

Quality Review Report 2013-2014

Archer

Elementary School 531

**1827 ARCHER STREET
BRONX, NY
10460**

Principal: Zakariah Haviland

**Dates of review: Jan. 13 - 14, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Myrna Rodriguez**

Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

Archer Elementary School is an elementary school with 427 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 60% Hispanic, 1% White, and 7% Asian students. The student body includes 19% English language learners and 20% 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 92.4%.

Overall Evaluation

This school is developing.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The school aligns assessments to curricula and analyzes student-learning outcomes to adjust instructional strategies and practices across classrooms and within teams. (2.2)
 - Teams of teachers use State, reading, writing and unit assessments, and have created rubrics for English language arts (ELA) and math to analyze student-learning outcomes in order to adjust classroom level curricula and instructional decisions. Based on the analysis of assessment data teachers adjust student goals, and plan scaffolded lessons for individual and groups of students. For example, in several classes teachers used different leveled reading texts on the same subject about animal extinction. As a follow up, teachers share student outcomes within teams and with the leadership to create next steps for students. As a result, targeted individuals and/or groups of students receive extra attention, which has shown to be successful as evidenced by the results of class and grade assessments, student work, and improved reading and math scores.
 - Across classrooms teachers use on-going assessments and checks for understanding, including the use of strategic questioning and having students display their work publicly throughout the lesson. This allows the teacher to know if students understand the content and to determine whether to individually tutor, form a small group for conferencing, or do a whole class review. As a result, students are engaged and held accountable for their own learning.
- The principal shares a coherent vision of school improvement with faculty as evident in a short list of clear and focused goals resulting in improved academic progress. (3.4)
 - The leadership involves the community in sharing a vision for both individual and school improvement. The school maintains a focus on college and career readiness by prioritizing writing throughout the curricula and providing students with clear understandings of what is expected of them. In addition, the school has developed goals that are driving efforts to accelerate student learning by targeting reading levels using running records and Fountas and Pinell. Teachers inform parents of their children's progress in achieving their reading goals and give feedback as to how they can help to improve their children's reading levels. The expectations of the school includes that students be able to explain their process for solving multi-step problems and teachers assess problem solving in math and make the necessary adjustments to curriculum tasks and pedagogy to support students in this task.. Families are encouraged to attend activities whereby their children explain the thinking behind their work. Detailed feedback to students and families, through progress reports and weekly updates support and prepare students for the next level of learning. As a result, students and families are aware of the high expectations for their children's academic growth so that they are prepared for college and future careers.
- The leadership uses the observation of classroom teaching and the analysis of learning outcomes to elevate teacher pedagogy and has strategies to enhance professional growth for all teachers (4.1)

- The leadership uses short but frequent cycles of classroom observation, referencing the Danielson Framework for Teaching, which articulates clear expectations for all teachers and offers feedback to teachers emphasizing strengths and next steps to improve instruction. Teachers shared that the feedback from the observations in a risk-free environment allows them to improve their teaching practices. Lead teachers and peers mentor new teachers, and outside consultants provide additional supports, which is improving teacher pedagogy as observed in various classrooms. In many classrooms, teachers are following through with feedback recommendations such as using multiple strategies to engage student in non-fiction texts, reminding students to use accountable talk during partner or group discussions, and prompting students to use academic vocabulary when responding to questions. Consequently, students are impacted across classrooms increasing volume and depth in on-demand and formal tasks and work products.
- The leadership and teachers have attended various professional development activities in the use of the Danielson framework that allows teachers to learn about their craft and set clear expectations for their work. Observations clearly note questioning as a high need across classrooms and feedback is beginning to support teacher development in this area. As a result, the leadership and teachers have set the focus in questioning to achieve high levels of thinking and the lens through which observations are measured, improving teacher delivery of instruction.

What the school needs to improve

- Further develop curricula consistently across all grades in all subjects to engage all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) to develop higher order skills. (1.1)
 - The school aligns its curricula and academic tasks using the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and emphasizes rigorous habits and higher-order think skills by focusing on student accountable talk and teacher questioning. The school integrates the citywide instructional expectations (CIE) in the curricula including the use of non-fiction texts across all subjects that create learning experiences that prompt students into deep thinking. Units of study are aligned to key standards, highlight literacy, writing standards, and word problems in math, and embed content area texts to engage students. Strategic questions are not fully developed in the curricula and tasks and as a result in some classes questions required basic recall answers and students replied with one word answers. Even though the school is making efforts to address its learners through the curricula maps, plans do not yet include high levels of questioning and strategic use of multiple points of access into the curricula to close the achievement gap for ELLs and SWDs. In most classes teachers use word walls and review vocabulary with students, however, there were few vocabulary acquisition and entry points into the lessons for ELLs. Consequently, although some groups of students are receiving targeted instruction and tasks, subgroups lag behind in accessing the curricula to close the achievement gap.
- Further develop teaching practices that reflect the school's beliefs on how students learn best specifically in questioning and scaffolds for academic vocabulary acquisition. (1.2)

- The school has set priorities that teaching strategies include high levels of questioning using depth of knowledge (DOK), tasks that reflect varied entry points, and that students participate meaningfully in class discussions. Across classrooms students are engaged and the school offers students with disabilities opportunities to be mainstreamed in various subject areas, where during lessons differentiated entry points into the curricula are provided. However, the levels of work and tasks are not as consistently diversified for ELLs, transitional ELLs, or for high achievers. As a result, not all students are being offered opportunities to be sufficiently challenged, impacting gains in their learning.
- Across classrooms students are engaged in partner talks or within groups. However many groups of students did not engage in accurately answering the questions posed by the teacher. Consequently, this leads to uneven levels of thinking, work products, and student improvement. Practices that produce high levels of accountability talk are inconsistent across the grades. For example, in some classes many questions required basic recall answers and students also replied with one word answers. As a result, the school's goals of achieving high levels of student discussions and produce meaningful work products is not being met completely, impacting student progress.
- Evaluate how school level practices are implemented and adjusted to increase the coherence of policies and practices to support all students attaining mastery. (5.1)
 - The leadership organizes the school so that on a weekly basis teacher team leaders meet to evaluate and adjust curricula and instructional practices after analyzing student work and class assessment data. However, the school does not have a fully developed process to evaluate the alignment and coherence of school level decisions regarding high achievers and making adjustments as needed to increase the coherence of practices across the school. While the school does have systems to target high achievers through special classes and diverse activities, including clubs, across classrooms there were few instances of the use of differentiated strategies to impact the learning of this group of students. In one class the teacher provided high achievers with extra questions that expanded their knowledge about the animal they had chosen to study. However, across classrooms high achievers are not given more opportunities to delve deeper in tasks during regular class time. Consequently, structures to monitor the coherence of practices are not fully developed; therefore teachers are not yet fully versed in adjusting their instructional strategies to sufficiently target all subgroups so they achieve their goals
 - The leadership and school share high academic and social/emotional expectations for students and adults. School leaders are developing processes to assess, evaluate, and adjust school culture and the ways expectations are developed for and shared with families. However, the school has not yet developed a coherent process to evaluate school action plans that address attendance and the impact on academic achievement. Although student attendance has increased since last year, there is still a majority of students not improving their attendance. Consequently, the lack of accountability relative to student attendance is impacting raising student attendance, performance, and progress.

Part 3: School Quality Criteria 2013-2014

School name: Archer	UD	D	P	WD
Overall QR Score		X		

Instructional Core

To what extent does the school regularly...	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

To what extent does the school ...	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

To what extent does the school ...	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
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