago. Through this program, students learn to identify, understand, label, express, and regulate their feelings and emotions using a color-coded grid. Students learn to identify their feelings and are supported to ensure that they express themselves and learn to self-regulate using strategies that teachers cover in their lessons. School leaders and teachers stated that having a common language and practice in supporting students in their social emotional learning has improved school discipline and created a positive atmosphere where students thrive. A review of the Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) reports show that there has been a steady decrease in the number of serious incidents over the course of three years.

- Through a theory of action that students and staff must work hard and be kind, initiatives in the school result in an inclusive culture. Students coordinated efforts to advocate for a second crossing guard by attending meetings and signing petitions. Students are also involved in guiding efforts through writing persuasive essays to the principal to advocate for a school mascot. In addition, students were integral in decisions involving recycling. The school cafeteria is equipped with the appropriate disposal containers. Students are responsible in the cafeteria to ensure that garbage is disposed of properly. Also, a select group of students are members of the Green Team, which proposed and carried out a project to use compostable utensils. Students guide the initiative and promote it during morning announcements. Students also plan to embark on an initiative to repurpose crayons and markers. Students stated that teachers and school leaders promote students having a voice by including them in decisions taking a lead in community projects through their participation in the Community Cares Committee which collected school supplies for local homeless shelters and by creating environmental projects within the school.

- There are many learning opportunities for students, teachers, and parents that have impacted the culture of the school, including a presentation for parents on promoting students’ communication skills. Regularly scheduled workshops use a program to help parents become partners in teaching students to read. School leaders communicate consistently with parents about social emotional supports through meetings, handbook, and newsletters. Parents, students, and teachers have participated in training to implement the school’s social emotional program. All constituents stated unequivocally that they have learned about the program and apply the strategies in out of school. Teachers communicate with parents consistently about how students use the ‘feelings meter’ to reinforce these strategies at home. One parent stated that because of the program, conversations at home are rooted on identifying feelings and then applying strategies taught at school. Teachers stated that through extensive training the staff has acquired a common language to effectively address academic and personal behaviors. Students reported being able to use the mood meter to know how to react and make decisions so that they are able to learn.
Findings
School leaders support teacher development with effective feedback and next steps from frequent classroom observation cycles. Feedback to teachers based on the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* supports their development.

Impact
School leaders provide feedback from frequent cycles of observations conducted in concert with consultants and instructional coaches. Teachers engage in topic-specific individual conferences with consultants and receive feedback. However, clearly articulated expectations for teacher practice have yet to align with professional goals for teachers.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders meet to discuss observation cycles by grade levels and their focus on meeting school goals. Teacher observation reports from *Advance* demonstrate feedback such as "you may want to consider setting students up to actively participate by having them observe you and jot down three things they see you doing while you read." Suggestions are provided such as having thinking prompts for students. In another report, the teacher received an effective rating for engaging students in learning. The feedback provided to the teacher was to have students set up in partnerships to read and answer questions about their writing to assist in figuring out where in their writing they need dialogue. The rating for the same component, engaging students in learning increased to highly effective in a subsequent observation where the students engaged in turn-and-talks, asked each other questions, and elaborated on their thinking. These examples of feedback are consistent with the expectations of the school and aligned to Danielson *Framework for Teaching*.

- School leaders communicate regularly with consultants and instructional coaches to develop plans to support teachers individually and by grade level teams. Two teachers who work together expressed that they were having issues managing student behavior during mini lessons. The instructional coach supported these teachers by meeting with them and observing their practices during a mini lesson. The feedback suggested having heterogeneous groups during mini lessons and then having students grouped by levels to support behavior management and allow for peer modeling. Teachers reported receiving valuable feedback from instructional coaches and consultants. Correspondence from teachers and instructional coaches reflects teachers receiving feedback to develop their capacity as teachers of reading and writing which is a core belief of the school. For instance, a staff developer wrote, "Make sure that when making a tool, you are also creating a teaching point and plan, and be able to answer, ‘How will you utilize the tool when working with a group of students?’" Feedback from school leaders, consultants, and instructional coaches shows specific language from Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, such as effectively grouping students, asking questions to promote discussions, and having engaging tasks for students along with areas of improvement and next steps.

- Teachers have received feedback articulating clear expectations for teacher practice to support them in their development. A review of furnished *Advance* reports, handwritten notes, and email correspondence shows that though feedback is provided that uses language from Danielson *Framework for Teaching*, and teachers have meetings in the beginning of the school year to create their professional goals, these goals are not memorialized and as a result, there is insufficient evidence that the feedback provided is aligned to teachers’ professional goals.
## Additional Finding

### 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 are planned and refined using student work and data.

### Impact

Curricular alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts results in coherence across grades and subject areas, promoting college and career readiness for all learners. All students have access to the curricula and are cognitive engaged.

### Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and faculty develop units of study aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and strategically integrate text complexity and finding textual evidence. In English Language Arts (ELA) the school adapts units and lessons from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Program (TCRWP). In a grade-five lesson plan the teacher plans to teach students how to quote from a text and determine theme by analyzing details. In a grade-three math unit on writing number stories, the teacher plans on having students use number models to write a two-step number story to fit a number sentence. Students are tasked with explaining their thinking to a partner. The strategic integration of fluency helps students use multiplication facts to divide and explain it in writing. A review of units and lesson plans show that teachers plan learning targets that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and emphasize reading and writing.

- In a grade-three ELA lesson plan, the students are tasked with “road-mapping” to highlight important details in a story. Students annotate the text and describe a character by using the annotations. Students must support their descriptions by finding textual evidence. In a grade-four science unit, students are tasked with designing a wind turbine to solve the problem of a town that has frequent blackouts. Students first read about wind turbines and use the information to support their designs for building the fastest turbine. In a grade-three social studies lesson plan students analyze maps and listen to a story to learn important facts, draw conclusions and gain new understandings about Africa. Students must use all the materials to provide specific details to justify their thinking. A review of units across subjects and grade levels, show coherence of students being charged with analyzing information to provide textual evidence and explain their thinking.

- Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using student work and data. A grade-one reading unit was refined to include comprehension lessons after teachers realized that students had difficulty specifically with analyzing characters and their problems. Lessons were added to ensure that students had explicit instruction on retelling and making predictions. Other lessons show that teachers are refining based on students’ Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals. For example, the teacher plans on using the Restate, Answer, Detail, Detail (RADD) strategy to help students answer questions by using details from the text. In other lessons plans there are specific plans for English Language Learners (ELLs) such as having visual models of how to use the RADD strategy. In a grade-four math lesson plan the teacher uses manipulatives to subtract mixed numbers by writing equations, drawing diagrams, and solving number stories. To meet the needs of low- and high-achieving students, teachers create their own materials such as mentor texts and tools. For example, to teach realistic fiction, teachers created materials for high- and low-achieving students that show expectations for the use of more sophisticated responses, acting out, and building stamina. These tasks demonstrate that students have access to curricula that are cognitively engaging.
Additional Finding

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

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect beliefs that students learn best when they make connections to previously learned material and there are opportunities for self-expression. Students engage in high levels of thinking and participation and exhibit ownership over their learning.

Impact

Shared beliefs among staff about how students learn best lead to students engaging in rigorous learning activities that involve self-expression. Student discussions and goal-setting practices demonstrate high levels of thinking and student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, instructional practices reflect a set of beliefs that students learn best when lessons help them make connections and have a balanced learning environment where they have ample opportunity for individual expression. In a grade-five classroom, the students worked on grading short responses they had worked on the day before and had to explain to each other their rationale for the grade, using a short response rubric. Students were observed assessing their own responses and making appropriate changes as needed. In a grade-three math classroom, students had to explain their thinking about how a number model fits a number story. The teacher asked questions such as “what multiplication fact helped you solve this problem, and why?” Students had to explain their thinking in their math journals after explaining their response to a partner. Students in both of these classrooms had to use knowledge from previous work such as knowing multiplication facts and criteria for grading short responses.

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) third-grade reading class, students were arranged in groups according to skills. The lesson began with a scenario that students are familiar with such as reading a long passage and trying to remember all the important parts to teach the skill of “roadmapping” or annotating important details in the text. Students engaged in turn-and-talks to answer a question such as “Which details are important and what is the question really asking?” Students turned and talked about the text while the teacher listened in, asked one pair of students, “why do you agree?” In a grade-two math class, students worked in groups arranged by tasks such as counting coins and coin values, time, and word problems. Students worked together using manipulatives such as base ten blocks and had opportunities to turn and talk when prompted to explain why it is important to use key words such as “next” and “after” when explaining their thinking. One student was assigned to come to the board and explain how she solved a problem by using the key words. The teacher elicited compliments from students for the student who explained the problem on the board and referred to her as a mathematician. The student also explained that she checked her work using a number line.

- In a grade-four science class, students worked on creating wind turbines. Students had been introduced to the engineering design process and learned about source converters. The teacher posed the problem of a town with frequent blackouts. Students used materials such as Popsicle sticks, paper plates, rulers, and tape to create the fastest turbine. Students recorded observations and reflected on their design to make a second iteration. In a third-grade social studies class students had to select classroom reference materials to support their answers to true and false statements after learning Nigeria’s location and facts about Africa and then share and justify their responses. Across the vast majority of classrooms, there are opportunities for students to engage in high levels of thinking and have ownership of their learning as evident in these lessons.
**Findings**

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments as tools for giving clear feedback to students that they then actively use toward improving their achievement. In addition, teachers' practices consistently reflect the varied use of ongoing checks for understanding.

**Impact**

High quality assessment practices provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers’ assessment practices result in effective adjustments during classroom instruction and in modifications to subsequent lessons to meet all students’ needs.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Students quickly shared and affirmed the use of assessments and rubrics for written assignments and clarity around their attainment of mastery. After receiving rubrics with comments that include teacher-written feedback with next steps, students then conference with teachers on the feedback and how it can impact their writing. Students then improve upon writing by implementing the next steps detailed in the feedback. One example of feedback reads, “Your story is well organized, you need to further elaborate in pivotal scenes using thoughts and actions.” Another example read, “You need a transition and it is also not a complete sentence.” A third grader shared that in writing an information book, the student had to use supporting details from the text. A fifth grader shared that the teacher wrote in the feedback to be more concise and write with more clarity. The student applied the suggestions and improved the original grade. Students’ academic growth as a result of targeted teacher feedback, was made clear on the bulletin board displaying gradewide projects. Displayed work included multiple drafts along with the final product, reflecting students’ application of the teachers’ feedback on earlier drafts of the same work.

- Across the school, students use checklists and rubrics, differentiated for ELLs and students with disabilities, as tools of self-assessment during the writing process. The grade-five “Feature Article Rubric” asks students to self-assess each part and criterion of the essay. The revision suggestions assessment tool connects students’ self-assessment with a checklist of next steps connected directly to identified areas of improvement. Some examples of statements on this checklist include, “Does my ending make sense or come out of nowhere?” Another self-assessment tool is used to have students edit and check by providing examples of the elements of the essay such as hook, thesis, transition words, and conclusion words. For example, for “the hook” the student wrote “I painted a picture.” In addition to using teacher-designed rubrics and checklists, students are also using the rubrics that accompany the curricula.

- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use checks for understanding and assessment data to adjust student groups. Students were assigned to differentiated math, reading, and writing groups. Teachers periodically adjust these groups based on formal assessment data as well as in-class conferencing. Teachers utilize checks for understanding during instruction to determine next steps to be implemented in the moment or during the next day’s lesson. Teachers used different strategies to gauge students’ understanding of the task. Some teachers used the thumbs up/down/sideways assessment strategy; another asked a student, “If I was your partner what would you tell me?” about explaining how the number model fits the number story the student wrote. In another classroom, the teacher modeled how to do a “triple check” when reading independently. The teacher asked whether a word would make sense in the sentence. Most students answered incorrectly, after which the teacher redirected the students to re-read a specific passage while considering an added focus question. Another teacher delivered a lesson using different centers to address various areas of deficits after assessing students.
Additional Finding

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<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Across the school, grade teams meet on a consistent basis to analyze assessment data, student work products and to share teaching strategies.

Impact

Teacher engagement in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations has strengthened teacher instructional capacity and promoted implementation of the instructional shifts. Systematic analysis of student data and work products has resulted in mastery of goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- The third-grade team met to conduct an item analysis on a pre- and post-assessment unit about character analysis. Teachers discussed which questions were challenging for students. After going over the student outcomes for each question, their findings were that students need small-group instruction on identifying character traits as opposed to feelings, evidence to support their claims, and direct vocabulary instruction on character traits. Teachers also discussed groups of students and next steps for students to reach mastery. For example, ELLs and students with disabilities need small-group instruction on explaining why and how characters change in a story as well as vocabulary. Teachers also discussed how to move students up from their levels of proficiency. For instance, for high achievers, teachers discussed having students cite more than one part of the text and analyze what is important to mention from the story to reflect character changes. Teachers concluded that they need to teach specific elements of a story such as how characters change and as a result affect other events in the story. They decided to teach this by having a visual of a puzzle to explain how one part affects the whole story. Additionally, they plan to create anchor charts with synonyms for students to use in their writing to describe characters and story elements such as theme.

- Teacher teams meet and analyze pedagogical practices, assessment data, and student work products on a consistent basis. A review of teacher team minutes clearly shows analysis of student assessment data or work products for classes, groups of students and individual students. In a grade-two meeting, teachers analyzed reading assessment data and created a plan to incorporate interventions to strengthen students’ skills such as retelling, decoding, and fluency. Individual goals are created and tracked for groups of students. For example, in grade three, the goal for a student was to improve reading fluency and respond to ending punctuation. Another student’s goal in math was to read and listen to two-step number stories. All students met their goals in reading and math. In reading, there is improvement for these students from the beginning of the school year to the mid-year benchmark. Teachers use trackers and jot down notes each time they check for student progress. These action plans are shared among all teachers by grade level and are discussed and revised according to student progress. Teachers reported that creating and revising action plans together during teacher team meetings has improved their repertoire of strategies to use to help groups of students reach mastery of goals.

- Documents from a different teacher team show evidence of the team’s target group of students mastering the skills addressed in their inquiry cycles earlier in the year. Specifically, this team analyzed student results of running records. Teachers implemented targeted small-group instruction and created action plans. For example, students who needed explicit instruction in recognizing word wall words, reading blends, and digraphs were grouped together. All students in the targeted groups moved up one to two reading levels. No student instructional levels decreased.