

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Brooklyn New School

Elementary School 146

**610 Henry Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231**

Principal: Anna Allanbrook

Dates of review: December 12 - 13, 2011

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Brooklyn New School is an elementary school with 629 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 30% Black, 25% Hispanic, 37% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 94.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's extraordinary interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum immerses all students in levels of higher order inquiry and thinking, well aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. (1.1)
 - The school's progressive philosophy focuses on hands-on, in-depth learning that is seen in all classes and across all grades. Teachers develop interdisciplinary units of study to engage their students and promote deep levels of student inquiry. Grounded in the social studies curriculum, second grade students explore the concept of islands and waterways as a prelude to their unit on New York City. They each create individual clay models of an island, which are then mapped as part of an art/math unit that encourages students to "use the strokes like Van Gogh to create movement in the water." Writings about the islands are then developed as part of a literacy unit. As a result, students develop a strong knowledge of complex concepts that are scaffolded and reinforced in all areas of the curriculum, in alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. This targets college and career readiness from the earliest grade levels.
- Individualized, meticulously targeted supports enable all students, including subgroups and advanced learners, to consistently engage in rich, challenging units of study through a wide range of entry points. (1.2)
 - Differentiation with intensive support is the hallmark of all instruction. Students are provided with a variety of materials and entry strategies, at various levels, which enable them to work to the identical curriculum standards. Subgroup students in Integrated Collaborative Teaching classes work on the same non-fiction units of study as their counterparts in general education. Consequently, they are able to successfully glean information from aligned, comprehensible non-fiction texts and then insightfully participate in whole class discussions, raising levels of student expectation and achievement for all students.
 - Teachers, paraprofessionals, and student teachers, work with small groups of students to ensure that concepts being taught are made accessible but not watered down. In a self-contained grade 3/4 bridge class, students worked in six small groups with non-fiction literature at a variety of readability levels. Assigned adults guided students one-on-one and helped them to gather textual evidence from their reading by refocusing them on the topics as necessary. Because of this highly concentrated support, struggling subgroup students were able to identify evidence from text, self-correct as necessary, and produce standard-defined work products.
- The strategic use of all resources provides students with personalized, supervised small group assistance that has accelerated student growth and fostered a schoolwide dedication to academic success. (1.3)

- School leaders view every adult in the building as a resource to support student learning and growth. Trained paraprofessionals serve as academic intervention providers for small group instruction within the classroom. The restructuring of the school based support team has deepened individualized support for students and ensures that all academic and social-emotional needs are met. Further, the school's extensive partnerships with colleges enable them to seek out student teachers who provide small group support to students. As a result, students work in meaningful groups with adult support that consistently addresses student needs, and scores on State assessments have increased in both English language arts and math.
- Grade teams, scheduled to meet to two to three periods a week, are supplemented by teachers who volunteer one day a week "afterschool" to plan and develop agendas for the programmed meetings. These collaborative sessions, a consistent component of the school's culture, enable teachers to adjust classroom practices through lengthy discussions with colleagues and reflections around student work products. Consequently, instruction is coherent and challenging school-wide, enhancing college and career readiness for all students.
- Universal, school created assessments, painstakingly aligned to the curriculum, provide school leaders, teachers, and teacher teams with detailed data that defines student needs and drives instruction. (2.2)
 - Teachers collaboratively develop rubrics that are aligned to specific writing units, and then adjust these rubrics with their students to deepen levels of student understanding and expectation. The rubric-evaluated work then serves as a data source, targeting student and class specific needs. As a result, students are able to consistently self-assess, monitor their progress toward targeted goals, and improve their own understanding of what promotes achievement and mastery.
 - To identify student needs at the deepest levels, the school has developed grade level assessments encompassing a wide range of literacy skills and fluency levels, administered three to four times a year. Additionally, it conducts fall screenings at the beginning of the year. These evaluations, coupled with 'Develop Your Own' math periodic assessments, enable teachers to pinpoint student needs and adjust instruction strategically, accelerating student growth.
- The school is anchored by an intense commitment to mutual respect for all that fuels the universal focus on student achievement. (1.4)
 - An understanding of the power of language by the school's diverse population exemplifies the school's respectful philosophy. As a result of concerns in the Learning Environment Survey, a curriculum was developed that culminated in an assembly program where the impact of slurs and epithets was openly discussed and the words were ceremoniously "buried." To quote the principal, "Some behaviors are simply not allowed." Consequently, respect is the basis of learning "from the top down and in all areas," and student success is prioritized.

- Students are well known to all teachers and adults within the school community. Students in need of additional support are frequently “matched” to specific adults who serve as both mentors and “check-ins.” In addition, pupil personnel teams meet bi-weekly to monitor student support and progress. For these reasons, students and parents are committed to the school and feel that “the level of attention for students, especially with learning needs, is unique.”
- A unique and extensive database provides all teachers with an in-depth portrait of each student and enables the school to implement and track highly specific and personalized interventions. (2.3)
 - The school has developed an extraordinarily detailed database that includes both an academic and social/emotional portrait of every child. This tool enables staff to track student growth at the student, class, and grade and school level. Further, teachers have developed their own data collection tools that track class progress and permit them to monitor strategically prescribed student interventions. This makes it possible for them to provide insightfully narrative progress reports to parents at key intervals throughout the year. Consequently, school leaders, teachers, and teams, have ready access to data that defines and addresses trends, drives instruction, and monitors the impact of instructional supports. Analysis of this wealth of information led the school to revise its assessments and pacing calendars, enhancing student comprehension of the curriculum.
- Long-term, scaffolded goals, aligned to data defined needs and the Common Core initiative serve as a road map for all decisions school-wide. (3.1)
 - The school consistently cultivates its Comprehensive Educational Plan and Principal Performance goals from an in-depth analysis of data that monitors long- and short-term progress. Thus, goals that are coherent from year-to-year reflect a continued focus on improved student progress. This is exemplified by the school’s keen eye on its increasing special needs population. All school decisions, such as the hiring of a special education coordinator and expanding the practice of mainstreaming special education students into general education, are aligned to these goals. As a result, student performance on the State English language arts assessment nearly doubled in 2011 for this target population.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the degree of focus in recommendations for teacher growth in formal and informal observations to include a timeline for follow-up review. (4.1)
 - School leaders have developed a transparent, uniform protocol to measure teacher effectiveness and provide assistance for new teachers utilizing the Danielson Framework, in addition to a careful review of assessment data and student work. Teachers meet several times a year with school leaders to set collaboratively determined goals and identify support structures. Further, the frequent cycles of informal observations are documented to ensure that they align with defined teacher goals and school leaders review results during weekly cabinet meetings. This

ensures that all school leaders share consistent expectations for growth. Observations also capture and define next steps and connect the teacher to a mentor and/or coach or colleague who will be providing suitable professional development. However, next steps do not consistently include an expected timeframe for follow-up. This minimizes the clarity of an expected timeframe for change, limiting the acceleration of teacher growth.

- Ensure that there is a clearly defined, codified protocol to measure progress in reaching long- and short-term goals.(5.3)
 - Several times during the year school, leaders and their instructional cabinet utilize the school's exceptional database, informal observations, and teacher conferences, to reflect on progress towards interim- and long-term school-wide goals. Said databases, coupled with team reflections on student work and instructional practices provide ample information for the evaluation of progress toward teacher team interim goals. However, though most teams reflect on the growth of a targeted subgroup population towards measuring attainment of their goals, others reflect on the progress of a grade as a whole. Therefore, the assessment of the success of strategic team decisions in moving targeted students towards identified goals is not consistent. As a result, the evaluation and sharing of successful strategies relevant to supporting learning of subgroups of students does not always occur in a timely manner, limiting growth of teacher effectiveness and student success.
- Enhance support for teacher teams to ensure that all teams utilize the inquiry process to support student achievement and leadership development. (5.4)
 - Highly collaborative teacher teams meet regularly for extended periods of time each week. The work of the teams is universally devoted to reflection on teacher practice and review of student work as an indicator of the success of lesson implementation. In addition, school leaders and coaches frequently participate in collaborative teacher team meetings, and consistently review the mandatory minutes from the meetings posted on the school's database. However, though teams hold themselves highly accountable for the progress of their students, the use of a true inquiry structure with a target population that serves as a barometer for strategic instructional practices within a defined timeframe is not uniformly in place, preventing school leaders from adequately evaluating the work of teacher teams in moving targeted groups of students.
 - Distributive teacher leadership is a natural outgrowth of the collaborative and respectful culture at the school. Teachers consistently comment on their autonomy and their ability to take a strong role in school-wide decision-making. Additionally, teachers are well known to school leaders, teacher teams are universally teacher run and staff led workshops abound. Nevertheless, protocols for evaluating leadership development skills are somewhat organic and consequently do not completely provide strategic support to enhance leadership growth.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Brooklyn New School	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score				X
Quality Statement 1 – Instructional and Organizational Coherence: The school has a coherent strategy to support student learning that aligns curriculum, instruction and organizational decisions.				
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous and coherent curricula, including the Arts, for a variety of learners and aligned to key State standards?				X
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best, and ensure that it is: aligned to the curriculum, engaging, and differentiated to enable all students to produce meaningful work products?				X
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?				X
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes toward learning that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?				X
Quality Statement 2 – Gather and Analyze Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather, analyze and share information on student learning outcomes to understand school and student progress over time.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
2.1 Gather and analyze information on student learning outcomes to identify trends, strengths, and areas of need at the school level?				X
2.2 Align assessments to curriculum, use on-going assessment practices and analyze information on student learning outcomes to adjust instructional decisions at the team and classroom level?				X
2.3 Use grading policies and tools to enable school leaders and teachers to organize, aggregate, and analyze student performance trends to inform instruction and curriculum?				X
2.4 Engage families in school decision-making, activities and an open exchange of information regarding students progress toward school and class expectations?				X
Quality Statement 3 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently engage the school community and use data to set and track suitably high goals for accelerating student learning.				
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
3.1 Establish a coherent vision of future development that is reflected in a short list of focused, data-based goals that are understood and supported by the entire school community?				X
3.2 Use collaborative and data informed processes to set measurable and differentiated learning goals for student subgroups, and students in need of additional support?				X
3.3 Ensure the achievement of learning goals by tracking progress at the school, teacher team and classroom level?				X
3.4 Communicate high expectations to staff, students and families, and support students and families to achieve them?				X

Quality Statement 4 – Align Capacity Building: The school aligns its leadership development and structured professional collaboration around meeting the school’s goals and student learning and emotional needs.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection, with a special focus on new teachers?			X	
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning?				X
4.3 Provide professional development that promotes independent and shared reflection, opportunities for leadership growth, and enables teachers to continuously evaluate and revise their classroom practices to improve learning outcomes?				X
4.4 Integrate child/youth development, guidance/advisement support services and partnerships with families and outside organizations with the school-wide goals to accelerate the academic and personal growth of students?				X

Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has structures for monitoring and evaluating progress throughout the year and for flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.

<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	UD	D	P	WD
5.1 Evaluate the quality of curricular, instructional and organizational decisions, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school, with particular attention to the CCLS?				X
5.2 Evaluate systems for assessing students, organizing data, and sharing information with student and families, making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of policies and practices across the school?			X	
5.3 Establish and sustain a transparent, collaborative system for measuring progress towards interim and long term goals and making adjustments during the year and over time?			X	
5.4 Use data to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of structured professional collaboration, capacity building and leadership development strategies?			X	

Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed