

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Charles A. Dorsey

Elementary School K067

**51 St. Edward's Place
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Temica Francis

Dates of review: March 7-8, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Charles A. Dorsey is an elementary school with 266 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 53% Black, 37% Hispanic, 4% White, and 5% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 14% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school incorporates clear teaching practices aligned to the curricula and the school's belief system of how students learn best that results in an increase in the quality of student work. (1.2)
 - The school continues to place value on creating a caring environment with reduced class size allowing students and teachers increased opportunities for individualized support. Teachers continue to strengthen their instructional practices such as small group instruction, student-to-student teamwork, and focused teaching points for new learning that is informed by a research-based framework for teaching. Targeted students are assisted with technological approaches such as Imagination Learning to support their vocabulary development and English language acquisition. The school's commitment to provide coherence between its belief system for how students learn best and instructional practices is evident across classrooms and has resulted in all students being able to produce and engage in quality academic work.
 - Teachers use a variety of small group configurations in all core content areas to scaffold learning for groups of students. The resources of additional support personnel, such as English as Second Language (ESL) teachers during block periods provide explicit support to students geared to the lesson. Deliberate school-wide work is focused on developing questions to sustain higher levels of student discussion, strengthening the workshop model format in English Language arts, tiered instruction and flexible grouping to strengthen instructional coherence from grade to grade, providing additional, multiple pathways for all students to access a more demanding curricula in order for all students to be successful. This has resulted in students being able to produce meaningful work products such as writing opinion pieces and personal narratives within more rigorous units of study.
- All stakeholders work as a unified team to create a respectful and inclusive environment of trust that provides academic and social-emotional supports for both students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school's Building Council is committed to ensuring that supports and structures are in place that ensures students and staffs are safe. The school has a set of nonnegotiable rules and responsibilities that not only address creating an environment to support teaching and learning but also the respect and trust needed in order to maintain a positive school culture. Teachers have multiple opportunities to provide feedback to the principal about the school environment to increase their sense of belonging and decision-making that results in adjustments. Faculty conferences and team meetings, staff handbooks and memos are used to increase collaboration, learning amongst staff, define expectations, and enhance the excitement for learning. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves while discussing their work and class successes and struggles. For example, students participated in a letter writing campaign to encourage the formation of a student government in order to have their voices heard in some of the school's decision-making processes. In turn, the principal is working with the cabinet to establish the Student Government Organization (SGO). Teachers are encouraged to learn from each

other and develop the functionality of teacher teams in order to become comfortable in sharing their successes and challenges professionally as instructional practices are refined. As a result, teachers and students are afforded the opportunity to grow and develop in a safe environment.

- The school has formal and informal structures to support the communication paths for student information to be free flowing to those persons interacting with students. Communication with support personnel such as the guidance counselor and ESL teachers with the larger staff enables student needs to be known to the staff in order to better meet their needs. The Children are Reason Enough Team (CARE) meetings and the Response to Intervention (RTI) team are the formal structures in which students academic and behavioral needs are discussed. These teams meet twice per month and review multiple sources of data such as student progress, attendance, and guidance referrals in order to determine the appropriate supports necessary leading to a cohesive plan that supports resources to enhance student learning. After reviewing attendance data, students who exhibited high absenteeism were flagged and discussions and supports were provided to families in order to support these students to attend school on a more consistent basis. The school has noticed an improvement of attendance of identified students compared to last year. As a result, both personal and academic growth of all learners is supported.
- Teachers use rubrics, classroom/common assessments, grading policies, and analysis of student work to assess student progress that results in instructional adjustments. (2.2)
 - In English Language Arts (ELA), teachers rely on Assessment Pro, an online grading system, to examine student data focused on struggling students not meeting benchmarks. As grade teams, trends are analyzed such as students having difficulty with close reading of text in order to make instructional adjustments to curriculum maps. For instance, additional mini lessons were planned to be more explicit in teaching about reading skills needed to support students as well as increased shared experiences with complex materials. Additionally, teachers use running records, teacher-made assessments, Acuity, and work sampling systems are common assessments to determine student's next steps, student groupings for tiered instruction within Response to Intervention (RTI) programming and instructional and pedagogical adjustments to curricula maps and grade/team planning sheets. The school aligned its report card with the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the instructional shifts outlined in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). Using these assessment practices, the school provides accurate feedback to teachers and students regarding student progress.
 - Teachers rely on teacher created assessments, running records, work samples and unit tests to determine student needs and progress toward goals. From this data teachers determine strategy lessons and small group instruction for daily classroom use. Across all grade levels small tutorials support targeted students as they master grade-specific skills. Teachers also perform a gap analysis between what students need to know and what they know in order to customize lesson planning to meet these needs. Teachers monitor and check for understanding throughout lessons through mid-workshop interruptions and student questioning to ensure that students are able to participate in the learning. Students reflect on their own work using a rubric to determine how well they are completing tasks. Teachers use these progress monitoring

practices consistently across classrooms to regularly make adjustments to their instructional plans ensuring that all student learning needs are met.

- School leaders support teachers through observations, analysis of classroom data, student work samples and effective feedback that promote professional growth and enhanced instructional practices. (4.1)
 - The school participates in the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP), which provides on-site support to school leaders in documenting low-inference observations of classroom practice. Teachers have been observed four times during the year. Feedback and next steps are analyzed by school leaders in order to calibrate their findings and ratings of school staff. School leaders focus on providing teachers opportunities to be reflective of observed classroom lessons and utilize the evidence of student work samples and class data to support the ratings in specific domains on the selected research based, teacher effectiveness rubric. As a result of this observation feedback process, emerging practices especially around lesson planning and questioning are highlighted in the principal's weekly bulletin in order to be transparent about the great work teachers are doing. This enables teachers to receive effective feedback about their practices in a consistent and timely manner allowing them to continue to develop their classroom practice and remain accountable for their improvement.
 - The school has selected the Danielson framework as the research-based rubric used to measure teacher effectiveness. Feedback to teachers is based on the rubric and focused on identified goals that the school has selected this year. Focusing on the domains of questioning and teacher planning, the rubric allows feedback to be specific and clear and highlights next steps in order for teachers to become more effective. Several teachers have experienced a more intensive monitoring of their growth because they have selected additional domains outlined in the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE) and the Teacher Effectiveness Pilot (TEP) program to receive feedback and next steps resulting in a more rapid development of their effectiveness as measured on the Danielson framework continuum. This has led to increased levels of questioning and more well-developed lesson plans.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to design curricula that is challenging and demanding so as to address coherent instruction in all subject areas, especially mathematics, allowing pathways of access for all learners. (1.1)
 - The school has adopted a new literacy program for all students which is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and incorporates the instructional shifts of increased reading of informational texts and citing text-based evidence to support writing. Curriculum maps and teacher lesson plans reflect a more rigorous curriculum in English Language Arts (ELA). The school also collaborates with Rainforest Alliance to assist in alignment of the science and social studies curricula with a focus on exploration and inquiry utilizing ELA strategies to support report writing and short answer responses. However, the school uses Singapore math for students in grades K – 2 which focuses on building strong foundational knowledge and deep conceptual understanding reflective of integrating the Common Core Learning Standards while students in grades 3 – 5 continue to use Everyday Mathematics with a revised scope and

sequence. Primary grade students are exposed to math concepts that require writing and speaking about their understanding as part of daily instruction. The use of the two different math programs illustrates the gap between current curriculum and the more demanding standards of the Common Core resulting in limited school-wide coherence in math instruction for all learners.

- School leaders and teacher teams use data from Acuity, teacher-created assessments and student work to inform their planning of academic tasks. Teacher teams also utilize the Common Core library online tasks as exemplars when designing their own tasks. Moreover, when planning curricula the school has focused on the performance of special education students, English language learners, and students in the lowest third in English Language Arts and math as measured by last year's state performance data. Strategies are incorporated in lessons with students that are struggling and teachers plan and modify group work in response to an analysis of student work. This was evident across classrooms in English Language Arts. However, limited evidence of detailed curriculum maps that link major topics within grades, grade-specific instructional planning by teams and student work samples that reflect a deeper understanding of concepts from multiple perspectives in mathematics and other content areas hampers the consistent refinement of the curricula so that all students have the opportunity to be cognitively engaged in rigorous academic tasks.
- Strengthen the coherence between organizational decisions and instructional goals in order to ensure school goals are met and students work products continue to develop. (1.3)
 - The school is committed to ensuring that every classroom is equipped with computers and SMART board technology to enhance classroom lessons and provide students the ability to deepen their work in research that supports the school's writing initiatives. The school is also committed to ensuring that teachers have the opportunities for professional growth and have set aside funding to support a United Federation of Teachers teacher center and external professional development consultants. Materials for professional study groups and allocations for substitute teachers, allowing teachers to participate in outside professional development, have also been scheduled. However, the school's lack of resources in informational text materials, stocked classroom libraries and other instructional materials limit the school's ability to reach its long-range plans to fully integrate Common Core materials into daily student work activities and resulting products.
 - Teachers are provided with the common planning periods 3 to 4 times per week and the school now functions on a 90 minute block for teacher planning time. Out of classroom personnel schedules have been reviewed and modified in order to ensure that students are not removed from classes during their literacy and mathematics to receive supplemental intervention services. School leaders receive copies of team meetings' agendas and minutes. The principal also attends meetings to ensure protocols and the school's instructional goals are the focus of discussion. However, during observed team meetings a systematized approach for protocols that structure their work was not evident. Thus, this lack of a deliberate structure for all teacher team work lessens the ability of school leaders to monitor that the work of teams are leading to improved instruction and for all learners to be engaged in challenging work.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Charles A. Dorsey	UD	D	P	WD			
Overall QR Score			X				
Instructional Core							
<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.1 Design engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula, including the arts, physical and health education, 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 that is informed by a research-based, common teaching framework and is aligned to curricula, engaging and meets the needs of all learners so that all students produce meaningful work products?			X				
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?			X				
School Culture							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.4 Maintain a culture of mutual trust and positive attitudes that support the academic and personal growth of students and adults?			X				
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students and families, and provide supports to achieve them?			X				
Systems for Improvement							
<i>To what extent does the school ...</i>	UD	D	P	WD			
1.3 Make strategic organizational decisions to support the school's instructional goals and meet students' learning needs as evidenced by meaningful student work products?			X				
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?			X				
4.1 Use the observation of classroom teaching with a research-based, common teaching framework 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				
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 the CCLS?			X				
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed