



**Department of
Education**

Dennis M. Walcott, Chancellor

**Quality Review: Quality Review Report
Division of Academics, Performance, and Support
2012-13**

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Phyllis Wheatley

Elementary School 328

**330 ALABAMA AVENUE
BROOKLYN
NY, 11207**

Principal: DOUGLAS AVILA

Dates of review: Dec 3 - 4, 2012

Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Gonzalez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

P.S. 328 Phyllis Wheatley is a/an K-8 school with 489 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 56% Black, 41% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 85.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is underdeveloped.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school's curriculum reflects the integration of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the development of academic tasks to engage students in challenging learning experiences. (1.1)
 - Curriculum maps and units of study, especially for English language arts are designed around the school's chosen standards for reading comprehension with a focus on developing student skills in citing textual evidence in literary responses and comprehending informational texts of varying complexity. Similarly, documents for math reveal the school's attempts to ensure that the major work of each grade is a priority as outlined in the CCLS and the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). Units of study include a list of resources and learning targets, related vocabulary and some descriptions culminating with student tasks aligned to the chosen standards. As a result there is evidence of the school's focus on ensuring that the units and tasks will consistently engage all students in rigorous learning experiences.
- Teams of teachers utilize rubrics and refine common assessments to inform instructional adjustments in order to address student needs. (2.2)
 - Teachers use some ready-made, standards-aligned, task specific rubrics as well as those created and modified by grade level teams to assess student writing. For example, some fifth grade assignments required students to read informational text about human rights, and explain their thinking about the violation of these rights. Teachers used a four-point rubric to assess student writing for development, organization, and conventions. In math, an early grade team used a common assessment across kindergarten classes to determine students' skills in counting, comparing and identifying "least" and "greatest." These assessment practices are beginning to illuminate patterns and trends in student performance thus leading to individual and teams of teachers' ability to make targeted adjustments to instruction at the grade and classroom level.
- Structures for professional collaboration and inquiry provide all teachers opportunities to share ideas and make decisions to improve instruction and student learning. (4.2)
 - Grade level teacher teams meet at least twice weekly for collaborative planning and once a week for inquiry work. These structures serve as the primary vehicle for sharing best practices. Teachers discuss ideas for adjusting instruction for targeted groups of students that are not performing at mastery in reading and/or math and use protocols for looking at data and student work for the students they share. Teachers state that they find this work, and feedback from colleagues about the academic tasks they design for their students, to be a valuable resource as professional development. For example, the early grade team's review of student work for math led to a discussion suggesting ways to make the task more rigorous and include supports that might address visual learners. Each week a different teacher facilitates the meeting and presents student work from their class for discussion and next steps. As a result teachers are now taking increasing ownership in the decision making about instructional improvements for their class as well as for their grade, aimed at improving learning outcomes for students

What the school needs to improve

- Improve teacher practice so that across grades and content areas, all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities, are engaged in rigorous lessons and are able to produce meaningful work products.(1.2)
 - Many students were asked to complete a learning style inventory at the beginning of the school year and teachers reviewed responses to identify students' preferred modalities. Teachers who administered this survey say they use the information in conjunction with performance data for planning instruction. The principal and teachers stated that students learn best when their learning styles and needs are attended to in lessons and tasks. The principal also stated that he expects lessons to be rigorous, interactive, and engaging. However, in most classrooms, teachers direct most of the lesson and student discussion is minimal. In special education classrooms, teachers direct most of the learning with minimal opportunities for students to uncover concepts on their own. There is limited evidence of rigor or that teachers are delivering lessons to meet students' identified special needs. For example, in a fourth grade class, students were working in groups reading stories from skills cards while the teacher worked with a small group on a different story. Students stated that the skills cards were much easier than the independent reading they enjoy and one student was completely disengaged because he had no support for accessing English. There was no evidence of scaffolds or support for English language learners during the teacher directed portion of lessons. In another classroom in which the teacher made note that several students had previously read the text she was introducing, there was no attempt to vary the entry point for them within the lesson. Thus, across grades and classrooms, there are many missed opportunities to engage most students in rigorous learning or thinking, inhibiting their academic growth.
- Establish a school wide approach to discipline and student engagement that promotes respectful relationships and supports the academic and personal growth of students and adults. (1.4)
 - Students, parents and teachers say the school tone has improved with regard to safety and management issues which were "very difficult" and "disruptive" within classrooms as well as in hallways and in the cafeteria. The administration has established expectations for student conduct throughout the building and assigned deans and school aides to help manage areas where large groups of students assemble. Student line up and movement throughout the cafeteria are detailed in several administrative documents intended to increase order and support positive interactions during large group activities. However, there are frequent incidents of adults speaking in elevated tones to children and reprimanding them harshly in front of their peers. These are then addressed formally by the principal. Some students stated that disciplinary consequences and rewards are unevenly and unfairly issued by teachers and they do not always feel they can go to an adult to speak about their issues. Parents also reported they are concerned about how some adults speak to the children, even in their presence. There has been some work with an external partner to engage teachers in professional development on classroom management strategies. However, participation and follow up from the sessions have not been consistent for all teachers and there is no school wide approach to discipline. The negative climate and absence of consistently implemented procedure and routines for the support of students' personal and academic behaviors hinders the social, emotional, and academic development of students. Limited and inconsistent support for teachers additionally precludes the school's ability to establish clear models of respectful interactions with students.
- Develop systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the school's organizational and instructional decisions in response to students' learning needs with particular attention to the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. (5.1)

- The principal has initiated a variety of initiatives to improve teaching and learning based on student performance data, feedback on the prior year's Quality Review report and the Citywide Instructional Expectations. The school's focus around curriculum alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards is ongoing and evident in the teacher teamwork. Teachers were introduced to the Danielson teaching framework, its related rubrics and competencies last spring and are beginning to receive frequent feedback about their practice. Additionally, teacher teams are participating in the use of protocols for looking at student work and data. The principal stated that there is no structure or system yet to determine the effectiveness of these initiatives but that he is exploring some ideas about how these may develop over the next few months. The lack of systems for evaluating organizational decisions limits the leadership's ability to assess progress towards school wide goals, make timely adjustments, or ensure that students are working to meet expectations as outlined by the Common Core Learning Standards.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Phyllis Wheatley	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