

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Public School 24

K024

**427 38th Street
Brooklyn
NY 11232**

Principal: Rose Silva Dubitsky

Dates of review: April 10-11, 2014

Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

PS 24 is an elementary school with 709 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 92% Hispanic, 4% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 45% English language learners and 14% 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 95.3%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- Enhancing opportunities for collaboration, grade and vertical teams have deepened understanding of student needs markedly and employed focused strategies to improve student growth. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in inquiry based professional teams at the grade and school-wide level that provide them with the opportunity to meet collaboratively on a weekly basis. Protocols for the review of student work are embedded in the structure of team meetings and enable teachers to define and norm expectations, adjust teaching strategies and target scaffolds to support identified needs. This year, seeking to deepen professional growth and, in response to concerns over the progress of English language learners (ELLs) at this predominantly ELL school, the new principal and her staff have created a vertical language team that uses inquiry as a means to strengthen teacher instructional capacity and move achievement for this fragile population. In order to pinpoint student needs at a granular level, the team analyzed data from the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). This work, which focused on student struggle with the development of English speaking skills and the transitioning of those skills to writing in English, led to the implementation of systemic instruction in vocabulary and conventions across all content areas school-wide. As a result, student use of academic language has been enhanced and writing skills have shown improvement, in alignment with the expectations of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the citywide instructional shifts, as evidenced by class discussions and rubric assessed writing.
- The school's curriculum, well aligned to the demands of the Common Core, has been modified so that all instruction is thematically structured, ensuring coherence and rich learning across all grades and content areas. (1.1)
 - Though the school consistently uses Teachers College reading and writing units of study, the school leader and her staff have made a purposeful decision to embed these protocols into thematic content units of study in order to fully integrate the Common Core and instructional shifts; building coherence across all grades and classes. Further, teacher-developed planning guides support teacher teams and promote this coherence during collaborative planning and deepen the levels of learning for students. This is also enhanced by the incorporation of "I can" learning objectives which clearly define expectations for each lesson. The results of these protocols were seen in a fifth grade dual language lesson plan which shared the objective of a social studies lesson from a unit of study on slavery, "I can take a stance on how to resist slavery." The task required that students role play abolitionists and slave owners during a class discussion. Consequently, all students share Common Core standards aligned learning experiences that have enabled them to develop language arts and content skills, enhancing college and career readiness.

- Using data from the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) assessment as well as student writing and teacher conference notes from classroom discussions, the school has determined that English language learners, former English language learners (ELLs) and struggling students require additional support in acquiring academic language, increasing oral language usage and transferring these skills to writing tasks. Consequently, discreet instruction in vocabulary and English language conventions has been incorporated into all instructional units and lessons. Further, higher achieving students are challenged with enhanced tasks that deepen levels of understanding in all content areas. For example, a fourth grade math unit provided for a range of access for a lesson that required students to create angles out of polygons. While some students were to use two polygons to form a right angle, others would then progress to form more complex angles using polygons, and drawing conclusions from their inquiry. As a result, all students have access to curricula and tasks that are cognitively engaging and provide areas of challenge for all.
- The principal has reflectively prioritized all resources, including budget, scheduling and teacher assignments to address student needs in alignment with school-wide goals, resulting in coherence of focus school-wide. (1.3)
 - Although the school leader only transitioned from an assistant principal into her current position in early September, she has used her ability to target resources to better align consultants and in-house teacher support to address student academic and social-emotional needs in direct alignment with school-wide goals. For example, one full time and one part time math coach and two literacy coaches now provide push-in academic intervention and direct student support for struggling students during English language arts and math instruction. In addition, hired consultants routinely provide support to teachers through model lessons and professional development designed to deepen instructional practices. Further, a partnership with the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility provides social emotional support in all grades. This has led to greater persistence and enhanced student work habits, which have enabled students to focus more deeply on their writing and has led to longer and richer responses to performance tasks. Hence, student work products are more meaningful, evidencing academic growth as a benefit of the more individualized teacher support and deeper teacher implementation of targeted emotional and academic scaffolds, accelerating student success.
 - The principal has developed a strategic protocol in order to best select and place pedagogues for the school. Casting a “wide net, “ the principal researches Open Hire and networks with colleagues, interviewing as many people as possible for each position to ensure that candidates are well aligned to the school’s vision and goals. A hiring committee consisting of the principal, the assistant principal, the union representative and volunteer teams of teachers, which varies depending on the position in question, conducts all interviews and views a model lesson. Care is then taken to ensure that the candidate’s skills truly meet student needs. In this predominantly English language learner and former English Language learner school, extensive care is taken to ensure that strong teachers man the Dual language classes on all grade levels. Further, great care is taken to ensure that there is universal fidelity to the

parameters of the Dual language model so that students develop fluency in both languages with scaffolded supports such as extensive use of visuals and development of academic vocabulary through thematic instruction. As a result, teacher hires and placement promote student access to learning that best supports college and career readiness.

- Formative, summative and teacher-created, rubric evaluated assessments routinely provide students, teachers and parents with an understanding of student strengths and next steps in reaching delineated goals. (2.2)
 - Teachers consistently use a range of assessments, in line with the curriculum that provide a detailed picture of student needs, using this data to identify appropriate scaffolds and integrate them into instructional practices. Running records and pre and post on-demand writing tasks (with aligned rubrics) are administered and analyzed three times a year, to measure reading and writing progress in alignment with Common Core Standards expectations and are entered into an electronic data base, providing teachers with continuous access and a source of actionable feedback. In addition, teacher conference notes and student observation note logs provide real insight into the specific needs of students and indicate next steps to meet those needs. This information is then shared with students through individualized teacher conferences, annotations on rubrics and during assessment review. Parents are also provided with information on needs, strengths and next steps during parent teacher conferences, family math events and parent professional development sessions. Thus all members of the school community have a clear understanding of identified student needs and students can clearly articulate where they stand in terms of their personal growth and needed next steps.
 - Common assessments determine progress towards goals in all grades and subject areas. For example, a school developed math fluency assessment, using an interview format for kindergarten and a pupil written response in grades one through five helps teachers identify number sense and automaticity issues in all students. These results were then used to adjust the pacing of the curriculum, especially in the early childhood grades and to build in greater opportunities for math games during instructional times. Further, a math rubric for problem solving was developed and translated into Spanish so that all students, including dual language students developed a greater understanding of mathematical protocols and usage. As a result, students have shown improvement on math unit assessments and increased their accuracy and ability to explain their thinking as evidenced during classroom visits.

What the school needs to improve

- Deepen the rigor of questioning and discussion in all classrooms and content areas to ensure greater alignment with Common Core expectations. (1.2)
 - The school has clearly defined expectations for classroom instruction such as clear learning targets for lessons and the use of the workshop model across content areas, and differentiated support for students through the use of visual cues and scaffolded materials. Additionally,

deep levels of questioning to promote higher order thinking in line with the expectations of the Common Core and the Danielson Framework is also a priority at the school. While small group work and scaffolded supports such as: individualized key chains with personal wordlists and student checklists; reader's theater and role play opportunities; and manipulative use in math were seen during classroom visits, not all scaffolds provide strong entry points for struggling students and questioning across classrooms does not consistently provide demonstrations of higher order levels of thinking. This was especially evident in a math lesson on area that provided students with a range of complex problems and very little teacher modeling. Further, though virtually every class utilizes the "turn and talk" protocol, the questions used during turn and talk were often limited, such as "turn and talk to your partner about what you are going to do." Therefore, students often lack appropriate multiple entry points and student levels of discussion are uneven, limiting student growth.

- Expand current systems to include uniform protocols that monitor cultural practices and data collection to better track student and teacher growth. (5.1)
 - The school leader has worked tirelessly to increase the quality and transparency of cultural structures within her school, including raising expectations for all learners including English language learners and reflecting on a wide range of data from attendance reports, incident reports and the Learning Environment Survey (LES). Further parent workshops and parental outreach is a priority for the school and is routinely conducted in two languages, making information accessible to all constituencies. However, processes to evaluate cultural and expectational decisions and their impact are not yet firmly embedded in the organizational structure of the school. Consequently, parental understanding of the rigorous expectations of the Common Core is only beginning to develop at the school, limiting parents' appreciation of the importance of college and career readiness.
 - A range of professional development supports have been used to deepen instructional practices in line with the expectations of the Danielson Framework. Math and literacy coaches, as well as consultants provide whole group, grade and one to one assistance to identified staff based on Danielson formal and informal observations, with particular attention to the mastery needs of students in alignment with the demands of the Common Core. Further, the principal and her school leaders regularly meet to discuss and reflect upon teacher needs and student data based on observations and supports prescribed. Nevertheless, a codified, universal protocol that tracks teacher growth in response to coaching supports is not yet fully developed at the school, hindering the capacity of the principal to ascertain the impact of coaching in a timely matter and make revisions accordingly. As a result, teacher growth is hindered, limiting the acceleration of student success as well.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: PS 24	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 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				
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 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				
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 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					
Quality Review Scoring Key							
UD	Underdeveloped	D	Developing	P	Proficient	WD	Well Developed