

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Lt. Joe Petrosino

Elementary School Q070

**30-45 42nd Street
Queens
NY 11103**

Principal: Donna Geller

Dates of review: October 22 - 23, 2013

Lead Reviewer: Dr. Philip A. Composto

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Lt. Joe Petrosino School is an elementary school with 1022 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 42% Hispanic, 36% White, 19% Asian students, and 1% other students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.0%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is proficient.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- School leaders support a high level of pedagogy through effective evaluation of instruction aligned to the Danielson framework for teaching, resulting in strong teacher practice that improves student outcomes. (4.1)
 - Through frequent cycles of classroom visits and walkthroughs, administrators use the observation practice to collect low inference data, engage teachers in effective discussions, identify specific next steps, and develop action plans, thus providing actionable feedback that improves instructional practice. For example, a newly hired English as a second language (ESL) teacher meets with the principal weekly to review a school developed curriculum-based handbook that supports effective instructional practices to improve student outcomes. In addition, the school's focus on questioning and Depth of Knowledge (DOK) for crafting questions in conceptual understanding was evidenced in teacher-to-student, and student-to-student conversations as noted during classroom observations. Furthermore, supervisors have already met with individual teachers and set up follow-up meetings to discuss and monitor professional goals toward improved pedagogy, enabling school leaders to modify and differentiate professional development to meet the specific needs of teachers. For example, at the start of the school year, teachers expressed concern about the increased rigor and text complexity required of the Common Core Standards. As a result, the principal and coaches created a weekly document called, "Sharing Notes" which contains strategies and best practices, of which the most current edition focused on the elements of a good lesson and the process of effective teaching. Also, the school's coaches work with individual teachers on time efficiency and well-planned instruction. These combined efforts result in student growth as reflected in work products contained in students' portfolios. Additionally, teacher teams expressed that they are "fully supported by the administration and have a full understanding of how changing their practice has a positive impact on student learning."
- The conscientious principal has created a goal-oriented learning community which uses data-based intentional strategies to accelerate learning, and is well focused on teacher practice and student outcomes (3.1)
 - School leaders and teams of teachers meet weekly to gather and analyze data in order to develop focused goals that are aligned with the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), and to carefully review student progress to improve student achievement across all grades and subjects. For example, one school goal is to provide engaging professional development to support teacher performance that reveals effective instructional practice through classroom observation. Based on a professional development needs assessment administered to teachers, a topic that most teachers requested was creating high-level questions using the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) matrix. Following the professional development session, classroom visits indicated an increase in teachers asking higher-level questions that guide students in analyzing complex texts. As a result on the most recent reading unit test students showed

an 88% increase in comprehension of complex texts. Another request was for support centered on the use of research-based instructional strategies such as using graphic organizers. The implementation of these instructional strategies was supported by professional development and monitored by the administration during classroom visits and observations. As a result, improved teacher practice has enhanced student writing as noted by progress on student on-demand writing pieces.

- The school leaders and teachers effectively align curricula to key standards and offer engaging learning experiences that challenge students and support their learning. (1.1)
 - The instructional cabinet reviews the Citywide Instructional Expectations and conducts an analysis of student data including running records, Reading Street assessments and the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT) to support their work on the alignment of the curriculum. As a result, the fifth grade team is working on an English language arts unit named “Meeting Challenges” that includes stories, both fiction and non-fiction, all centered on the key question, “What kind of challenges do people face and how do they meet them?” Additionally, there is a focus on the comprehension skills cause and effect, and sequencing, selected as an outcome of an administered reading assessment. Lessons include cause and effect relationships linked with key words that allow students to create a cause and effect sequence chain, leading to them writing personal narratives about important events in their lives, what led to that moment by creating a flow chart of story events, numbering events in order, and using transition words to indicate sequence. As a result, students’ interests in non-fiction literature have increased as noted by teachers’ observations, which indicate that students are implementing the strategies taught. Weekly tests reflect an overall improvement of 90% in students use of this strategy as measured by cause, effect, and sequencing rubrics.
 - The first grade teachers analyzed the beginning year Reading Street assessment. Through discussion at the inquiry team meeting, teachers concluded that a low percentage of students were not achieving CCLS 1.3, “To identify the characters, setting, and plot in a story by using major events.” Thus teachers created a four-week unit focused on understanding the plot of the story, and included both fiction and non-fiction stories. The assessments that followed the lessons revealed increased students’ comprehension through their retelling and answering of comprehension questions based on the (DOK) model for questioning, and teachers noted that student writing was more interesting as they added important details to their stories. Their writing products met the instructional goal of the school, “To write a strong argument by providing three details to support their thoughts.” First graders were able to support their understanding of the plot of the story by providing information about characters and listing more details about the setting that were more descriptive. The identification of the story’s plot as presented by the students was more detailed and developed. These planned strategies by the collaborative efforts of teachers, raised the students’ reading and writing levels in a range from 60% to 80% mastery overall across the first grade.

- The school uses its resources effectively to build teacher capacity and improve instruction as evidenced by increased student engagement in academic tasks. (1.3)
 - This year, the school purchased 15 Smart Boards and also laptops for classrooms in kindergarten through grade 5. In addition, iPads were purchased for two of the kindergarten classrooms to enrich students' learning through a virtual platform. For example, students research animals of interest to learn about where they live, what they eat and drink, and how mothers care for their young, which aligns to the school's goal on nonfiction units of study. As a result, students are exposed to real life experiences, vocabulary through visuals, and auditory discussions that result in meaningful research projects.
 - Teacher teams meet a minimum of one period a week with the support of a coach to collaborate and design academic tasks, rubrics, units of study, and lesson plans that link to the school's goal of engaging students in challenging academic tasks. For example, the fifth grade team refined a geography unit using the Smart Board including interactive maps that provided students with the experience of not only identification of locations, but also math computations and recognition of land characteristics. A simulation of the theory of Pangaea was presented demonstrating the continental drift, which led to an Earth Science unit of study. Students viewed illustrations of the different rock formations in the world and followed a simulated tour of an archaeological dig. Students viewed the different layers of rock in the Earth focusing on igneous rocks. After the simulation, students reenacted an archeological dig using science resources, which included a block of dirt and sand. Students had to dig through to discover different rock formations. While digging, students found a variety of rocks and minerals that were part of the lesson. Students recorded their findings and then presented their results as they completed an interactive chart on the Smart Board. After sharing their findings, students in all fifth grade classes were administered a variety of short assessments. The assessments included writing of a brief summary of information, a reading selection followed by comprehension questions, and a cloze procedure to identify if they had mastered the objective of the teaching point. As an outgrowth of the fifth grade team designing a geography unit, students were involved in higher order learning activities and demonstrated better than 80% mastery in all tasks and in their independent work.

What the school needs to improve

- Further refine teaching practices to ensure the vast majority of teachers strategically provide multiple entry points so that lessons challenge all students and result in producing meaningful work products. (1.2)
 - Teachers across the school work together to plan lessons and use scaffolds to provide multiple entry points into instruction in response to student's needs and interests, including special education students. The use of picture clues help students build their vocabulary as noted in their reading notebooks and discussions. Also, the school focuses on supporting high needs students such as English language learners (ELLs) by hiring certified teachers of ELLs, and uses Title III funds to provide

supplemental services via an after school program and instructional materials to be used during the day and after school to increase student achievement. However, lessons do not always challenge all students, particularly high performers, to their full potential, in that assignments do not include opportunities for them to demonstrate higher order thinking skills or extend their learning, thus limiting even greater learning outcomes.

- Strengthen teacher assessment practices to monitor daily student progress in order to make instructional adjustments and offer clear next learning steps for enhancing progress of student outcomes. (2.2)
 - It is evident that teachers celebrate students' best efforts through checkmarks and written comments and use this information to inform instruction. Teacher teams and individual teachers use English language arts (ELA) and math item analysis information as well as baseline and interim assessment data to supplement summative data and identify student performance levels. Rubrics are used to assess student work and are attached to individual student's writing pieces included in work folders and displayed on bulletin boards. However, the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment during instruction in order to make immediate adjustments to lessons is not strategically practiced across the school. This limits teachers' ability to pinpoint and address the special needs of student subgroups during daily lessons and modify targeted, differentiated interventions to accelerate learning. As a result, instructional strategies and learning tasks are not always strategically adjusted, hindering opportunities to meet the needs of all students.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Lt. Joe Petrosino	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