

# Quality Review Report 2012-2013

**Brooklyn Brownstone School**

**Early Childhood K628**

**272 McDonough Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11233**

**Principal: Nakia Haskins**

**Dates of review: December 10-11, 2012**

**Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

## Part 1: The school context

### *Information about the school*

Brooklyn Brownstone School is an early childhood school with 199 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 89% Black, 7% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 4% 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 93.4%.

### **Overall Evaluation**

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The school curriculum, including the arts, reflects the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to maximize student learning and progress. (1.1)
  - In addition to developing curriculum maps and units of study aligned to the CCLS, the school analyzed student data outcomes and identified key standards. These included oral language development, writing across all curriculum areas, questioning, using text to support an argument and solving multi-step problems in math to deepen thinking skills and promote college and career readiness. In several classes students engaged in collaborative discussions in response to higher order questions and assignments and used writing to document their work. For example, in one math class students worked in groups to discuss various strategies for solving word problems using fractions and wrote their findings on chart paper to reference during the whole class share out activity. During the weekly teacher team meetings staff discuss curricular standards and plan and refine related tasks in order to increase instructional rigor. The special education support service teacher, who pushes into classrooms to accommodate students with disabilities and ensure they are learning the required curricular mandates, participates as an equal partner in team discussions. The art and music teachers also work with classroom teachers and integrate curricular units with the arts to reinforce concepts. For example, the art teacher infused character development by having students draw self-portraits with distinguishing traits of characters they studied in class, while the music teacher had pre-kindergarten students write lyrics about the monthly school theme of “courage.” Consequently, all students, including students with disabilities, participate in more challenging activities that require thinking, discussion and engagement to enrich learning experiences and accelerate progress.
- Classroom practices accommodate students’ instructional needs while engaging students in challenging tasks to promote performance at high levels. (1.2)
  - The school has implemented a research-based teaching framework throughout the school with a focus on planning lessons that increase the use of academic language and higher order questioning. In several classrooms answers to questions required that students explain their thinking and rationale for their responses. For example, in an English language arts class, the children engaged in a discussion of a poem where they had to explain the author’s purpose in attributing human traits to an inanimate object and indicate what each of the traits represented and why. In a science class, children explained their thinking, using scientific language, on why they chose specific tools as being more suitable to use when adapting them to gather different food types. This promoted oral language fluency and the use of evidence to support assertions. In addition, the special education support service teacher used a push-in model to engage students with disabilities as well as other students who needed additional support to ensure they were successful in learning and completing the tasks. Subsequently, there is greater student participation at

high levels as noted in classroom discussions, activities and student work reflective of the school's curricular goals.

- The school makes organizational decisions with an emphasis on professional development to support improvement initiatives and maximize student progress. (1.3)
  - In response to data from the Progress Report, the school budgeted funds to target resources to raise student performance levels in English language arts and math. The school purchased programs in literacy and math that align to the CCLS and network specialists provide monthly training for teachers to ensure its effective implementation. The school also increased the use of technology to extend learning and computer literacy. This includes Smart Boards that facilitate lesson presentations, two computers in each classroom for individual student work and portable laptops for whole class or small group instruction. Additionally, every teacher has been given an iPad to track student progress and support staff use of them for small group work. This has led to increased student engagement and performance as noted in greater classroom participation, higher English language arts and math scores on benchmark unit assessments and teacher feedback.
  - The school has programmed time in the schedule for teachers to meet weekly by grade level to plan academic units of study and share best practices to address academic needs for target population students. Teachers also meet in a “cross grade” team once a month to continuously refine alignment of curriculum and instruction across grade levels. Resource and guidance personnel sit in the meetings and have input in the planning and sharing of data and ideas for improvement. The collaborations have promoted deeper discussions of individual student outcomes and the development of strategies for re-teaching to ensure student learning. For example, in one of the teams, analysis of student work indicated that a subgroup of students demonstrated a need for more instruction in writing details to illustrate ideas. The discussion led teachers to determine that there was not enough modeling taking place during lesson presentations and they agreed that they would include more modeling of strategies for writing details. As a result, teachers make instructional adjustments to accelerate progress.
- Staff utilizes school-wide assessments aligned to curricula to inform and adjust instruction to address students’ needs. (2.2)
  - At the classroom level teachers use a variety of assessments to evaluate comprehension and math skills. Teachers utilize running records and conference notes during reading, writing and math activities to assess progress and prescribe next steps. Teacher feedback to students via comments on their written work, and additional input in the form of critiques from classmates during peer interactions, provide meaningful information to students to encourage self-assessment and ownership of their learning. Furthermore, teachers review students' use of rubrics and completed exit slips to check for understanding, adjust lessons and reconfigure groupings in a timely, effective manner. For example, during the lesson in one class the teacher adjusted the group assignments to sit with a selected group of students who demonstrated difficulty in understanding the lesson content by

not accurately completing the assigned tasks. The principal and teachers also access periodic assessment data in English language arts and math and end of unit test data in all subject areas to adjust classroom and school-wide focus for continued growth. For example, outcomes in the recently administered Acuity test in math indicate that students have not fully mastered their multiplication skills. To address this finding teachers now include multiplication drills in all math lessons to reinforce the skill. As a result, teachers are able to provide the accommodations needed to deepen the learning and maximize progress towards student goals.

### **What the school needs to improve**

- Enhance the use of a research-based teaching framework and extend analysis of student outcomes to elevate instructional practices and deepen the levels of professional growth. (4.1)
  - The principal uses the Danielson Framework to conduct formal observations and frequent "snapshot" classroom visits for teachers, including teachers new to the school, and provides verbal and written feedback on overall lessons and activities observed. The feedback consists of lesson descriptions and suggested next steps for improvement. In addition, the principal reflects upon student growth by analyzing student work seen in the classroom. However, the use of student data from formative and summative assessments is not consistently included in the analysis. This reduces opportunities to provide suggestions for next steps that are directly connected to student performance and continued growth and, thus, adversely affects student progress. Further, while the feedback provided includes specific information regarding expectations for best practices to support teacher growth, alignment with teachers' professional goals is not uniformly evident in the reports. This lessens opportunities for teachers to reflect on their practice and progress towards meeting their individual goals for continued development to maximize student achievement.
- Expand the processes for school level decisions to make adjustments as needed and enhance coherence of curricular and instructional practices. (5.1)
  - The school has developed systems to evaluate the level of implementation of the CCLS and make adjustments accordingly. These include analysis of school-wide program assessment outcomes in English language arts and math, running records and Dibels in reading, analysis of student work and classroom observations with feedback. However, while these systems are in place for English language arts and math, they have only recently been developed for science and social studies. This has resulted in the limited implementation of systems for evaluation in these content areas and has hindered the ability of the leadership to provide timely feedback for maximum impact on student success.
  - The school has established a culture of learning and trust and has shared the expectations of the CCLS with teachers and parents at workshops, team meetings and one-on-one conversations. Processes for monitoring levels of understanding and implementation to adjust and support the expectations of the CCLS include minutes and agendas that are shared with the principal and school-wide during professional development half days, monthly staff conferences and the monthly newsletter. The school also reviews data from

parent surveys and assesses input from all constituents at School Leadership Team meetings for additional information on the quality of school culture. However, despite these efforts and ongoing evaluation, parent participation at workshops has not substantially increased. Additionally, processes for monitoring CCLS expectations among parents in content areas have not been fully assessed. This diminishes the level of coherence in the culture of the school and hampers in-depth understanding of the CCLS among parents, thus lowering the impact on student progress.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Brooklyn Brownstone School	UD	D	P	WD			
<b>Overall QR Score</b>			X				
<b>Instructional Core</b>							
<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				
<b>School Culture</b>							
<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				
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>							
<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 <b>inquiry approach</b> 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					
<b>Quality Review Scoring Key</b>							
<b>UD</b>	<b>Underdeveloped</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>WD</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>