

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

Mary D. Carter

Elementary School 151

50-05 31st Avenue

Queens

NY 11377

Principal: Jason Goldner

Dates of review: March 6 - 7, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Mary D. Carter School is an elementary school with 599 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 15% Black, 49% Hispanic, 14% White, 17% Asian and 5% other students. The student body includes 17% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 59% of the students enrolled and girls account for 41%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.5%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school meticulously collects and uses a wide range of data to create a concise picture of the schools and individual students' strengths and areas of need. (2.1)
 - School leaders use data from ARIS, New York Start, Progress Report, Quality Review, iReady diagnostic assessments, Teacher's College Reading and Writing Assessment, and student work to obtain a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of need. For example, the school determined that English language learners were lacking in the area of comprehension of literature. As a result, teachers revise their lessons by using new strategies such as listing character traits and keeping track of what characters say think or do on graphic organizers. This has led to an increase of 29% of ESL students in grade 5 moving two levels on the Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment.
 - The administration and data inquiry team analyzed the I-ready math diagnostic assessment results. It was evident that students across grades 3 through 5 struggled with the number and operations strand. Minute math drills were introduced as a strategy at a faculty conference and implemented daily in each classroom. As a result, student achievement on unit tests on numbers and operations increased significantly.
- School leaders and faculty align curricula to key standards and provide rigorous learning experiences that cognitively engage students, resulting in improved learning outcomes. (1.1)
 - The school uses units of study aligned to key indicators to implement standards-based lessons and support rigorous habits and higher order skills. This is correlated with the teacher's use of student work and formative data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks across grades. Curriculum plans integrate literacy, social studies, science and the arts. Learning activities incorporate the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies to cognitively engage students. For example, first grade students write informative texts and use facts to create reports about what they learned. Students are further challenged with activities such as semantic feature analysis to increase their academic vocabulary. As a result, curriculum and academic tasks challenge students and improve their learning as measured by the school's Common Core Learning Standards informational writing rubric.
- Teaching practices and lessons across classrooms align to the school wide framework for teaching and are typically differentiated so that students have multiple opportunities to meet their learning needs. (1.2)
 - The school's beliefs about how students learn best is reflected across classrooms through the workshop model, in which teachers conduct a mini lesson followed by independent work and small group instruction.

Lessons provide differentiated strategies and multiple entry points through activities such as the use of photography to tap into students' prior knowledge, high interest visuals, varied graphic organizers and numerous charts that scaffold content and facilitate learning for all students. Strategies and routines such as turn and talk, think aloud, and self-to-text connections, motivate students to participate in class and further develop their thinking. As a result, there is evidence of increased volume in non-fiction writing assignments as noted in published pieces and rubrics that demonstrate increased student thinking and significant progress in the genre of informative writing. In September, 177 students were on level 1 and as of January 1st, 137 students were on level 1 demonstrating a 9% decrease of high needs students school-wide.

- School leaders make purposeful organizational and curricular decisions across all aspects of the school to improve student learning and meet the school's instructional goals. (1.3)
 - The school uses its resources effectively to improve learning outcomes of all students. School leaders recognized math as an area of concern based on the progress report data. As a result, a math cluster position was created to provide targeted instruction to all students in grades 3, 4 and 5 with a focus on problem solving. Consequently, students have demonstrated gains as evidenced by the data from the iReady diagnostic assessment, indicating that an additional 22% grade 3 students, 7% grade 4 students and 2.5% grade 5 students performed on or above grade level.
 - The school schedule enables teams of teachers to meet regularly to share best practices and improve instruction for identified students. Teams analyzed English language arts data and decided to increase the rigor of vocabulary instruction. Instructional strategies such as the use of magnetic tiles to reconstruct difficult vocabulary and post-its to track new vocabulary were shared with the staff. As a result, students in grades 3 to 5 increased their vocabulary skills as indicated on the iReady assessments.
- School leaders and staff effectively use a wide range of assessment data that guides student grouping decisions and informs planning, resulting in a clear understanding of the performance of learners. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams and individual teachers effectively use baseline assessments, end of unit tests, Acuity, teacher-made tests and other common assessments that are aligned to key standards. The school's reading and math programs include a comprehensive assessment component which evaluates teachers' instructional and curricular decisions. Teachers use the assessment data to group for instruction and to modify lessons based on their students' academic needs. As a result, student groupings are flexible and academic deficits are met across grades and subjects. For example, the development of an "On Demand Writing Rubric" aligned with the Common Core Learning Standards is used to evaluate students' writing. The data demonstrates an improvement in the organization of students' writing as noted in 28% of the students progressing from Level 1 to Level 2; 16% of the students

progressing from Level 2 to Level 3 and 17% of the students progressing from Level 3 to Level 4.

- School leaders use a variety of purposeful evaluation tools to closely monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of pedagogy with a clear focus on deepening adult learning thereby impacting classroom instruction. (4.1)
 - Based on the recommendations provided by the 2010-2011 Quality Review with regard to effective feedback, school leaders implemented several changes. For example, the principal and assistant principals offer recommendations for teachers to improve their instructional practice through formal and informal observations and analysis of student work products. The school adopted Danielson's research based rubric to articulate clear expectations for teacher practice and use the framework for the development of teachers. As a result, the feedback is frequent, clear and aligned with individual teachers' goals which are indicated in the school's professional development plan. This enhances the school's ability to identify teachers' specific areas for improvement to strengthen their teaching craft and positively impact student outcomes.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance goal setting for greater consistency in identifying short term differentiated goals targeted to meet the needs of individual and groups of students in order to increase learning outcomes. (3.2)
 - Teacher teams use data to set long-term goals for students in greatest need of improvement, such as English language learners, Hispanic or Latino, and students with special needs. Most teams and classroom level goals have leveraged changes in some classrooms as evidenced by the use of intense phonics strategies to improve students' decoding skills. However, the practice of setting interim goals and the use of specific academic interim benchmarks to meet granular learning targets of identified groups of students is not yet fully embedded across the school. The developing nature of goal setting hinders opportunities to continually increase student progress.
- Establish systems to evaluate teacher team effectiveness and to build leadership capacity. (5.4)
 - School leaders are in the process of creating systems to evaluate the work of teacher teams. They use data binders to gather information related to the focus, agendas and next steps for the respective teams. However, administrators are just starting to use the data to assess the collaborative inquiry work across the school. Consequently, the school's ability to provide feedback to target improvements in the work of teacher teams and build leadership capacity is emerging.
- Expand systems for measuring progress towards achievement of goals so that timely adjustments are made across the school to accelerate learning for all students. (5.3)

- Although school leaders, teacher teams and individual teachers measure the progress of students by class, their action plans do not include projected gains for interim measures of progress for subgroups of students or individual high needs students. Therefore, the school does not monitor the progress of all relevant subgroups of students toward interim goals to determine necessary adjustments to plans or strategies by class grade or across the school. This limits the school's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of plans and impedes revisions that maximize impact and further improve academic achievement for all students.
- Strengthen the work of teacher teams so that the collaborative work results in capacity building to improve learning outcomes. (4.2)
 - Teachers participate in collaborative teams that share effective instructional strategies and recommend appropriate interventions to accelerate the learning of high need students. However, opportunities to fully partake in key decision-making are not fully embedded across all teams thereby limiting the impact of teacher's roles as leaders.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: Mary D. Carter 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