



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

**The 47 American Sign Language & English Lower
School**

02M347

**223 East 23 Street
Manhattan
NY, 10010**

Principal: David Howell

Dates of review: Nov 25, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Mariano Guzman

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The 47 American Sign Language & English Lower School is a pre K-8 school with 214 students from pre K through grade 8. The school population comprises 20.1% Black, 47.6% Hispanic, 29.9% White, and 2.3% Asian students. The student body includes 7.0% English language learners and 45.7% special education students. Boys account for 46.7% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53.3%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 89.2%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school designs its curricula to be engaging and rigorous by incorporating Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and utilizing instructional materials that address the individual interests, strengths, and needs of all learners. (1.1)
 - With the support of an external consultant, administrators and teachers have mapped the curricula this year. During this ongoing process, the need to develop academic vocabulary across subject areas evolved as the primary school-wide focus. As a result, the principal and his core team purchased CCLS-aligned instructional materials which support all students across grades, positioning them for increased achievement in English language arts. To facilitate differentiated planning of the Ready Gen and CODEX curricula, the school also embeds a balance of Foundations and Fairview Learning instructional materials and strategies during curriculum planning, providing targeted supports for its student sub-groups, and in particular, the American Sign Language (ASL) population. The Concept Construxion system is another noteworthy resource which the school has implemented across subject areas in the upper grades this year, to systematically push the consistent development of academic vocabulary. As a result of the school's purposeful approach of consistently addressing one instructional shift in a highly focused manner, the vast majority of students, across grades, demonstrate the appropriate use of rich vocabulary across subject areas, including math and science. Students also exhibit an increased level of self-confidence in communicating with their peers and teachers, as evidenced by conversations in classrooms visited.
- School leaders make purposeful decisions that are aligned to the school's instructional goals so that most students' needs are met, resulting in improved instructional outcomes. (1.3)
 - In support of the school's top priority of improving academic vocabulary for all students, the principal has implemented pivotal instructional resources across the school. For example, word walls are now utilized consistently in kindergarten through grade 3, increasing the amount of interactive print available to students. As a result, sophisticated language development among students, including pre-kindergarten children, is exhibited through peer discussion, class participation and student writing. Another new resource to the school, which is re-shaping the way students learn and apply new vocabulary, is the Fairview Learning system. Fairview Learning's unique structures help students make connections between English language arts and the concept development of signing, by integrating an adopted Dolch word list which promotes context clues strategy development. Flash cards and bridges of the Fairview system further support students in knowing that there is not a 1:1 correspondence between signing and the written word, thereby accelerating students' mastery of the relationship between the languages of English and American Sign Language and extending their schema so that they communicate across all subject areas with increased precision, as noted via observations of one-to-one work between specialists and students.
 - The principal has structured the school's schedule so that teachers on all grades have opportunities to meet approximately three times each week for unit planning or professional development activities. In addition, the principal filed a School-

based Option plan to enable teachers to serve three concurrent small groups of students weekly, with teachers rotating between engaging in additional professional development sessions and providing struggling students with supplemental academic intervention. In this way, the school community's core belief of "learning as a lifelong process" is manifested through continuous learning cycles for students and adults alike, resulting in improved student work as evidenced in reviews of student work samples and improved teacher pedagogy as noted by teachers at team meetings observed.

- The school supports a culture that places a high value on meeting the social and emotional needs of students and provides targeted supports to address those needs in order to increase academic success for all students. (1.4)
 - Students are clearly the main focus of the school, which is primarily comprised of deaf students as well as the children of deaf adults. As such, the principal has made strategic decisions which support the continual refinement of the school climate so that mutual respect between students and adults empowers students to take risks as they learn. For example, the school has adopted the Bully Project so that students learn to be "up-standees" instead of "bystanders", in the face of potential incidents of bullying. The administration has also instituted an advisory program, led by two social workers who collaborate with other staff, as they work weekly with entire classes as well as individual students on topics such as the symptoms and ills of drug and alcohol abuse, dealing with peer pressure, building healthy relationships with peers and others, time management, and balancing home and school responsibilities. Consequently, parents, students and staff benefit from a respectful and productive environment as evidenced by constituents' reports of improved collaboration among hearing and hearing impaired members of the school community.

What the school needs to improve

- Promote consistency of instruction through purposeful groupings that provide challenging tasks to all students, and teacher questioning that extends students' thinking and provokes discussion, thus maximizing learning and autonomy. (1.2)
 - Throughout the school year, the principal has afforded teachers and staff assorted professional development opportunities, including workshops and grade-specific team planning sessions, to clarify the expectations for effective instruction. As a result, several teachers are becoming increasingly adept at addressing students' misconceptions about content, during lessons. Accountable talk is also evolving across classrooms, with the support of sentence starters, so that students learn to express their thoughts in a more fluid and respectful way. Despite these efforts, however, several students across grades remain minimally engaged during classroom discussions and independent writing assignments when there is minimal teacher use of available classroom resources and little evidence of multiple entry points to learning tasks that reflect the varying cognitive needs of students. The principal acknowledges the pedagogical deficiencies that exist within the school and notes the need to strengthen in-house professional development structures to promote ongoing improvement in instructional practices so that all students consistently benefit from engaging learning experiences that challenge them to producing work that illustrates higher order thinking.

- Expand the alignment of teacher feedback and next steps to teacher needs and goals, in order to accelerate individual teacher development and further promote positive instructional change across the school. (4.1)
 - Administrators use the Danielson Framework for Teaching during visits to classrooms in order to provide targeted feedback to teachers on their strengths and areas for continued growth. Additionally, the principal has strategically structured this work so that he conducts observations for teachers of pre-kindergarten through grade three teachers, as well as the observations of struggling upper-grade teachers; the assistant principal gauges the effectiveness of teaching in grades four through eight and both administrators visit grade three teachers to norm the evaluation process, as part of their focus on strengthening instruction particularly for this testing grade. At this time, however, the principal continues to rely predominantly on external specialists and coaches for periodic feedback to build teacher capacity, lessening the effectiveness of feedback in informing teachers' understanding of next steps to strengthen their instructional skills in alignment to individual goals and areas of need. Therefore, several newly-implemented targeted assistance plans and intervisitation opportunities have not yet produced significant improvements in the pedagogy of struggling teachers.
- Refine the work of teacher teams in order to maximize the impact of data-driven teacher collaboration that continuously improves teacher practice and student outcomes. (4.2)
 - The school engages teachers in periodically gathering a myriad of interim assessment data, including conference notes, the Developmental Reading Assessment -2, Foundations assessments, classroom tests and end-of-year performance tasks. In addition, administrators have programmed the school schedule so that teachers have multiple opportunities to meet in grade teams each week. At this time, however, the principal has not yet streamlined the data gathered by teachers so that key findings from student work and data are identified and consistently analyzed by teacher teams, using a systematic inquiry approach. Furthermore, administrators have not yet structured teacher team work so that all teachers utilize available data to regularly assess student progress towards targeted learning goals. As a result, teacher capacity and student progress are not being systematically monitored in ways that will fully address shortcomings, in real time, and thus maximize staff and student learning.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The 47 American Sign Language & English Lower School	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