Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 230 Doris L. Cohen
Elementary 15K230
1 Albemarle Road
Brooklyn
NY 11218

Principal: Maria Della Ragione

Dates of Review:
January 15, 2020 - January 16, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Kevin 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><strong>To what extent does the school...</strong></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 State 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 State standards and the Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the curricula, engaging, and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Align assessments to curricula, use on-going assessment and grading practices, and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom levels</td>
<td>Area of Focus</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## School Quality Ratings continued

### 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>Well Developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate schoolwide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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 State standards</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
<td>Proficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Area of Celebration

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

### Findings

The school’s approach to culture-building, discipline, and social-emotional support is informed by a mission statement and the adoption of structures, such as a fifth-grade advisory, as an effective approach to meeting social, emotional and academic needs of students.

### Impact

A safe and inclusive culture supports progress toward the school’s goals and has a positive impact on student behaviors. Staff meaningfully involve student voice in decision-making regarding school improvement efforts and structures are in place to know each student well and personalize supports.

### Supporting Evidence

- School culture and a positive learning environment are supported by the implementation of a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach. Each morning, teachers greet students at the door and classroom communities begin the day with a morning message and meeting. During the morning meetings, classrooms are setting their days up through shared norms that include greeting students, sharing opportunities for students, a positive culture-building group activity, and news and announcements. Morning meetings merge social-emotional learning with academic learning to enable students to start their academic day ready to learn. In addition, the use of a chime sound is implemented as a signal over the use of teacher voice for getting student’s quick and quiet attention. These daily structures encourage the school's focus on community building, and students reported that they feel safe and that their school is inclusive for all students. Students have a meaningful voice in school improvement plans, as they had input in classroom libraries to include more culturally responsive books and starting the school yearbook.

- Each classroom highlights students that demonstrate habits that the school values through executive functioning and emotional qualities. These qualities are also showcased in the characters and plot of each book of the month. In order to support students as they transition to middle school, advisory teams are programmed for fifth graders. These teams ensure that each student is known well by adults, as well as offer student participation in a group where they can explore topics that are relevant to their experiences. A specific advisory curriculum is used as a guide to facilitate these groups. The year begins with supporting students with executive functioning needs that promote success as they navigate the different academic content areas. Throughout the year, topics range from using empathy, to listening, being assertive, accepting differences, and looking at something through multiple perspectives. The composition of each of these groups is strategic, evident in student rosters and staff assignments. Teachers work collaboratively to group students with other students that will help their social and emotional growth, as well as with students that they may have not had an opportunity to know due to their classroom assignments. Online Occurrence Reporting System (OORS) data shows that there have been zero suspensions this school year as of January 2019 thus, showing evidence of a safe environment and inclusive culture that has a positive impact on student behaviors.

- Structures, such as guidance counselors and a CARE team, focus on personalized supports for at-risk students. The CARE team identified a third-grade student who needed additional supports and was moved from an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class to a Special Education Teacher Support Service (SETSS) class with more personalized supports. A third-grade student identified as a Student with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE), works with the CARE team through a once a week push-in support model, and another teacher works with him several times a week to help him build foundational skills as his phonemic awareness is a strength that the team is building.
**Findings**

Across classrooms, teachers use or create assessments and rubrics aligned with the school’s curricula. School leaders and teachers use common assessments, such as diagnostic assessments through an online platform, to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subject areas.

**Impact**

Teachers provide students with actionable feedback regarding student achievement; however, some students were not able to speak about meaningful feedback. Assessment data is used to adjust curricula and instruction; however, there is no evidence that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Across classrooms, samples of student work products showed teachers’ written actionable feedback directing students to the steps they should take to strengthen their work. An example of that feedback from a fifth-grade math assignment stated, “Can you label the numbers with units? That would help the person reading your work follow your thinking.” On a third-grade science assignment, feedback included, “Is there another word we could use to better describe the size of the rock? Remember some of the words we talked about...big, small, medium.” Actionable feedback appears on post-it notes and written on assignments across the school in different grades and subjects. While actionable feedback is apparent on student work across classrooms, a clear portrait of student mastery is not evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

- Teachers use rubrics, such as a third-grade scoring guide for opinion writing, a fifth-grade math problem-solving checklist, and, in addition, students use rubrics to observe like a scientist. Some teachers respond to students using a comment form that includes student comments about a mathematical investigation and responses from the teacher, such as, “Estimating is tricky. If you compute with numbers that are too far off, you’re incorrect.” Additionally, teachers use checklists, such as an introduction to historical writing checklist and a fourth-grade writing checklist. While rubrics and checklists were seen across classes, half of the students at the student meeting were unable to speak meaningfully about their use.

- Common assessments are used to determine student progress and considerations for schoolwide support. The school administers New York City performance tasks in ELA and math three times per year. Based on the analysis of this assessment, teachers identify trends, address needs and monitor student’s progress towards goals. Also, a reading-level benchmark assessment system is analyzed three times per year. This data is used to plan one-on-one conferences, small-group instruction and unit plan adjustments. The school also administers diagnostic assessments in grades two and five and these assessments are used to individualize instruction and inform intervention groups. Although school leaders and teachers use the data from the assessments to track learning gains and monitor student progress, and ongoing curricular modifications across content areas are evident, all students do not currently demonstrate increased mastery.
Findings

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in academic tasks that support learning across grades and subjects, including academic vocabulary across content areas. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Rigorous habits and higher-order skills in curricula and academic tasks ensure that all students demonstrate their thinking. All students have access to the curricula and tasks, and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- Reading and writing units of study include teaching practices that support conferring, small group reading, and writing instruction. In math, the implementation of purchased curricula is also included in the units. Lesson plans consistently challenge students to utilize rigorous habits during the course of instruction. Lesson plans include learning objective statements, such as, “developing accurate techniques to measure the length of an object”, and “locate any errors in the story [provided to them] and make corrections.” Lesson plans regularly detail high-level questions including asking students: how they can read parts of a text and find common ground or things that are similar among characters in their books; how can they use a debate structure to talk about math; how they can create a character in their story, paying close attention to traits, motivations, struggles, changes and relationships. Thus, rigorous habits and higher-order thinking skills in the curricula are embedded in a coherent way across grades and content areas to ensure that all students demonstrate their thinking.

- The school’s curricula are designed so students can apply their thinking skills in order to build student understanding and expect them to explain their thinking. Reading curriculum includes specific academic vocabulary instruction that gives students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of learning outcomes. A fifth-grade reading unit has students learn content-specific vocabulary by using word attack strategies. Writing curriculum is designed to build student skills in informational writing of non-fiction topics. A fourth-grade writing unit has students summarize the American Revolution using informational texts. Math curricula are designed to build mathematical skills using fluency. A third-grade math unit builds fluency by having students solve subtraction problems with two- and three-digit numbers by using strategies that involve either subtracting one number in parts, adding up, or subtracting back. Literacy is a focus in a dual-language curriculum as students are required to use reading, writing, and speaking in completing their work.

- As a result of planning and revising curricula and academic tasks, all students, including the lowest- and highest-achieving students, are cognitively engaged. Units of study and academic tasks reflect planning and refinement that are based on student work and assessments. This is evident in a first-grade math curriculum pacing chart that moved the unit on 2-D shapes to later in the year to build number sense, which was based on analysis of State testing data. Based on student work, lesson plans identify differentiation for specifically identified learners receiving support with scaffolds. Specifically, a third-grade math lesson on travel stories and collections includes parallel- and small-group instruction by adapting the problems and having students solve related problems within 100, using base 10 blocks provided to specific groups of students, based on assessment data. A fifth-grade writing lesson plan using illustrated timelines includes a teacher-led small group and a personal narrative checklist. A kindergarten lesson plan on sound power includes modifications for small-group instruction on modeling tone and repetition of new words with visuals.
Findings
Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the articulated belief that students learn best through individualized instruction for the whole child through interactive experiences. Across classrooms, students are engaged in discussions.

Impact
Across classrooms, many students are involved in individualized instruction. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- During a presentation about finding common ground with characters in the story in a second-grade reading workshop, students had an opportunity for a turn-n-talk and to mix-think-pair, as all students were involved in moving around and having conversations with peers. During a fifth-grade math lesson, students were assigned one of two possible solutions for the best way to find the volume of a rectangular prism, and they were asked to work together in groups to come up with points to use in a debate between the two different options. The teacher assigned positions to the students; students had a graphic organizer with one side for option A and one for option B. One group of students spent several minutes talking to each other about option A, and when the teacher visited their table, reminded them that they were supposed to be working on option B. Across classrooms, the articulated belief that students learn best through individualized and interactive instruction was evident.

- During a fifth-grade ICT lesson on illustrated timelines, teachers co-taught the lesson, and there were multiple opportunities for students to respond to the teacher’s questions. Intentional grouping was followed with two groups working with teachers for additional support. During a third-grade writing workshop class, there was a co-teaching model with students working on editing skills. There were two teachers, each working with a small group of students; each group had their own differentiated editing checklists that were different from the one that was being used by the larger group of independent workers. The teachers modeled the importance of reading aloud and asked questions during their group time that students were able to answer. During a first-grade writing class about revising and editing, teachers worked with small groups while other students worked independently on their writing tasks. All students were engaged and those working independently were checked on by the teachers, when needed.

- During a fourth-grade writing lesson, the teacher read from *Fox* and asked questions about the characters, and students did have a turn-n-talk opportunity. During whole-class questioning, several students answered the teacher’s questions. A third-grade ICT reading workshop class included targeted guided reading as students participated. During a third-grade gifted and talented math lesson about problem solving, the teacher reviewed a checklist for the task, and then students collaborated and worked together in student-to-student discussions solving the math problems. During a first-grade math class, students worked on a lesson with manipulatives as they measured images of two fish. However, some groups could not answer the question regarding how much longer was one of the fish. Generally, across classrooms, student discussions reflected high levels of thinking and participation.
**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations through observation feedback and the professional development (PD) plan. School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness and successfully partner with families.

**Impact**

Written feedback and constant communication and support have resulted in a system of mutual accountability for shared expectations. Partnerships with families provide opportunities to support student progress toward high expectations for success.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high-quality instruction. School leaders support teachers in understanding their instructional expectations by conducting classroom visits that are followed by a written summary of what was observed, providing feedback, and identifying the next steps which they will be looking for on their next visit. Also, high expectations for classroom environment are communicated to staff with the environmental self-reflection document that includes accountability via verification from school leaders. A PD plan makes clear that school leaders support teachers in their understanding of expectations in addressing topics, such as morning meetings, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) learning objectives, and advisory.

- A mutual accountability among all staff exists around expectations delineated in several handbooks and within the professional book inquiry teams. School leaders communicate high expectations for instruction, remediation, and environment through the Staff Instructional Handbook. The school's instructional focus has been to individualize instruction based on student need and expectations and can be seen through the common practices of conferring, small-group instruction, and goal setting. The handbook is shared electronically with all staff. In addition, expectations regarding professional responsibilities are communicated through the Staff Operational Handbook. Expectations detailed in the Paraprofessional Expectations Handbook is reviewed each fall with all paraprofessional staff. Staff receive weekly newsletters that cover operational matters, upcoming events, as well as instructional foci and highlights. Also, mutual accountability is evident through professional book inquiry teams. These teams are self-selected based on student and class need and professional self-reflection of each staff member. Each team completes an online inquiry cycle form to track their progress towards answering their inquiry question and plan for classroom instruction.

- Parents reported they are involved as partners with the school through detailed teacher newsletters that outline high expectations for what students are currently learning and empower parents to help their children academically at home. A parent shared, “Newsletters let us know exactly where they are and ideas of how to extend the learning at home.” The school communicates with families regarding reading levels following assessments to ensure that parents understand their children's reading levels and what they need to do to improve. The principal communicates with parents via Mornings with Maria, scheduled meetings for parents with specific topics, including a session following parent-teacher conferences where the principal outlined strategies for parents to use the information parents learned during these conferences to help their children at home. A parent shared about using online resources provided by the school, “On the homework page, it lists expectations and shows samples of the homework. If I look for that, I can help my child from there, I can help.”
Additional Finding

<table>
<thead>
<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. There are embedded distributed leadership structures.

Impact

Professional collaborations result in strengthened teacher instructional capacity and increased student achievement. Effective teacher leadership plays an integral role in focusing on the instructional goals to support student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The fifth-grade ICT team looked at ICT students that are struggling across three content areas: math, reading, and writing. Using iReady math and reading diagnostics, reading-level data, math assessments, pre- and post-writing samples, notebooks, and informal observations, the team generated a list of students from each homeroom that met the initial criteria for Level 1 academic performance. The team cross-referenced data across all three content areas to determine students that appeared on multiple lists. Following a discussion of each student’s current academic standing, the team decided to invite parents to a family conference to share online resources that parents can use to support their children at home. This allowed them to finalize the list of students and families that would be invited to an open-school night with a strategic focus on their most academically at-risk students. Many of the students selected are Multi-Lingual Learners (MLLs) students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP). A teacher noted about improved instruction, “In this team, we narrowed down the topics for our thematic units and focused on specific supports for a small group of students who struggled with reading and writing by modeling it heavily in the first part of the unit.”

- Teacher teams are engaged in structured professional collaborations with inquiry topics determined by each team. The dual-language team meets weekly to review student work and assessment data and uses this data to determine if students are making adequate progress in both languages. The special education team meets monthly to monitor the progress of students with IEPs and determine sufficient progress in all content areas. The English as a New Language (ENL) team uses student work to plan for flexible groupings on their grade levels. Fifth-grade departmentalized teams use student work and data in order to plan goals and support that will extend across the content areas. The gifted and talented team uses student, teacher, parent feedback, and observations, in order to plan for the social and emotional needs that support growth mindset. As a result of teams’ inquiry work, increased student achievement is evident in State ELA exam results showing an eight percent growth in 2018-2019 from the previous year and a State math growth of 11 percent in 2018-2019 when compared to the previous year.

- The Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) uses schoolwide data and State exam data to identify trends across grade levels, cohorts, and the school as a whole. This team also uses grade-level feedback and input in order to identify schoolwide areas of improvement with regard to the school’s practices. Teachers then receive support through coaching cycles with a math coach. Also, during planning days, the coach works with grade-level teams to make adjustments to unit plans. Embedded distributed leadership is also evident by teacher representation across teams. Teams include grade level, dual language, special education, ENL, gifted and talented, and fifth-grade departmentalized teams. For example, teachers self-select participation in professional book teams and collaboratively determine an inquiry focus to personalize their individual professional learning with specific colleagues who have the same interest. The inquiry book teams connect their work to one or more of the schoolwide goals.