

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

Ellen Lurie

Elementary 005

**3703 TENTH AVENUE
MANHATTAN
NY,10034**

Principal: WANDA SOTO

Dates of review: February 11 - 12, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Elsa Nunez

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Ellen Lurie is an elementary school with 778 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, and 93% Hispanic students. The student body includes 46% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2011 - 2012 was 93.9%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is Proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Across classrooms teachers implement rigorous tasks in order to improve academic outcomes for all students. (1.1)
 - The school has developed interdisciplinary units, including the integration of art, to support students in developing reading and writing strategies. For example, during a biography unit teachers used paintings by Pablo Picasso and Diego Velasquez to teach students how to make inferences by observing art pieces and develop theories about the artists. The culminating task required students to cite evidence from texts read to prove theories regarding the chosen artist. Across grades, teachers implement common teaching points from units that focus on non-fiction reading and writing to convey an opinion or to persuade. In math, teachers substituted units from the Math in Focus program to provide students with greater practice in activities that require verbal and written articulation of process used to solve problems, create model representations, and apply concepts learned to real world situations. As a result, students explore topics deeply, provide details from texts reads, use content specific vocabulary, and make real world connections, as evidenced by student work.
 - Teachers develop tasks using Hess' Cognitive Rigor Matrix to focus on having students analyze and evaluate information extracted from multiple sources such as videos, articles, and texts read, to engage students in rigorous tasks. This is evident in a unit on African ecosystems that required students to engage in several interim tasks, culminating in the writing a persuasive letter to The Wildlife Conservatory Society explaining why and how an endangered species should be saved. In math students engage in activities that require modeling and application to demonstrate understanding of key concepts such as using knowledge of area and perimeter to find multiple ways of arranging kitchen appliances or knowledge of capacity to adjust amount of liquid needed for recipes. Furthermore, students are consistently asked to identify strategies used for solving math problems and explain their rationale for choosing the strategy, thus demonstrating comprehension. Classroom observations revealed that students consistently ask themselves and classmates, "What evidence supports that answer?" so that all are held accountable for demonstrating a deep comprehension of concepts.
- Coherent teaching practices across classrooms provide students with scaffolds that support and challenge all students. (1.2)
 - The school is focusing on Danielson's competencies related to designing coherent instruction, and questioning techniques, in order to improve the consistency of effective teaching practices across classrooms. The school's development of a coherent vision of good instruction consists of clearly articulated teaching points and explicit modeling of strategies by the teacher, followed by small group or individual activities to allow for the gradual release of responsibility of learning to students. Across classrooms, teaching points tell students explicitly what they are to learn and what strategies they will need to apply, group activities are developed to allow collaborative completion of tasks, and students are consistently asked to explain answers. Consequently, student work and observations demonstrate that students elaborate on responses by providing details, examples, and by citing evidence from texts read.

- Teacher teams purposefully plan strategies to address the needs of subgroups of students, including English language learners and students with disabilities. Observations indicate that student work is used to develop differentiated tasks for groups of students and to strategically group students so that they can support each other and receive targeted instruction. Across classrooms, teachers generally ask open-ended questions and encourage students to question each other in order to promote critical thinking of content being learned. Teachers also provide students with graphic organizers, word charts, and visuals, to support students during independent work. As a result, classroom observations and discussions with students demonstrate high levels of student engagement.
- The school has established a safe, nurturing environment that promotes the academic and social development of students and adults. (1.4)
 - The school's long standing relationship with the Children's Aid Society helps support its mission of being a "full service" community school via a strong collaboration that provides health, dental, and psychological support for at-risk students who require on-going services. The school employs two guidance counselors who provide mandated and at risk counseling services to promote the emotional well being of students. In addition, guidance counselors have developed units related to topics such as diversity, caring, and friendship to promote positive character development. Students who need additional attention are supported by the school's intervention team working with teachers to develop plans to address specific needs of students and by pushing in during instructional time to provide targeted assistance. Posters throughout the school re-enforce expected behavior and are also highlighted as part of morning announcements to re-enforce and promote school values. Teachers meet with the assistant principals to regularly monitor student's attendance and referrals are made to the attendance team that conducts outreach to parents in the form of phone calls, letters, and home visits, to promote high attendance rates. The school's efforts to address the social and emotional needs of students have resulted in a decrease in suspensions as compared to last year.
 - To promote parent engagement, the school sends home monthly calendars and quarterly newsletters announcing events and providing information regarding key dates. Parent workshops are scheduled on a weekly basis to provide information regarding the increased rigor of the instructional program so that parents can support the school's efforts in preparing students for the demands of the CCLS. In addition to workshops, parents are also offered courses such as English as a second language, the teaching of literacy skills at an early age, and computer classes, which allows them to support their children at home. In collaboration with CAS, parents are engaged in discussions on college and career readiness so that they are enlisted in motivating their children to think about the road to higher education. As a result, parents believe that they are better equipped to support the school's effort as confirmed by parent interviews. For example, one parent stated that this has mobilized her to begin researching colleges with her second grader to foster a college bound vision in her child.
- A variety of assessments is used by administrators and teachers to measure student learning and adjust curricular decisions. (2.2)
 - Teacher teams have developed grade level common rubrics to analyze student work in order to assess progress and make curricular adjustments. Teachers also use conference notes, running records, and interim assessments, to inform instructional decisions. Teachers use student work resulting from tasks, exit slips, and comments written on post-its, to assess understanding of daily teaching points and to plan for targeted instruction of

students. Across classrooms, student work displayed is graded and feedback provided using rubrics aligned to units of study related to key standards such as persuasive or opinion writing. Teachers begin units of study with a pre-test to assess the knowledge of relevant content, make adjustments to instructional plans, develop interim tasks, and to provide targeted instruction to prepare students for culminating tasks. The school is also using the STAR assessment system, which provides the school and parents with detailed reports on the progress of individual students and to monitor student growth towards grade level skills. As a result, teachers are able to adjust instructional plans based on the needs of students.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance structures that support teacher teams in the collaborative review of student work so that all tasks and curricular units are fully aligned to the CCLS in order to improve student outcomes. (4.2)
 - Teacher teams meet weekly; develop units of study, and engage in analysis of student work to gauge progress towards unit goals. Teachers have a particular focus on planning for the needs of English language learners to support the school goal of improving the achievement of this subgroup in literacy and math. Further, analysis of student work allows teachers to identify gaps in student understanding, and application of skills such as supporting topic sentences with appropriate details, organization, and the use of content specific vocabulary, as a means to help in the development of instructional plans. Teachers reference rubrics during teacher team discussions; however, they use checklists based on rubrics to actually review the work. Thus, the lack of consistent use of a common rubric to analyze student work and plan instructional tasks results in creating interim tasks and presenting lessons that are not always fully aligned to the unit plans and the identified CCLS.
- Further develop structures to enable the school to effectively evaluate school level decisions and make revisions that support school improvement efforts. (5.1)
 - The school's mantra of "Data, Move, and Impact" symbolizes its theory of action for school improvement. Various sources of data are used to adjust instructional and curricular decisions. This cycle of using data to take action and assessing impact is continuous throughout the school year, so that plans to address the specific needs of students are developed. Data is also used to inform and revise organizational policies that impact student outcomes. For example, a review of achievement trends of ELLs led to the reorganization of classes from homogeneously grouping ELLs to heterogeneous grouping so that classrooms are more inclusive thus allowing ELLs to be supported by English proficient students. Teachers are asked to reply to anonymous surveys so that the administration gauges teacher opinions regarding instructional practices and the tone of the school. As a result of teachers expressing that they needed support in the implementation of instructional initiatives, an additional consultant was hired. However, data analysis is not sufficiently granular to allow the school to fully surface the gaps in school-wide instructional practices across all content areas in order to make timely adjustments needed to further elevate student achievement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: Ellen Lurie	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