

# Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**Marcus Garvey**

**Elementary School K044**

**432 Monroe Street  
Brooklyn  
NY 11221**

**Principal: Valerie Taylor**

**Dates of review: March 18-19, 2014**

**Lead Reviewer: Barbara Freeman**

## Part 1: The school context

### Information about the school

Marcus Garvey is an elementary school with 287 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 85% Black, 7% Hispanic, 5% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 16% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89.9%.

### Overall Evaluation

**This school is proficient.**

## Part 2: Overview

### What the school does well

- The principal uses school resources and teacher time strategically to improve instruction, in order to meet the school's instructional goals and improve the quality of student work. (1.3)
  - The principal makes deliberate decisions on the investment of the school's budget, in alignment to instructional goals, the instructional foci and based on the Citywide Instructional Expectations (CIE). For example, in order to support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), new curricula materials were purchased for instruction literacy and mathematics. Additional technology equipment such as desktop and laptop computers were installed in classrooms, to give students additional access to online resources. White Boards have been updated and additional informational text materials have been purchased to support the instructional shifts, contributing to improvement in student performance, as evidenced by reviews of student work products.
  - The principal utilizes the school's master schedule to provide all teachers with common planning time, in order for teachers to meet to discuss student work and effective grouping practices, as well as engage in ongoing professional development activities. School leaders also schedule one-to-one teacher conferences with teachers to discuss common grade assessments and student progress. Teacher teams are responsible for discussing school goals, student outcomes, and instructional practices in order to accelerate student learning. Professional collaborations also allow specialized staff such as cluster teachers and special education teachers, to articulate with classroom teachers to provide additional support in the development of academic tasks and analyses of academic behaviors outside of the major four content areas. This enables teachers to have dedicated time to focus on the impact of classroom practices on student outcomes, thereby elevating the quality of instruction, with emphasis on challenging tasks for students in all classrooms and content areas.
- The school uses assessments to generate data on students' progress in order to inform curricula and instructional refinements on the team and classroom levels, thus promoting improvement in student achievement. (2.2)
  - Administrators, in collaboration with teachers, selected specific assessments as the Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) to monitor student progress. To complete the assessment program, teachers also administer monthly end of unit tests, running records and common assessments such as Acuity baseline assessments and performance tasks. The data from these assessments is used to determine flexible groupings, including guided reading groups, and highlight students' strengths and next steps based on the performance tasks. Data is also used to determine the effectiveness of instructional practices and curricular adjustments. Teachers collaborate to deepening discussions about suggested activities aligned to areas of focus determined by grade level content assessments. This allows the school to analyze various data

points and utilize them to customize curricula and instructional practices in order to improve instruction and enhance student achievement.

- Across classrooms, teachers monitor student work and discussions during the practice phase of lessons. Several strategies such as turn and talk, questioning for explanations, and cold calls were evident. Teachers also push students to set goals and use rubrics to self-monitor. Checks for understanding are used as informal assessments, allowing teachers to make adjustments during their lessons. For example, one teacher utilized questioning to ascertain the thinking process of a student during a lesson on fractions, in order to trace the student's problem solving steps back to where an error by the student had occurred. Other students were then able to support their peer in correcting the mistake. These strategies have allowed teachers to gain additional information about students' understanding, leading to adjustments to lessons in order to meet the needs of all learners.
- The principal is effective in communicating high expectations of performance to the school community and provides the necessary supports to ensure that the expectations are attained. (3.4)
  - Based on the School Survey, the principal has focused on what high expectations look like and sound like for all teachers and students. For example, the principal has been explicit about the expectations for teaching and learning based on the Danielson Framework and the professional development that is in place to support those expectations. Each Wednesday all teachers engage in reviewing each domain of the teaching framework, including reviewing and rating lessons in ARIS to inform reviews of their own lesson plans to ensure that their lessons include effective teaching practices. Teachers and school leaders also review student data, observation reports, and student work samples, allowing them to determine the impact of instructional practices on student outcomes and resulting in their shared accountability for meeting expectations for adult and student learning across the school.
  - The school has focused on persistence, organization and collaboration, as practices connected to college and career pathways for all students, as students prepare for middle school. Through outreach to families, the school ensures their understanding of the high expectations set for their children. For example, the school has enhanced their open house to clearly outline the expectations in the curricula, based on the CCLS. Parent workshops have also been strengthened so that school data is shared to inform parents of student progress. The school's guidance counselor also provides outreach to families of students in need of additional academic and behavioral supports. Focus has also been placed on fostering student independence in order for students to be more accurate in self-assessment and monitoring of their learning. These practices allow the school to maximize support for students and their families so that students are able to meet increasingly more demanding expectations for their academic and social development.
- School leaders observe teachers using the Danielson Framework to inform the development of feedback, in order to identify strengths and next steps that allow teachers to grow and develop professionally. (4.1)

- School leaders believe that teachers, especially new teachers, are best supported through multiple opportunities to practice new pedagogical skills in an environment where they receive consistent and effective feedback. Through frequent formal and informal observations the principal uses low inference notes to provide teachers with concrete examples of strengths and next steps to support their growth. The principal also constantly engages teachers in conversations about classroom data and student work samples, in order to align instructional practices to student outcomes. Observation reports reflect feedback that includes next steps, such as professional development opportunities that include inter-visitations or peer coaching support. Thus all teachers are well supported with feedback that strengthens their practice.
  
- Based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching, the principal regularly assesses and analyzes observation data to unearth trends in areas of focus, in order to strengthen support for all teachers. Based on this data, focus has been placed on indicators 3E, demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness, and 2C, managing classroom procedures, as areas for leveraging teacher growth. The principal also expressed the, “need to see increased levels of informal assessment and checks for understanding throughout lessons, instead of culminating the end of lessons”. In response to that, schoolwide and individual professional development activities center on continuing to build on strategies that assess student learning during lessons and appropriate supports to accelerate student learning. The principal also provides opportunities for teachers to chair grade meetings, volunteer to work with student government members, host extracurricular activities, as well as to support their peers through coaching, intervisitation and friendly feedback sessions. These structures enable the school to plan professional development that is focused on increasing all teachers’ content knowledge and pedagogical capacity, while strengthening the leadership capabilities of all staff.

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

- Continue to align curricula to the CCLS in order to strengthen coherence and provide all students’ with additional opportunities to enhance their higher order thinking skills, so that they are well prepared for their next level. (1.1)
  - The principal, in conjunction with staff members, selected new CCLS aligned materials recommended by the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) to support their work in embedding the instructional shifts in curriculum maps, while providing teachers with materials that promote college and career preparedness. Social studies and science curricula follow the state scope and sequence. Grade specific content in these areas is also included in the literacy portion of the school day, with all students required to engage in reading across the content areas. However, coherence of the curricula across all grades and content areas is not yet evident, limiting opportunities for rapid movement of all students towards college and career readiness goals.
  
  - The School Instructional Team (SIT) meets to review student work samples and class data in order to determine student progress and next steps. Higher order thinking skills that are stressed are determined by an analysis of observation reports and lesson plans. For example, school

leaders look at teacher questioning and its impact on discussions in order to ensure that students are required to cite evidence as they create their own meaning in order to improve their writing and solve real-world problems. English language learners and students with disabilities are exposed to differentiated activities outlined in the English language arts curriculum. However, there is limited evidence that curricula, across grades and subject areas, push all students to demonstrate their thinking via rigorous learning tasks. As a result, opportunities to immerse all students in highly demanding curricula and tasks are not maximized.

- Continue to align instructional practices to the curricula, Danielson Framework, and the school's belief system, incorporating extensions to curricula in order to deepen learning and enhance student work. (1.2)
  - The school embraces the theory that, if staff members provide a safe and nurturing environment, supported with positive attitudes, all students will learn at high levels. Therefore, across classrooms, teachers utilize varied instructional practices such as close reading, use of small groups, conferring using rubrics, and multiple readings of passages, to ensure instruction that is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching. The workshop model is the form of lesson delivery in most classrooms, as evidenced by explicit teaching points, embedded practice time, students' sharing their learning and conferencing with teachers about their work. However, teaching practices in a few classrooms do not reflect full alignment to the curricula, espoused belief system, and the tenets of the Danielson Framework for Teaching, resulting in minimal impact of discussions of instructional expectations at the team and school levels.
  - Across classrooms, it is evident that school leaders stress the importance of print rich classrooms, positive affirmations and displaying student work on bulletin boards, to ensure students see models of and are pushed to produce high quality work. School leaders also focus on lesson delivery, targeting the use of questioning and discussion techniques. For example, students in a fifth grade math class engaged in an activity to add unlike denominators and use manipulatives to visualize equivalent fractions. The teacher posed the essential question, "How can you create models of fractions that have different denominators?" Students engaged in table conversations and supported other students who were having difficulty with the task. However, teaching practices that engage students in inquiry or project based work, and strategic use of scaffolds and extensions of curricula were not evident in a few classrooms, leading to missed opportunities to continue to challenge all students to demonstrate higher order thinking skills in their work products.

## Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Marcus Garvey	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>