

Quality Review Report 2011-2012

John C. Thompson
Elementary School 052

450 BUEL AVENUE
STATEN ISLAND
NY 10305

Principal: Jane Mccord

Dates of review: February 8 - 9, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Kim Adams

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

John C. Thompson is an elementary school with 655 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 14% Hispanic, 75% White, and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 12% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2010 - 2011 was 93.6%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal has aligned human resources and materials in support of the school curriculum and teacher practices that are impacting student learning and achievement. (1.3)
 - o The principal's initiation of the Word Work program in grades kindergarten through grade 2, Every Day Math and Go Math for all grades, and Good Habits Good Readers program in grades 3 through 5, unifies the curriculum inter- and intra- grades and classes. The elimination of departmentalization in grades 3 and 4 reduces student movement, and student daily time off task and now promotes less disorganization and fewer disruptions. In addition, changes to morning protocols targeting lateness, has resulted in an additional 35 minutes focused on student learning. Integrated collaborative teaching classes, that included two grade levels, were reconfigured to accommodate a single class on grades 2, 3, 4, and 5, raising the focus of grade specific curriculums for students and leading to student learning. Coaches and mentors, selected from trained staff, work with new teachers. Consequently, these strategic changes are leading to improved student performance on all grade levels as evidenced in the Teachers' College Reading and Writing Pro (TCRWP) assessment scores.
- The school has developed a strong sense of community where students, families and teachers are about and respect each other which has positively impacted student's social emotional environment and affected student learning. (1.4)
 - Bulletin boards throughout the school reflect messages promoting school spirit, being kind to others and working together to meet goals. A bulletin board with student names on puzzle pieces shows all of the pieces being needed to complete the puzzle and make the school whole.
 - The principal's focus on kindness and community, started last year, that is continuing this year, is in response to the Online Occurrence Report (OORS), and daily anecdotes regarding conflicts and problems of both students and families. Some activities include workshops for students presented by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), "Stranger Danger" for grades K-1, "Bullying" for grades 2-5, and "Cyber bullying" for grades 2-3. "Fill Your Bucket" book series, embraced by families, students, and staff, embraces through reading, lessons, and activities that emphasize helping others. The Peaceful Playgrounds program, implemented last year and included training for school aides who work with students during lunch periods, provides for student specific games and strategies for conflict resolution. "Caught Being Good" implemented last year, allows school staff to know and support individual students socially and emotionally. The school keeps monthly tallies of students and classes awarded the highest numbers of students caught being good and students receive prizes for accruals in monthly points. Growth is evident each month in the numbers of students receiving points, which has been doubling since September. In addition, several assemblies on treating others with kindness by giving out points to students has led to positive changes in student behavior evidenced by fewer incidents in OORS, and an improved school tone leading to increased student learning.

- Administration provides consistent and normed support for teachers, both formally and informally, using a research based instrument that is changing teacher practice and is affecting student growth. (4.1)
 - o School leader's work closely to provide feedback to teachers through pre- and post-conversations using a research-based framework focusing on improving questioning techniques and establishing a culture of learning to guide teacher practice through regular cycles with clear expectations. Strategic and targeted support is focused on teachers who have demonstrated needing improvement in several ways. New teachers are paired with trained mentors or senior veteran teachers who work with them to guide practice. In addition, model lessons and coaching is used for any teacher as needed or requested. Inter-visitations are also utilized to model practices. The principal observes and works closely with a few teachers requiring focused attention and feedback. All of these techniques are resulting in teachers' usage of varied questioning and establishing across classrooms a culture leading to increased student thinking and learning.
- School leaders consistently and intentionally communicate high standards to staff, students, and families, which has led to changes in practices and impacted student behavior. (3.4)
 - o High expectations are communicated through the school's staff handbook, faculty conferences, grade meetings, walkthroughs, and feedback to staff. The principal models professionalism in her appearance and her daily messaging to staff during walkthroughs, and staff appreciate daily communications of high expectations. Letters written to staff commend them for their professionalism, which has led to a cohesive staff focused on increasing student achievement. The principal's high visibility and daily greetings to all deepens the sense of community and communicates high expectations to students and families, as she personalizes messages around attendance, lateness, and treating others with kindness. Parents receive letters throughout the year reinforcing the importance of attendance with reminders of school procedures, and the parent coordinator reinforces contact by sending emails to families. Attendance certificates and prizes given to students monthly, have resulted in improved attendance as evidenced in the Automated the Schools (ATS) attendance reports and reduced lateness, impacting student learning.
- The school's meaningful community partnerships create a variety of supports and opportunities for students, leading to positive social emotional outcomes and a greater sense of community, impacting student behavior and learning. (4.4)
 - o Strategic partnerships forged with several community partners address school concerns of student discipline, develop learning for the school community, and improve services to the school community. A partnerships with Staten Island Hospital focuses on ensuring that families have awareness of heart health. Training for "Peaceful Playgrounds" was introduced to the school to improve the quality of positive student engagement during recess each day. Creative After School Association, CASA, is a 10-week cycle afterschool program with classes in architecture, art, music, and creative movement, engaging 100 students across kindergarten through grade 5 to enhance student thinking and behavior. Evidence of projects from these clubs is seen on bulletin boards, displays and in conversations with students and families.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase the use of data-based academic tasks that reflect targeted supports for a diversity of learners including English language learners and students with disabilities so that all students have access to the curriculum content. (1.1)
 - o The school introduced and began implementing Universal Design this school year. It is also integrating Common Core Learning Standard (CCLS) tasks into their curriculum maps and classes. Teachers are at the beginning stages of implementation for both and it is evident that there are uneven examples of rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills demonstrated in student learning experiences and student work products exhibited across classrooms and grades, leading to uneven levels of student thinking.
- Sharpen pedagogical strategies that provide well-varied opportunities for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities, to engage cognitively in small and whole group instruction. (1.2)
 - o The school's structure and routines allow students to focus on tasks. However, the inconsistencies in teaching practices, alignment of scaffolding for greater student understanding, questioning techniques to encourage deeper thinking, examples of student-to-student thinking, and consistent checks for understanding throughout lessons, were not evident across all classrooms, resulting in inconsistent student thinking and student work products.
- Refine practices for developing curriculum-aligned assessments, including rubrics and teacher made assessments, so that teaching practices capture and meet the learning needs of individuals, and relevant subgroup of students. (2.2)
 - Teachers and teams engage in data analysis of student work and student assessments weekly. However, there is no evidence in meetings or minutes that teams have identified strengths and needs of the English language learner and/or the student with disabilities subgroups, nor are there identified teacher strategies to address their needs, thus affecting student learning.
 - The school designs and uses rubrics, assessments, and checks for understanding, as evident in some classrooms. Currently, students who use rubrics attached to work products expressed confusion in understanding the specificity of next steps. The inconsistencies in the ability of students to understand how to improve their work based on the teacher feedback and rubrics create uneven opportunities for improvement and hinders improved learning outcomes.
- Ensure that teacher teams and individual teachers are aware of trends captured by student data and that they receive feedback that will help them focus their work to impact student achievement and close achievement gaps. (3.3)
 - Teacher teams weekly analyze and discuss student work, assessments, and teaching strategies. However, the absence of teacher team analysis of student work and development of strategies for student subgroups negatively impacts their performance, progress, and closing the achievement gap.
 - Although families are familiar with goals and rubrics which accompany student work, helpful feedback to guide improvement to work products and move student thinking is not always evident. Confusion was expressed several times in

understanding next steps and opportunities for implementing suggested changes to improve student outcomes was not evident, leading to uneven levels of student progress.

- Develop an approach to teacher team meetings that includes the systematic analysis of student data and work products to improve instructional strategies to increase student outcomes. (4.2)
 - o Teacher teams meet weekly and are developing their understanding of analyzing student data as a team. Teachers are thoughtful about identifying new practices and trying them out individually but focused strategies as a team are not yet evident. Vertical teams also meet once a month and analyze student work and assessments. A system for deciding the focus of next steps for teacher practice was unclear, which leads to missed opportunities to change teacher practices across classrooms and improve student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2011-2012

School name: John C. Thompson	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
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