Quality Review Report

2019-2020

P.S. 009 Sarah Anderson

Elementary 03M009

100 West 84 Street
Manhattan
NY 10024

Principal: Katherine Witzke

Dates of Review:
January 16, 2020 - January 17, 2020

Lead Reviewer: Phyllis Siwiec
The Quality Review Report

The Quality Review is a two-day school visit by an experienced educator. During the review, the reviewer visits classrooms, talks with parents, students, teachers, and school leaders and uses a rubric to evaluate how well the school is organized to support student achievement.

The Quality Review Report provides a rating for all ten indicators of the Quality Review Rubric in three categories: Instructional Core, School Culture, and Systems for Improvement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Celebration to highlight an area in which the school does well to support student learning and achievement. One indicator is identified as the Area of Focus to highlight an area the school should work on to support student learning and achievement. The remaining indicators are identified as Additional Finding. This report presents written findings, impact, and site-specific supporting evidence for six indicators.

Information about the School

P.S. 009 Sarah Anderson 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional Core</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</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 State standards and/or content standards</td>
<td>Area of Focus</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>Area of Celebration</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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### School Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<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>Additional Finding</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>
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### Systems for Improvement

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent does the school...</td>
<td>Additional Finding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the schools instructional goals and meet student learning needs, as evidenced by meaningful student work products</td>
<td>Additional Finding</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>
</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>
</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>
</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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Area of Celebration

| Quality Indicator: | 1.2 Pedagogy | Rating: Well Developed |

Findings
Across the vast majority of classrooms, strategically placed multiple entry points and high-quality supports and extensions into the curricula are evident in student work products and discussions.

Impact
All learners are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that demonstrate higher-order thinking skills in student work products that reflect high levels of student thinking, participation, and ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- Intentional small-group instruction and support and the availability of both special educators and co-teachers provide both direct service to identified students. Each observed lesson had accommodations for specific students who needed additional supports in order to participate and complete tasks. In a grade-two science class that covered categorizing rocks by physical characteristics, two teachers co-taught and adjusted their instruction to meet student challenges, within three different groupings, each led by an adult. The general education teacher circulated around the room, taking assessment notes on checklists by observing pairs of students working together. Modifications included differentiation of sorting sheets, with each small group depending upon visible and tactile noticings as they thoroughly explored each rock. In pairs, students discussed the categories that could be used to sort the rocks as size, color, shape, and texture. In a grade-five math fraction problem-solving lesson, students were divided into two groups, with the smaller group supported by one teacher throughout the lesson. There were problems designed so that all students could engage in challenging tasks.

- Multiple entry points and extensions included differentiating the complexity of reading material, use of leveled hands-on materials, partners and small-group settings, and student-friendly rubrics. After an analysis of State assessment data, school leaders and staff worked together to create the What I Need (WIN) program in English Language Arts (ELA) for the lowest-scoring third of students in grades one through five. Identified students are divided into small groups that meet several times each week with a dedicated adult who could be a teacher, assistant teacher, or paraprofessional who provides specific guided instruction, focused on skills or identified gaps in learning as observed in practice. During a grade-four social studies class, some students were placed in heterogeneous groupings for differences of opinions, views, and ways of thinking. Other students were placed in homogeneous groups in order to access additional support with the teacher or assistant teacher. Students launched into an exploration with challenging questions of the three branches of government and read several articles that explained each branch’s roles. Important information was recorded on one central poster that was shared at the end.

- Student ownership was demonstrated in a discussion about challenging work and how each overcame the challenge. In one example, a student needed to write a biography of a Revolutionary War leader. Gathering ideas from friends, parents, and siblings, the student then felt confident enough to begin writing the biography. Using the school’s writing rubric as a guide and a peer to evaluate what had been written in stages, the student reflected on the strong glows and grows, included a glossary, and successfully completed the first draft. Another student worked on a journal written by an immigrant to New York City. Research was key to understanding the decisions that the immigrant needed to make. Using the suggestions and feedback from a peer empowered the student to develop the immigrant as a story character with challenges and regrets while overcoming obstacles. These students had owned their challenges and devised methods to overcome their obstacles resulting in a sense of accomplishment and increased confidence.
**Area of Focus**

| Quality Indicator: 1.1 Curriculum | Rating: Well Developed |

**Findings**

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricular documents are strategically aligned with State standards through the end-of-year retreat and the work of the Coherency Team. Using student work and a variety of data, teachers plan and refine curricula and academic tasks and create targeted interventions in ELA.

**Impact**

Reviewed documents demonstrate coherence across grades and subject areas that promote college and career readiness while ensuring that all students have access to the curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging. Plans to introduce new, and strengthen existing, math interventions, will potentially increase the existing benefits to students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are strategically aligned to State standards through the work of the Coherency Team, which is made up of one teacher representative from each grade, a Spanish teacher, and a Special Education teacher. This team meets monthly and provides cross-grade curriculum and ongoing alignment with standards. In addition, an end-of-year retreat is attended by the vast majority of teachers who bring data to inform decisions regarding curricular alignment. During this time, as reported by school leaders and teachers, teachers meet by grade and across grades to make curriculum adjustments based on what they have learned during the year. During this process, they aim to avoid redundancies in content, as well as to ensure that tasks, materials, and assessments are aligned to State standards. This work continues with the Coherency Team, which meets to solidify any changes to yearly curriculum maps to ensure that all units are updated to reflect new changes to better support students through the analysis of student data and work. The goal is to deepen the level of coherence throughout the curriculum from year to year and to promote college and career readiness.

- Coherence and alignment with State standards in curricula is demonstrated in reviews of curriculum maps. In the grade-two writing unit that covers personal narrative writing, an extension of the focused memory-writing explored in kindergarten and grade-one built the foundation for grade two. In grade three, the concept of personal narrative is developed through a social studies and ELA-integrated unit that looks at historical events and transitions made by immigrants to America through the genre of personal journals. In grade four, the shift in narrative writing moves to realistic fiction, which is then coordinated with the study of the colonial period in expository nonfiction of a famous historical figure in report writing. Grade-five writing focuses on personal narrative as memoir and later in essays. The path of moving students through increased challenges based on learned practices in narrative writing leads to an increased ability to explore coherent genre throughout the grades. Similarly, math concepts build upon each other leading to more sophisticated practices and progress.

- While school leaders and teachers planned and refined curricula and academic tasks using student work and data in ELA during grade-level meetings and Coherency Team meetings, the shared understanding was that more interventions were needed. The WIN program resulted from the identified need of extra support in ELA for the lowest third based on multiple measures including State test and internal baseline data. As a result of WIN, the additional move into math instruction is planned for next year's schedule while maintaining ongoing monitoring of student progress and necessary adjustments throughout the year. Additionally, monthly reading assessments are administered for those whose progress is targeted in order to capture strategies that are being used successfully and where challenges remain. The inclusion of math with specific monitoring and program development can assist in more attention and success for more students.
Additional Finding

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

Across the vast majority of classes, teachers use rubrics and create assessments directly aligned to the curricula which offer a clear portrait of student mastery. Teachers use multiple, varied approaches and tools to check for understanding and student self- and peer-assessment practices on an ongoing basis.

Impact

Assessment practices lead to actionable and meaningful feedback to students regarding their achievement. Effective adjustments result in student awareness of their next learning steps and the demonstration of progress towards learning targets.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all subject areas, teachers use curricula-aligned rubrics and success criteria to assess students, who have a clear understanding of the rubric’s purpose. One student mentioned, “Before each assignment, we receive checklists and success criteria, so we have guidance for the level of our work. I visualize the problem after rereading it, then work through the problem by myself. Afterwards, the teacher gives feedback about what is working and what is not.” Another student stated, “I had trouble writing the connection based on a math challenge. The teacher gave me feedback with a grow and glow and I self-reflected and was able to make a connection successfully.” Feedback in the form of glows and grows were evident in the review of student work products, curriculum-planning documents, and tasks posted on bulletin boards.

- Review of students’ work products revealed that feedback is targeted such as in a teacher’s comments on a personal-narrative writing assignment, “I like how you’re focused on one event in camp. Be sure to stop and read your writing out loud, so you can correct minor mistakes.” Another read, “Good job picking one moment. You are missing the wonderful emotions of getting a dog and playing with puppies. Be sure to follow basic conventions and give rich details.” Students mentioned that teachers not only offer feedback that is helpful, but also follow up to ensure progress in the subsequent work as meaningful next steps. One student shared that while receiving a teacher’s feedback in a problem-solving task, he realized that the suggestion to use visualization would help him solve future similar tasks, thus making it meaningful feedback.

- Ongoing checks for understanding are evident in the vast majority of classrooms and take place in numerous ways. Teachers use individual and group conferencing during lessons to assess students’ understanding of the task at hand. These interactions enable teachers to provide support in real time, while students are working individually or in groups on their instructional tasks and make on-the-spot instructional adjustments. In a grade-two co-taught writing workshop class, students worked in partnerships focusing on goals the students had set. While teachers circulated around the room asking questions, they wrote conference notes. Based on group or individual responses, these teachers prompted students to determine if they were on the right path to completing feedback on their goals.

- During classroom visits, students were observed monitoring their own thinking through various means such as student-focused checklists of success criteria, peer assessments, and student-friendly rubrics, which enabled them to monitor their own understanding and identify their next steps. This was evidenced through classroom observations, board displays, and discussions with students where they shared that the self-assessment process has helped them have a better understanding of what they were learning so they could improve their work and their grades.
**Additional Finding**

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<th>Quality Indicator:</th>
<th>3.4 High Expectations</th>
<th>Rating:</th>
<th>Well Developed</th>
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**Findings**

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to staff and provide training in support of those expectations. Additionally, school leaders and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

**Impact**

Teachers benefit from a culture of mutual accountability to high expectations around common planning and intervisitations. Strong communication through letters, phone calls, and online platforms empower families to academically support their students’ progress toward college and career readiness.

**Supporting Evidence**

- School leaders share high expectations through a collection of handbooks including those for teachers, assistant teachers, and paraprofessionals. They detail assigned duties and responsibilities, types of assessments, instructional guidance, special-needs provisions, and the logistics of attendance, safety drills, and procedures. Homework expectations for each grade level are documented in a separate booklet. Memoranda from school leaders to teachers detail high expectations regarding current concerns and focus areas. Examples of the expectations shared in this way include reminders for teachers to submit their annual goals, that observations will begin, a sharing of the list of teachers who are comfortable in sharing their practices with colleagues along with those who are requesting intervisitation opportunities. Requirements and expectations of the newly instituted WIN intervention program in ELA were also provided, listing roles of teachers, time frames, reporting protocols, and the inclusion of teaching assistants and paraprofessionals. Training for the expectations for the instructional focus on success criteria and learning intentions was provided by an external consultant over the course of the school year.

- Teachers hold each other accountable to high instructional expectations through their collaborative common-planning sessions. Teachers spoke about relying on each other to give constructive criticism to each other when presenting problems of practice during planning sessions. With the variety of CTTs, there are multiple ways that teachers work together to plan, design, and implement curricula, assessments, data analysis, and improve teaching practices. Additionally, teachers hold each other accountable for their colleagues’ professional learning in that teachers participate in the intervisitation process used to determine which teachers host specific practices and which teachers visit and observe during intervisitations. Teachers reported that mutual accountability is evidenced in the intervisitation process with a growing appreciation to observe and discuss many instructional components.

- Expectations are effectively communicated with families through the school’s website, newsletters, during Parent Association (PA) meetings, and parent-teacher conferences where report cards are distributed. Two specific means of communication are the Sunday Night eBlast, a weekly newsletter sent to each family electronically and the Red Folder, a system that shares notes, classroom requests, and notifications between homes and the classroom. In addition, teachers send home a monthly newsletter to each family that contains information about current units of study, expectations, and any upcoming trips, special events, and celebrations. Parents spoke highly of the Growth Mindset work that the school has been involved with as a place of partnering with the school and developing students’ college and career readiness. Additionally, bookmarks differentiated with grade level expectations and prompts to ask students at home to discuss reading material are published and given to each family. Parents reported that this tool guides deeper understanding of expectations for students reading activities.
Additional Finding

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

A strategic, transparent supervisory system is in place, which utilizes the observation process to provide effective feedback, make informed administrative decisions to promote continued professional growth across the faculty, and nurture future school leaders.

Impact

School leaders implement support strategies and opportunities for growth, such that school-wide instructional practices in designing success criteria and differentiation are consistently elevated and improve the quality of student work.

Supporting Evidence

- Strategically, schoolwide observations emphasize the use of success criteria and differentiation. An observation report for a kindergarten teacher highlighted highly-effective practices for designing coherent instruction, creating an environment of respect and rapport, and engaging students in learning. Positive feedback noted evidence of differentiation that included varied writing sheets and varied prompts and levels of adult support. Further, next-steps included a direct focus on working with several of the most challenged students with foundational skills and detailing that the class would be revisited by the supervisor in a month for a follow-up observation. A special education teacher received feedback that focused on developing differentiated word studies and the coherency of practice within the entire grade level so that students and teachers could work on words that are customized for each student and not generalized for all students. The school leader stated that she would be attending the grade-level meeting to support the entire team in developing coherent word study practices.

- School leaders identified the mentor teacher’s support, New to 9, as critical to the development and retention of teachers who are new to the school community. This mentor has a flexible schedule that allows for weekly meetings with all of the new teachers or to work one-on-one with them when necessary. Specific expectations are collected and presented to new teachers at their orientation in the beginning of the school year with a specific focus on the importance of their grade-level teams as essential supports, along with building coherency and consistency across the grade and school-wide. New teachers also participated in a new-teacher learning-walk that focused on special education team modifications for grades three through five math modifications. In addition, evidence of unannounced walkthroughs are gathered in observation forms entitled Self-Reflection/Feedback Checklist that includes categories such as evidence of rigorous habits of mind and higher order thinking, differentiation, students working in groups, with routines around groupings. The checklists continue with looking for evidence of feedback to students, word walls, learning targets, and the roles of adults in the classrooms.

- Systems are in place to use observation data and teachers Individual Planning Conference (IPC) goals to inform professional development (PD). For example, compiled observation data across the school illustrated the need to provide coaching in the areas of demonstrating knowledge of success criteria and learning targets along with designing coherent instruction and using assessment in instruction. A coach provided PD in the areas of building success criteria and learning progressions for key curricular areas. The ratings for the staff between September 2019 and January 2020 demonstrated improvement in the Danielson Framework for Teaching components related the targeted areas that received direct PD support. In addition, an analysis of teachers’ IPC goal areas confirmed the observation reports regarding areas on which to focus. Additionally, teachers are offered assignments that further their leadership capabilities and experiences, which support the overall development of success plans.
Additional Finding

Quality Indicator: 4.2 Teacher Teams and Leadership Development  
Rating: Well Developed

Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations concentrated on their instructional focus areas. Distributed leadership structures are embedded in the organizational design of the school.

Impact

Teachers have strengthened their instructional capacity and self-efficacy, improved instructional coherence, and increased student achievement. The work of effective teacher leadership and school teams as in the Collaborative Teacher Teams (CTTs) and the Coherency Team play an integral role in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- This fall, grade-level teams took on the task of conducting a grade-wide curriculum inventory. This work involved conducting an internal audit around reading, writing, and mathematics units of study, analyzing alignment to State standards, assessing opportunities for differentiation, and planning for the inclusion of success criteria. In addition, schoolwide instructional coherence was demonstrated in ELA through the hybridizing of several programs that all use a common writing rubric and reading and writing progressions. Three schoolwide instructional practices in math serve to build upon previous understandings in order to complement math concepts. They are number conversations to emphasize flexible thinking, a problem-solving approach to support student understanding, and a performance-based summative assessment that depends upon students demonstrating their thinking processes. In addition, grade-level meetings, flexible planning time for Integrated Co-Teachers (ICT), 90-minute instructional blocks, summer planning, and PD days are routinely used by staff to collaborate around curriculum and standards throughout the year as shared by teachers and documented in team minutes.

- Teachers also benefit from the support and guidance that is available through CTTs. These teams meet regularly on Monday afternoons, per the PD schedule, which is created by the PD Committee. Each CTT is composed of classroom teachers across the grades, out-of-classroom teachers, service providers, and paraprofessionals. Each member of the CTT has a responsibility to lead one of the PD sessions, choosing from book study, child study, inter-visitation, or curricular design. The administration routinely attends these meetings. In addition, increased student achievement for all learners is noted in particular for the WIN program dealing with the lowest third/blacks and Latinx students, who have made progress this year in reading levels with 73 percent showing improvement in at least one level up in movement from September to January.

- The Coherency Team has evolved over the last decade from a teacher-initiated literacy study group to a group of staff representative of the collaboration that is fundamental to the way decisions are made. One member of each grade-level team, including out-of-classroom teachers, special education teachers, and administrators, serve on this committee. Team members take responsibility for schoolwide decision-making and consensus-building among their constituencies. At the end of each school year, Coherency Team leaders facilitate the staff-wide Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP) planning retreat. At that retreat, teachers work together to analyze data and reflect on the previous year. The outcome of this school-wide meeting is the creation of new CEP goals as well as suggested initiatives in support of these goals such as the WIN program. Additionally, at the beginning of this school year, the Coherency Team met and divided the Teacher-Leader roles for each team including Child Study, Book Club, Intervisitation, Curriculum Alignment and Social/Emotional. For example, the Book Club is reading Why Gender Matters and using this information to make decisions in classrooms.