

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Clara Cardwell

K308

**616 Quincy Street
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: George Patterson

Dates of review: October 24 - 25, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Clara Cardwell is an elementary and middle school with 644 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 83% Black, 13% Hispanic, 2% Asian, 1% white and 1% American Indian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 21% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 90.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school has created a nurturing learning environment where teachers and students have opportunities to grow and achieve their personal best. (1.4)
 - After review of information gathered from the school's Learning Environment Survey and feedback from constituents including network specialists, the school hired a dean of students and maintained counseling personnel to further support students in making the necessary adjustments to succeed in school. The school created a student government where representatives from each grade have opportunities to voice concerns and provide input for improvement of school maintenance, climate and academic culture. The school also keeps an 'open door' policy that promotes trust and encourages students to seek help in addressing issues that may arise. Additionally, through funds acquired from a '21st Century' grant the school provides enrichment opportunities during 'Club' period on Friday afternoons and academic intervention support on Saturdays and during 'Peer Tutoring', 'Morning Math' and afterschool programs. These efforts have led to a reduction in the number of incidents and suspensions and in students expressing that they feel "safe" and supported in school and are learning more than they did last year.
- Teachers welcome opportunities to participate in professional development learning activities and collaborations to strengthen instruction, promote learning and develop their leadership capacity. (4.2)
 - All teachers collaborate at least twice weekly in teacher teams that focus on meeting the needs of target population students, improving instructional strategies and planning lessons reflective of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). At the meetings teachers share, critique and offer instructional strategies to enhance higher order thinking and student learning. This has resulted in teachers noting progress of targeted skills based on student work products examined. In addition, most teachers volunteered to work with students during the winter recess last school year and they have met voluntarily on selected Saturdays to receive additional training on the (CCLS) from a consultant and collaborate in the development, alignment and implementation of the (CCLS) in their grades and classrooms. Within this framework teachers are given greater autonomy in the development of curriculum and units of study for their students. The principal also encourages teacher participation as grade leaders and members of school planning teams to further advance their leadership and decision making capacity. As a result, the school received a higher overall grade score in the Progress Report over the previous year.
- The school makes organizational decisions with an emphasis on professional development and program scheduling that support improvement initiatives to maximize student progress. (1.3)

- In response to student academic needs in English language arts and math, the principal prioritized budget expenditures to focus on professional development and improvement of instruction. The school hired consultants from several companies and organizations to work with teachers in areas of need that include early childhood education and the development of curriculum reflective of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) for all grades. Thus, lessons include higher order performance tasks and CCLS aligned rubrics in the areas of writing text based arguments and math problems that require thinking and multiple steps to solve. These engaging and more challenging experiences are starting to yield in depth discussions and more meaningful work products. Additionally, the school purchased an assessment program aligned to State tests, to determine individual students' baseline needs for instruction in literacy and math and monitor their progress as measured by benchmark tests. Subsequently, teachers are beginning to use the outcomes to adjust instruction to meet the needs of groups and individual students including students with disabilities. In efforts to increase time on task for students and opportunities for staff collaboration, the school programs double periods in English language arts and math for students and provides time twice a week for all teachers to meet in collaborative teacher teams. The English as a Second Language teacher pushes in to the classroom to support English language learners during subject area instruction. Preliminary formative assessment results in literacy and math, positive teacher feedback to the principal and observations of noted improvement during classroom snapshot visits indicate that these additional resources and organizational structures are promoting improvements in teacher practices and increasing student progress.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop greater coherence of the school's curriculum, instructional shifts and Common Core Learning Standards across the grades to ensure higher student achievement. (1.1)
 - The school has begun working on creating curriculum maps by grade level that integrate Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) in English language arts and math. However, rigorous instructional activities were not evident in several classrooms. In these classrooms lessons were mostly teacher dominated with limited peer interaction that would generate conversation, sharing and analysis. This hinders creativity and achievement for students. Additionally, in most classrooms there was little evidence of planning higher order learning tasks for student sub-groups. This reduces opportunities for challenging all students, especially students with disabilities and English language learners to maximize engagement for a diverse student population.
- Improve the consistency of classroom activities to provide multiple entry points and tasks that promote high levels of thinking for all students. (1.2)
 - The school has expressed its belief in providing multiple entry points and challenging tasks as a means to meet the needs of students performing at various levels. However, this practice was inconsistent across the grades. In some classrooms lessons minimally included activities or teaching strategies designed to support in depth authentic learning

opportunities for student subgroups and students performing at different levels. This adversely affects understanding and skill development needed to maximize progress for all students.

- While there was evidence of student participation in all classrooms, engagement in assigned tasks that generated higher order thinking was inconsistent across the grades. In several classrooms, discussions and student participation in lesson presentations were minimal. Additionally, student folders and notebooks did not contain sufficient work products reflective of the learning. This lack of quality work diminishes the ability for students to be critical thinkers and limits academic growth.
- Increase assessment analysis practices across the school to make instructional adjustments to meet the needs of all students. (2.2)
 - Classroom teachers and teacher teams gather data from student work and a recently implemented school-wide assessment to identify skills in need of improvement. In addition, students fill out 'exit slips' at the end of lessons to provide teachers feedback on what they have learned. However, the use of these outcomes to measure progress toward goals and adjust instructional practices is not consistent. This hinders teachers' abilities to use the information to plan effectively to meet the academic needs of students thus, limiting opportunities to consistently provide suitable instruction and accelerate progress for all learners.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name:	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