



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Carroll School

Elementary School K058

**330 Smith Street
Brooklyn
NY 11231**

Principal: Katherine Dellostritto

**Date of review: February 11, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Anita Skop**

The School Context

The Carroll School is an elementary school with 974 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 3% Black, 12% Hispanic, 70% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 13% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.5%.

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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Proficient
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	Proficient
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	Celebration	Well Developed
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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

High expectations are consistently shared by school leaders and staff, emphasizing professionalism, instruction and communication in line with the Danielson Framework for Teaching, as is the connection to the path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The sharing of high expectations has resulted in a culture of mutual accountability that supports student progress and successfully partners with families to support student progress towards these defined goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The mission and vision statement were built with the staff based on their common values, which has led to greater ownership of the school's mission and vision by the staff. The school leaders continuously reference this work by sharing positive notes weekly based on identified goals. Meeting agendas and meeting minutes by teacher teams are provided to the principal and administration as well as shared with the whole staff through Google Docs. Administration provides feedback and support on observations and meeting minutes and agendas, including examples of higher-order thinking questions, utilization of a literacy word wall, use of assessment folders, and bulleted letters to staff reinforcing meeting next steps such as intervention for students achieving a level 2 or below.
- College and career readiness is an expectation communicated through community service in each grade and supported by the Parent Teacher Association. The first grade takes field trips to study community venues, the second grade sold series books to raise money for the Heifer Project and the third grade ran a Turkey Trot Empty Bowl Soup Kitchen project to raise money for a local soup kitchen. The arts and enrichments are also a key component of college and career support. Students participate in chess challenges and visits to the Metropolitan Opera, while the fourth and fifth grades participate in ballroom dance and visits to the New York Historical Society to support content area instruction. The philanthropy projects develop empathy and a connection to critical thinking for solutions for the community.
- Teachers regularly provide feedback to students on their work and students are expected to articulate their learning through discussions in class, on field trips and during arts, strings and science programs. Teachers hold one-to-one or small group conferences on current tasks and in- and out-of-class learning experiences. Parents are provided with "cheat sheets" based on the use and meaning of lesson rubrics to ensure they understand what students need to learn and how to help them meet these expectations.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies (including questioning, scaffolds and routines) consistently provide multiple entry points into the curricula and student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

All learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities are engaged in appropriately challenging tasks, demonstrate higher order thinking skills and result in quality work products that reflect critical student thinking. However, the school is still actively working to create greater student ownership.

Supporting Evidence

- In all classrooms, teaching practices reflected how students learned best through differentiation and by giving them choice such as creating a poster or an infographic on a student-selected topic connected to the lesson, or choice of roles such as reader, recorder, moderator and speaker. Students were grouped based on their learning styles and academic needs and their previous lesson assessment results. Students were engaged in groups and every student had a role. Students have a rubric to guide their group and independent work and teachers provide ongoing feedback using post-it notes and conferencing. Support is individualized for students to have opportunities to demonstrate their learning through writing or poster work with writing or student jobs in group work.
- To support coherent and cohesive instruction in all grades strong teachers were moved to second grade and good teachers were dispersed throughout the grades as teacher leaders and role models of their grade level. Teachers have built-in accountability through observations and administration feedback on higher-order questioning and discussion, classroom environment and learning activities such as an interactive writing task or group-created solution steps to solving a multiplication or division problem.
- Student work focuses on students writing for an audience with one strong piece a week for each student with clear, concrete teacher feedback. Evidence of high-quality student writing and classroom artifacts were seen across classrooms. Student writing such as a fourth grade literary essay, a kindergarten description of their artwork, and a third grade decimal lesson demonstrated use of academic vocabulary, text-based examples, comparison, higher-order thinking, and conceptual understanding. Study groups in second grade were working on expert projects using research protocols and going in-depth into the Westward expansion. Students engaged in rigorous work which involved risks in students making mistakes and learning from the mistakes on the way to becoming experts. Despite the excellent opportunities provided to students, students do not yet have a deep level of ownership of their learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are well aligned to the Common Core and content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts, so that rigorous habits and higher-order skills are emphasized in curricula and academic tasks and are embedded in a coherent way across grades and subjects.

Impact

The continuous and reflective curricular alignment by the administration and teachers has resulted in coherence across grades and rich subject area tasks that promote college and career readiness and ensure that all learners, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, must demonstrate their thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Curriculum maps, units and lesson plans were aligned to the Common Core and coherent in purpose and expectation of students. The math curriculum based on TERC investigations, a research-developed teaching method, has incorporated EngageNY math questions and tasks. The literacy curriculum based on Teachers College Reading and Writing Project was revised in order to provide more opportunities for rigorous student writing and student-facing checklists aligned to the Common Core. Maps, units and lessons focus on the needs of the lowest-third with technology and visual supports and small group instruction.
- Multiple entry points are supported through a range of strategies that address data-defined student needs. For example, extended problem-solving, peer to peer explanations, “Flocabulary,” study groups, and Chromebooks allow all students to access the curriculum with checks for understanding, heterogeneous learning groups, and access to technology tools as well as through the Universal Design for learning protocols evidenced in the curriculum maps.
- The general education program and the French dual-language program ensure scaffolded supports for students, especially English language learners on a variety of levels so that all students are engaged in high-quality conversations on the content which is supported with visuals, conferencing, exemplar charts, and leveled texts. Students in the French dual-language classes learn in English or French on alternating days with a continuing unit of study throughout the alternating language days.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Across the school the vast majority of teachers create and use common assessments, rubrics, and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula and offer a clear portrait of student progress toward mastery.

Impact

Assessments and rubrics utilized provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers and enable them to adjust curricular and instructional decisions so that all students, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities, demonstrate increased mastery of standards-based skills.

Supporting Evidence

- In response to a need for informative assessments in literacy, teachers implemented running records more effectively with benchmark books, on-demand prompts for narrative, opinion and informational writing. After reviewing students' standardized item skills analysis, teachers identified a problem with students' extended response and have added checklists and "cheat sheets" to support students' extended response. Along with the supports, teachers incorporate speaking and listening activities to enhance the writing process. In addition, teachers are using assessments to increase volume of writing and use of academic vocabulary. Teachers collaboratively define lesson goals based on the rubrics, and review writing progressions and math unit scores to determine students who need extra support and monitor their growth in response to intervention strategies.
- Teachers use assessments to measure growth and use the data to identify at-risk learners resulting in extended day programs for the lowest level readers, meeting with service providers to target support by every adult, conversation clubs and book study group cycles for students, and child study on the most struggling learners.
- All lessons incorporate checks for understanding like fist-to-five, a one sentence or phrase response to a question prompt, and teacher notes on student learning as he or she circulates the classroom so that teachers can review student work products daily and develop goals for the next unit. Student-facing checklists and rubrics allow students to meet expectations as they progress through an interactive writing activity that included a flash draft, a jigsaw and a gallery walk.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals and the implementation of the Common Core including the instructional shifts. They have expanded leadership capacity school-wide as well.

Impact

These teacher collaborations have strengthened the instructional capacity of teachers, and provided teachers with a voice in key decisions that affect student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers are expected to come prepared to team meetings with laptops or iPads and student work so that everyone can participate and collaborate. Meetings begin with positive teaching share-outs from the classroom and field trips. Teacher teams review lessons using student responses from checks for understanding and other formative assessments to determine strengths of the lesson and what concepts need to be retaught in context.
- Collaboration in the teacher teams impacts student learning. For example, after teachers conducted a cycle of studying student work, they identified vocabulary strategies which they agreed to implement in all classes. Vertical teacher teams have enhanced instruction and support in social studies and the French dual-language with common vocabulary and French and English classroom libraries relevant to cross-class topics in both subjects. The vertical team implemented student discussion groups across all grades. As a result, students more frequently led discussions and expanded on one another’s thinking.
- This year teacher team leaders were part of the cabinet and they engaged with the administration in making instructional decisions. Teacher leaders turned to teacher teams for advice and problem-solving. Teacher leaders facilitate teacher-led professional development series. Vertical study groups and teacher teams have built on their strengths and share their findings on student progress in literacy and math for each unit of study with grade teams. Teachers feel welcome in visiting one another’s classrooms and consistently build their teaching repertoire through teacher leader led discussions and study groups based on peer observations. For example, by sharing the strengths in language development strategies shared by the dual language French teachers, monolingual teachers enhanced their use of visuals to deepen student comprehension, by using extensive labeling and SMART board imagery.