

Quality Review Report 2012-2013

William C. Hughley

Primary School/Intermediate School Q116

**107-25 Wren Place
Queens
NY 11433**

Principal: Debra L. Farrow

Dates of review: March 6 – 7, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS/IS 116 is a PK-8 school with 769 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 69% Black, 21% Hispanic, 3% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 8% 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 92.1%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The visionary principal and her proactive leadership team utilize a variety of effective strategies that promote high expectations across the entire school community, resulting in student advancement. (3.4)
 - The school leadership clearly communicates high levels of academic expectations for all staff members, students and families and serves as models that encourage a culture of support and responsibility. The principal sends a weekly newsletter to staff reinforcing the levels of utter professionalism that are expected daily. The school handbook addresses accountability and respectful communication at all times. Other supplemental data sources at the school include the Principal's report and the Evolving Inquiry Newsletter. The Principal's report explains school wide improvements in implementing the citywide instructional expectations. The inquiry newsletter highlights the work teacher teams engage in to move struggling students through different tiers leading to adoption of the most effective strategies across the school. Students are aware of their individual and classroom aspirations and college and career readiness is emphasized in counseling sessions for middle-school students as well as during assemblies and parent meetings. The school leaders strongly encourage parental involvement on the School Leadership Team and in parent meetings, trainings and workshops. These workshops elaborate on the specific changes in the curriculum and describe how parents can better support students in their daily writing and close reading of challenging texts. The staff has nurtured a culture where students readily speak to the adults regarding matters of concern. Students are engaged in their learning, eager to do well and speak highly of the standards, the school and the specific feedback they receive. Students can explain the components of high quality work that is contained in their portfolios and the rubrics and standards by which they are assessed. As a result, the school has demonstrated strong academic progress on its progress report in both its formative and summative assessments.
- The school leadership and faculty effectively align curricula to key standards and offer a range of learning experiences that engage students and support their learning. (1.1)
 - Teacher teams meet each week to align their scope and sequence and curriculum maps to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). They compare outlines to those on the Common Core library and use the CCLS units of study as a guide to edit and define their work. The school is focusing on the key standards that define high level writing, including opinion and analytical pieces, and close reading of text. They are also emphasizing fluency in problem-solving in math. They have shifted to text-based writing and close reading and analysis of non-fiction texts. The teachers coach the students in critical questioning and daily discussion which will prepare them for more advanced studies later in their academic careers. This has resulted in steady improvement over a four month period on the unit assessments in grades three through eight.

- Each teacher recognizes that a major focus for the school is to pay particular attention to tutoring English language learners and students with disabilities regardless of the number of students in their classes. English language learners are carefully assessed by teachers of second language learners. Students with disabilities are held accountable to their individualized educational plans which are written by special education teachers. To that end, the levels of rigor infused in lesson plans are required for all students including the school's relevant subgroups. For example, a second grade teacher's lesson plans included extra appropriate vocabulary for English language learners and additional examples of metaphors for students with Individualized Education Plans. This has led to increased comprehension at the conclusion of lessons as measured by student journal reflections evaluated by grade-level rubrics.
- Teaching practices are based on the Danielson framework and strategically provide multiple entry points so that lessons challenge all students in their learning and result in high quality student work. (1.2)
 - The school is committed to the full integration of the Danielson framework as demonstrated across classrooms. They believe in active engagement of students with the teacher in the role of facilitator buttressed by extensive planning. This is evidenced by open ended questions that cannot be answered by a simple binary response, but by a flow-of-the-day that supports group work that includes students with disabilities and English language learners, customized writing rubrics that speak to text-based writing and arguments and a workshop methodology of teaching that prizes student discussion. As a result, students have shown progress as measured by formative literacy assessments administered between units that show from seven to fifteen percent improvements in grades three through five.
 - Teachers provide multiple entry points for students using a range of materials and modality supports. For example, a seventh grade science teacher explains how a volcano works and demonstrates the process of building one in the lab. Some students were researching volcanoes on the internet and writing a summary of what they learned. Other students, particularly English language learners were collaborating in small groups to begin the process of actually building one. In a third grade class students were exploring the relationships between equivalent fractions. Some students were doing mental math while others, including students with disabilities were using measured blocks to define the similarities and differences. This resulted in students showing high levels of participation as measured by their work products and evidenced in research projects displayed in the classrooms and graded assignments in student notebooks.
- Individual teachers and teacher teams utilize various forms of common assessments and grading policies to monitor student progress towards their goals and adjust instructional strategies in response to all learners' needs. (2.2)
 - Across grades and classrooms teachers use summative, periodic and formative assessments using disaggregated data and detailed item skills

analysis to create learning goals and implement effective instructional adjustments based on student needs. Rubrics for all types of writing, mathematics and project-based assignments are created and shared across grades. Through the use of a common grading policy many grade level assessments create a clearer picture of student progress and are able to provide precise feedback to students and teachers to increase achievement. These assessments include Acuity, Running Records, Developmental Reading Assessment-2 as well as, unit assessments and quizzes that check for understanding. Teachers use this data to group for instruction and modify lessons based on their students' academic needs. As a result, student groupings are flexible so that tasks are matched more carefully to students' learning needs and academic deficits are met as evidenced in student reflections and exit slips.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to refine the observation system in place to provide effectual instructional feedback to teachers that is specific and timely to their pedagogic needs and supports their professional goals. (4.1)
 - The school leadership uses the observation process as a tool to attend to specific needs of staff. They have moved this year to the Danielson framework and shared the rubric with their staff as a standard of effective practice. Coaches work in collaboration with school leaders to coordinate and facilitate comprehensive professional development through study groups, designated professional sessions both within and outside the building, teacher team meetings, and grade and faculty meetings. The Common Core State Standards are crucial to the school's instructional focus and they are used to leverage improvement in teacher performance. However, the oral and written feedback provided to the upper and lower grade teachers have distinct stylistic and substantive differences. As a result, observations are not yet strategically used to strengthen teacher skills and best practices are not always shared uniformly throughout the school leading to variations in the quality of student work products.
- Increase the use of professional contributions suggested by staff to make even more effective policy and strategic decisions around resources that facilitate higher levels of student work. (1.3)
 - All grades are programmed for daily common planning time for teacher collaboration and inter-class visitations as well as concentrated blocks for English language arts and mathematics. Careful budgeting has enabled the purchase of essential non-fiction books to support the instructional shifts. In addition, middle school classrooms are particularly exposed to technology. A literacy coach works daily with middle school English language arts teachers in raising the level of rigor in student writing especially with students with disabilities and English language learners. However, the middle grades performance levels are lower than the elementary grade levels and the recent loss of an assistant principal position has not yet been replaced. This has led to enormous additional pressure on the school leadership resulting in an additional supervisory load that slows the rate of academic improvement.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2012-2013

School name: William C. Hughley	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