

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

The Winchester School

Elementary School 26Q018

86-35 235 Court

Queens

NY 11427

Principal: Kathleen Peknic

Dates of Review: October 23-24, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Anita E. Saunders

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Winchester School, PS 18 is an elementary school with 597 students from Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 8% Black, 11% Hispanic, 6% White, and 74% Asian students. The student body includes 8% English language learners and 5% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 96%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is well-developed.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The principal and staff have developed engaging rigorous curricula aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and the instructional shifts offering meaningful learning experiences to improve student achievement for all students.(1.1)
 - The Winchester Elementary School has participated in the Teachers College Reading and Writing project for the past eight years. The school uses the interdisciplinary units of study in reading and the newly designed writing curriculum, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) to strategically incorporate the New York City Department of Education instructional shifts. The usage of this curriculum has resulted in instructional coherence across all subjects and grades including the arts, music and physical education. Curriculum maps and pacing calendars have been adjusted to ensure that content and instruction meet the students identified needs and increase literacy, specifically with a focus on nonfiction reading and persuasive writing. There are school wide displays of CCLS tasks beginning with Kindergarten that build upon the previous year's learning objectives resulting in vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment. Additionally, the school is using Envisions Math and Math Exemplars, both aligned to the CCLS with an emphasis on constructed responses, explanations and diagrams to support rigorous discussions. All teachers have received science and social studies curriculum maps and pacing calendars aligned to the CCLS and appropriate content standards to support the planning of instruction.
 - Teacher teams use a variety of data, summative and formative; to continuously analyze student work to plan and challenge students' thinking for English language learners, students with disabilities, and high and low achieving students. A variety of academic tasks, with multiple entry points are provided to allow students to work in small groups and show various ways to solve a problem. Students use a variety of self selected thinking maps to plan writing, select research for their project and engage in activities that push student thinking, such as chess. From the classroom visits it was evident that students are actively engaged in tasks aimed at challenging cognition and enhancing achievement. Some of these activities providing extensions for high achieving students included finding a rule/ pattern to solve a math problem in second grade.
- School leaders and faculty systemically collect and analyze a wide range of data that successfully identifies the needs of students and adjust instruction in order to improve student progress and performance. (2.2)
 - Assessments collected by classroom teachers and the principal include: Teachers College Assessments three times a year; On Demand Writing prior to every writing unit; Periodic Baseline Assessments grades three - five; Fountas and Pinnell reading levels on a continuous basis through conferring; pre and post math assessments; open constructive responses for math problems; and student work. Teacher teams meet on a weekly basis to analyze assessment results and student work, track individual student

progress and adjust instructional plans and strategies to meet the specific needs of students. During the visit the fourth grade teams' work comprised of analyzing On-Demand writing pieces for low, medium and high performing students using a mentor text, a rubric and the appropriate Common Core Learning Standard as well as the sharing of strategies regarding how high achieving students can be supported to accelerate their writing. The third grade team discussed moving level M students to the next level and determined after assessment analysis and consulting the CCLS that more time must be spent on the difference between character traits and feelings, retelling, and dialogue Teams meet with the principal once a month to share agendas and next steps, providing the principal with data on their students as well as data on teacher instructional progress. This work has been instrumental resulting in English language learner students demonstrating 95.5% mastery on the latest Progress Report.

- The principal makes informed and data based organizational decisions across all aspects of the school and allocates resources to support student growth. (1.3)
 - The principal has carefully used her budget to hire additional teachers based on increased student enrollment. Moreover, she has managed to schedule per diem and per session funds for professional development. Additionally, she has utilized every space available in the building for classrooms; the new library has been turned into a classroom, the parent coordinator's office is now the assistant principal's office; the science and art rooms are now classrooms and the English as a Second Language (ESL) and Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) teachers share a small classroom. Every classroom has a SMART Board (with half the school receiving new hanging boards), a laptop computer and a document camera. 60 new classroom computers and 20 new laptops were distributed this year. Technology has enabled the students to conduct research, engage in math enrichment and close reading and additional academic tasks to increase academic performance for the lowest and upper third. These decisions, based on a plethora of data, summative and formative, were made to support instruction and strengthen student achievement.
 - The principal has hired fourteen new teachers in the last two years due to retirements and the increase in student population. All teachers were required to do a lesson demonstration, as well as, interview to ascertain instructional and content knowledge and familiarity with the Teachers College Reading and Writing program. Several teachers were moved from one grade to another: first grade to second grade, self-contained first grade to Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) first grade, and a kindergarten gifted to first grade gifted, to promote collaborations and expertise among groups of teachers as a means of accelerating student achievement. Binders are kept by each teacher with all the summative and formative data per child and groups of students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, and used in planning by individual teachers as well as in teacher teams to accelerate and improve learning, and help close the achievement gap.
- Teachers benefit from an observation process that is grounded in the Danielson framework and allows for the implementation of effective instructional techniques and strategies thereby promoting professional growth. (4.1)
 - Collaboration with the New Teacher Center enables the school to have a teacher mentor on staff that provides push in mentoring to new teachers. The principal

schedules mini observations using the Danielson rubric, conducts individual teacher conferences to provide feedback after teachers have self assessed their practice, discusses next steps and opportunities for visitations and engages in informed discussion about professional development action plans to support teacher growth and practice. The focus of professional development this year is on planning and studying student work to provide actionable feedback and responses to students during instruction. These strategic practices have led to high levels of support in the areas of teacher development.

- Classroom instruction provides multiple opportunities for meaningful student engagement in lessons that motivate students to reach their highest potential as demonstrated by high level thinking and meaningful student work products. (1.2)
 - Teacher practices reflect the belief that all children can learn by being engaged in a meaningful learning activity. Hence, teams are continuously focusing on using differentiated resources for flexible groups and guided practice, and providing feedback and checks for understanding. The school has differentiated instruction in content, process and products in all content areas and for all grades. For example: a fourth grade class researched Native Americans and had topic choices such as natural resources, animals, and how they lived, producing constructivist work that necessitated the skills of compare and contrast, and synthesis. A kindergarten class had various size paper choices with space for pictures and lines to apply elaboration strategies and more information in writing. Student conversations are aligned to the CCLS by using text based evidence and arguing a stance. The principal visits teachers, one grade per week, and observes and coaches on the delivery of content and engagement to monitor teacher practice. This work has resulted in student work products that reflect higher-order thinking skills and the schools set of beliefs about how students learn best.

What the school needs to improve

- Continue to engage in professional collaborations with varied opportunities to share and develop strengths resulting in improved instruction and student achievement. (4.2)
 - All teachers are engaged in structured horizontal and vertical teacher team meetings. Grade level horizontal teams meet one time a week and one time a month with the principal. The vertical team meets two times a month with the principal. The focus of recent meetings have been on strategies to teach complex texts with text based evidence, as revealed by analyzing data, and student work products per the CCLS. The teams work additionally strengthens the use of the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework to guide their level three and four questions and extend the thinking of students at a variety of levels. Although these teams consistently analyze assessment data, shared improvements in teacher practice resulting in student mastery of goals is not yet evident.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: The Winchester School, PS 18	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