



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Samuel C. Barnes

Elementary School K054

**195 Sanford Street
Brooklyn
NY 11205**

Principal: Lorna Khan

**Date of review: November 18, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lucia Perez-Medina**

The School Context

Samuel C. Barnes is an elementary school with 248 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 55% Black, 40% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.1%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
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	Celebration	Proficient
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	Focus	Developing
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	Additional Findings	Developing
School Culture		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	Additional Findings	Proficient
Systems for Improvement		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	Area of:	Rating:
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	Additional Findings	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The schools' curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and offers meaningful learning experiences that promote higher-order skills to improve student learning.

Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence and promote college and career readiness for all learners. The interdisciplinary theme based units of study challenge student thinking across grades.

Supporting Evidence

- The schools' academic program is consistent with their theme "Magnet School for Environmental Science, Technology and Community Wellness, through project based learning. Students are immersed in environmental topics.
- Student's practice scientific inquiry skills during a unit of study on ecosystems and conservation. Students in every grade are expected to engage in projects as slideshows, podcasts, and video projects to enhance current units of study with opportunities for critical and creative thinking skills for students. In addition, thematic unit plans show supports, such as vocabulary cards, graphic organizers and visuals to support English language learners and Students with disabilities.
- Coherence is developed in writing through units that focus on a planned deliberate sequence of learning. Learning is paced and developed through the year in grades k-5 through writing bends that teach introductory, intermediate and advanced writing units for each text type.
- The school's mathematics curriculum is supplemented by Math Exemplars to improve student's fluency, ability to demonstrate conceptual understanding and discussions in writing through problem solving in real world contexts.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Refine the use of instructional strategies across classrooms and embed multiple entry points so that lessons fully challenge student thinking and student work reflects high levels of engagement.

Impact

Lessons do not always challenge all students, particularly high performers, to their full potential, thus limiting opportunities for them to engage in higher order thinking tasks that demonstrate ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In classrooms visited, some students participated in class discussions. In two of the seven classrooms visited, students were able to explore their thinking, justify their conclusions and use evidence or examples to support their reasoning.
- In most classes, students are presented with the same task and receive limited feedback from the teacher, several students quickly completed the task with no further direction while others struggles with minimal support.
- During a third grade mathematics lesson, students were asked to complete a worksheet by recording the number of liters into milliliters; the lesson was a group lesson: nine students had completed the assignment and were not on task while waiting for further directions. In addition, there were no supports like manipulatives or visual aids available for English language learners and other students who struggled with the task.
- In most classes, student discussion was limited by low level questioning or low level tasks provided by the teacher. Many questions were recall and relied on a student's memory. For example, in a first grade literacy lesson, the teacher asked, "Is this small?" and the task asked students to copy a list of things that are small from the board.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school is in the process of aligning shared assessment practices so that teachers make effective adjustments to instruction and provide clear next learning steps to students in order to accelerate their learning.

Impact

The school is limited in aligning shared assessment practices so that teachers make effective adjustments to instruction and provide clear next learning steps to students in order to accelerate their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Common Core aligned performance based assessments are selected based on the current unit of study in mathematics to ensure that students are focused on rigorous content and engaged in mathematical practices. However, the results are inconsistently used to adjust instructional next steps.
- The school collaboratively scores learning tasks in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics throughout the year. This data is used to identify grade level strengths and areas of need, to determine learning gaps across the school, and to target additional supports and resources to students and classrooms where students are performing in the lowest one third.
- A review of teachers' conference notes indicated that formative assessments lead to instructional adjustments, such as regrouping students and re-teaching concepts. However, this practice was inconsistent across classrooms visited.
- Teachers use the Teachers' College Benchmark Assessments to monitor students' independent and instructional reading levels in order to plan small group work to address deficits in the grade level reading progressions. A review of conference notes revealed that planning for small group instruction was not noted in most classrooms visited.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school conveys high expectations that promote parental involvement and support learning so that staff, students and families work together toward achieving school goals.

Impact

Staff, students and families are well supported towards progress in meeting school expectations and parents understand the schools expectations for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- In an effort to communicate high expectations to all the school's constituents, staff and parents receive handbooks specifically designed for each constituent. A yearly calendar is also distributed with annual events, which include a signature event "parents as reading partners".
- The principal creates and distributes monthly letters to parents focused on academic and personal behaviors to prepare students for college and career readiness. The parent coordinator also sends out a monthly calendar of events to all parents.
- Teachers receive a monthly letter and newsletter that is aligned to the instructional focus and measures of teacher practice. A weekly and daily focus reminds staff of the instructional expectations, professional learning opportunities and other important events for that day or week.
- The school communicates with parents about learning expectations through monthly newsletters, weekly parent conferences and progress reports. Workshops provided to families include the following: Preparing Students to Meet the Common Core Learning Standards and partnerships like Fatherhood Male Initiatives to mentor and increase fathers involvement in the school community. Additionally, fathers visit classrooms and participate in student's academic and social emotional learning.
- The Lighthouse Team in Collaboration with Franklin Covey consultants and administrators work together in communicating the expectations for the "Leader in Me" initiative, which helps teachers, students and families work towards understanding the characteristics of Leadership. For example, teachers teach lessons on self-regulation and offer feedback to help families understand how this skill is essential in preparing students for college and career readiness.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across all grade teams, teachers are engaged in structured professional collaborations that support the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. The school has a distributed leadership structure in place in the form of a school cabinet.

Impact

Teams are working to ensure that the Common Core Learning Standards are embedded in each unit of study across grades and subjects strengthening the instructional capacity of teachers. Teachers have a voice in key decision that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- All staff are expected to engage in structured collaborative inquiry through teacher teams in order to align and implement the instructional shifts. For example, the 2nd grade team examined teacher generated graphic organizers tracking reading comprehension of non-fiction text students in order to determine appropriate differentiated texts.
- Teacher teams meet to calibrate writing and math units to ensure that there is a shared understanding of requirements to meet grade level standards in student work products.
- Agendas and teachers during the teacher meeting substantiate that grade level leaders participate with school leadership in instructional cabinet meetings to promote school goals, provide teachers with a voice in instructional decisions, and facilitate the work with their respective grade teams.