



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**Quality Review  
Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning  
2013-2014**

# **Quality Review Report 2013-2014**

**Henry D. Woodworth**

**Elementary School K017**

**208 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11211**

**Principal: Dr. Robert Marchi**

**Dates of review: October 23-24, 2013**

**Lead Reviewer: Alicja Winnicki**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Henry D. Woodworth PS17 is an elementary school with 343 students from Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 83% Hispanic, 9% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 16% English language learners and 24% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 93.0%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- School leaders and teachers make purposeful decisions to build coherence in curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and with emphasis on challenging tasks for all learners. (1.1)
  - The leadership, in collaboration with the faculty, decided to implement Ready Gen in English language arts and Go Math, both Department of Education recommended programs. In this way they support common planning approaches to the integration of instructional shifts such as balancing informational text, development of academic vocabulary, textual evidence and math fluency that are embedded in lesson and unit plans across grade levels. Likewise, teachers in most visited classrooms repeatedly asked for text evidence when discussing class novels or articles and thus provide the students with opportunities to experience text complexity and to practice reading closely. Furthermore, all students across the school engage in project-based learning. As a result they have opportunities to build prior knowledge and make real-life connections in the context of areas such as the mayoral elections, a school-wide project that is led by the principal with social studies and history tasks embedded in literacy and math. Tasks in this project include recognizing the rules of debate in alignment with the standards for persuasion, argument, and identifying a point of view. As a result, all students from kindergarten to grade 5 have opportunities to learn life-long academic skills that prepare them for college and career.
  - A review of curriculum artifacts revealed that teachers support their students in developing high order skills by planning essential questions and rigorous daily tasks. For example, math lesson plans include questions such as, “How can you use base-ten blocks to model and understand division of whole numbers?” and “How can we make a prediction/estimate to figure out whether the exact answer will be less or greater than the estimate?” In addition, teachers plan culminating performance tasks to engage all students in learning by matching anticipated outcomes of lessons with teaching points for identified groups of learners. Unit and lesson plans include tasks such as identifying problems and finding solutions in a story; finding and supporting the author’s point of view in informational text by distinguishing facts, opinions, and observations; and giving reasons for solving multi-step word problems. Lesson plans also include strategies for a reteach, small group instruction, and vocabulary development and support. Consequently, all students across grades, including English language learners and students with disabilities, participate in rigorous, standards-based curricula.
- School staff strategically creates policies and practices that promote a safe and respectful environment that results in students’ positive personal and academic development, adult learning and collaboration. (1.4)
  - Students, parents and teachers agree that the school emanates a respectful and inclusive culture where structures and programs are in

place to support each child's social and emotional growth. Parents feel welcome, report that the home-school communication is very strong and positive, and that the school is sensitive to meeting the needs of all families. For example, a newly hired parent coordinator is bilingual in Spanish and English and the principal introduced her to all families prior to her official start date. Similarly, there are bilingual paraprofessionals working alongside the teachers, with one specifically assigned to a librarian to facilitate communication with Spanish speaking families about resources, expectations, and programs available to them and their children. Respect and appreciation expressed about the positive contributions of a school nurse and a safety agent, as evidenced in letters posted by parents online, illustrate that the support given to students school-wide comes from all adults in the building. Similarly, the principal's open door policy has led to some student-centered initiatives including student-authored plays for Halloween festivities. Students also actively participate in class and school elections for the student council and a position known as the "school mayor," leading to students having a voice in school decisions about student events connected with learning and school improvement. Moreover, the principal and the teachers recognize student academic and attendance accomplishments during installation assemblies scheduled three times a year. In addition, teachers across grade levels utilize strategies for character development and lead discussions about peer pressure or bullying. Teachers present these lessons every Monday and differentiate by grade to better meet and support students at their social and emotional developmental stages. As a result, the school tone is inclusive and students respect adults in classrooms and hallways. To further support all students, the School Implementation Team, consisting of general and special education teachers, a guidance counselor and a school psychologist and led by the assistant principal, holds bi-weekly meetings on child study and works closely with classroom teachers to address concerns and needs of identified students. Furthermore, classroom teachers receive professional development in the use of academic and social and emotional interventions and the school Robin Hood library serves as a resource center for the Respect for All citywide initiative. As a result, the school has a very low number of safety or behavior infractions as evidenced in the Online Occurrence Report System and this allows for fewer distractions from learning caused by disruptive behavior.

- The leadership supports teacher development and growth with frequent observations and instructional feedback utilizing strategies from the Danielson Framework, resulting in improved teacher practice. (4.1)
  - In September, the principal scheduled time to meet with all individual teachers to conduct initial planning conferences. Agendas for these conferences encompassed the options for teacher observations as part of the new teacher development and evaluation system. As evidenced by the teacher evaluation selection forms, the majority of the teachers chose to have at least six short feedback observations throughout the school year. Furthermore, the principal engaged each teacher in self-reflection and goal setting by anchoring these conferences in the Danielson Framework and rubric. He also set expectations for teacher practice and student work as part of the process. Teachers had an opportunity to review the rating system, component elements, indicators and critical attributes, especially in the effective and highly effective areas.

Furthermore, they reflected on their teaching and chose two domain specific components as their professional goals for the year. As a result, all teachers, including cluster teachers and a librarian, have opportunities to reflect on the improvement of their practice as evidenced by individual goal forms submitted to the principal. Additionally, to further support teachers in their development and understanding of the new evaluation system, the principal scheduled and completed preliminary classroom visits with instructional feedback specifically targeting two components teachers chose as their goals. For example, if teachers chose a component about using questioning and discussion techniques, the principal suggested strategies such as asking “why” and “how” questions as oppose to low level questioning he observed. Moreover, teachers receive next steps that support their instructional growth, as evident in the principal’s low-inference notes and the feedback forms to teachers. As a result of this transparent system of evaluation, all teachers know clear expectations and have opportunities to apply specific feedback they regularly receive, thus improving their practice in a self-reflective and collaborative manner.

- Teacher teams work on implementing the new curricula across grade levels and using student work and assessment results in order to ensure improved student learning. (4.2)
  - The majority of teachers work in vertical and horizontal teams that meet regularly. For example, vertical curriculum teams meet biweekly and consist of content leaders and specialists from kindergarten to grade 5. They primarily focus on planning units of study and the implementing new literacy and math programs to align with the standards. These lead teachers then guide planning in their respective grade level teams. Moreover, teachers use this time to turn-key effective methods gained from professional development workshops and discuss instructional strategies that support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, as evidenced in the English language arts and math teacher team meetings. This results in strengthening the instructional capacity of all teachers, especially in the planning and preparation of lessons and units. Furthermore, this year’s teacher team structures and schedules increase opportunities for all teachers to collaborate on planning coherent curricula.
  - Teachers consistently meet as teams to analyze current student assessment results and discuss their implications for instruction. For example, vertical teams, facilitated by the school’s data specialist, analyzed the English language arts fall performance task for common weaknesses and strengths. Teachers look for trends school-wide and discuss benchmarks and academic expectations as well as strategies for groups of students to move them towards goals by planning scaffolds such as reading a passage out loud, using repetitions or providing bilingual editions for English language learners. Similarly, teachers have opportunities to look at student work and benchmarks from different grades and discuss instructional approaches, thus improving teacher practices in identifying gaps in student performance, increasing learning opportunities for all students, and building teacher expertise in supporting different groups of learners.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enhance instructional practices so that in all classrooms students are actively engaged in higher order thinking and participation. (1.2)
  - Across classrooms teachers scaffold instruction and consistently provide multiple entry points to facilitate student learning and participation through grouping, visuals, hands-on activities, re-teaching, and opportunities to use manipulatives. Additionally, as observed in classroom visits, teachers build and activate students' prior knowledge. In most classes visited, students were engaged in answering text- or topic-specific questions and had opportunities to access prior learning or their life experience. In some classes students applied their knowledge by discussing a task during independent group work. Furthermore, although teachers engage students in discussions by asking probing questions, the use of strategic scaffolds and extensions varies across classrooms. In one class, for example, a teacher encouraged students to participate in table team talks to discuss strategies they used to solve math problems. In another class, a teacher presented the students with a group task to compose a song about apples using their prior knowledge and acquired vocabulary and facts, then orally present it to the class. Teachers' attempts to raise the level of student participation in discussions are sometimes limited to teacher asking and students answering questions in groups, thus limiting opportunities for all learners to extend their thinking beyond teacher-directed questions.
  
- Ensure that the use of common assessments and teacher feedback supports student participation in self-assessment and progress towards goals. (2.2)
  - Across grade levels teachers use common assessments such as standards based rubrics for writing, unit assessments embedded in the new English language arts and math programs, and New York City performance assessments and baseline assessments that are aligned with instructional goals. Moreover, all classroom teachers participate in scoring of baseline assessments. Furthermore, they use Fountas and Pinnell reading assessment for identified students. The school collects student achievement data from these multiple assessments and grade level teachers receive student group data reports from the school's data specialist, who analyzes and presents student results from the most recent baseline and benchmark assessments. Likewise, a technology cluster teacher collects and analyzes the Renzulli Learning Style Student Profiles and then presents class and individual student data to grade teams and individual classroom teachers for added information. As a result, most teachers use student data to adjust units and lessons and set next instructional steps. Two vertical teams also meet regularly with the principal and the Academic Interventions leader and analyze trends in student performance and identify gaps in meeting the standards. For example, a vertical English language arts team identified writing conventions and using details in supporting opinions as common gaps across grade levels. Grade level teams use this information for planning specific implications for instruction. Similarly, some teachers use common assessments to provide students with feedback tickets on what they are doing well and what they need to improve. Even though these

efforts are leading to the next instructional steps, individual feedback does not always include learning strategies for students to use in order to improve their academic performance. Equally, the school uses standards-based rubrics for response to reading or task rubrics in math, but student engagement and reflection on their work is not consistent across classrooms, thus there are missed opportunities for all students to self-assess and increase achievement toward goals.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Henry D. Woodworth K017	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 Ensure engaging, rigorous, and coherent curricula in all subjects, accessible for a variety of learners and aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and/or content standards?			X				
1.2 Develop teacher pedagogy from a coherent set of beliefs about how students learn best that is informed by the instructional shifts and Danielson Framework for Teaching, aligned to the 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 supports 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 those expectations?			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 student 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 Observe teachers using the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate school-wide instructional practices and implement strategies that promote professional growth and reflection?			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				
<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>