



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

William H. Prescott Elementary School

13K093

**31 New York Ave
Brooklyn
NY 11216**

Principal: Sandra Philip

**Date of review: December 2, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lucia Perez-Medina**

William H. Prescott is an elementary school with 313 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 71% Black, 4% Hispanic, 4% White, and 20% Asian students. The student body includes 10% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. 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	Additional Findings	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	Celebration	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:

**3.4 High
Expectations**

Rating:

Proficient

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 expectations established for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- In an effort to communicate high expectations to all the school's constituents, staff and parents receive the handbooks specifically designed for each constituent. A yearly calendar is additionally distributed with monthly events such as parents as learning partners where parents come and read to their children the last Friday of every month.
- 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 weekly 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 has a partnership with Medgar Evers College and New York University (NYU). Representatives come into the school to speak to students about habits of mind. For example, students in grades 3-5 had a presentation on strengthening study skills. NYU students came to speak to students in grades K-2 about what does it mean to be a college student and supported teachers in creating career centers in their classrooms.
- During the parent interview, parents stated that the school communicates expectations for their children and gave out a monthly schedule of parent engagement events that will take place across the grades on Tuesdays. Another parent added that the school sends home progress reports every 6-8 weeks, invites them to parent teacher conferences, and informs them about their children's progress in meeting expectations for learning. Parents also praised the school for having enrichment opportunities, multicultural activities, and hosting workshops, including a workshop on Common Core Standards and a mathematics workshop where families received strategies to help their children with assignments.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

While the school uses instructional strategies across classrooms and embeds multiple entry points so that lessons challenge student thinking, not all student work products reflect high levels of student thinking and 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 to demonstrate ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In the majority of classrooms visited, all students worked on the same task and most teachers did not provide extension activities for advanced learners. For example, in one classroom all students had to determine the cause and effect relationships of New York City long ago using a graphic organizer. Seven students completed the task and waited for the teacher for further directions.
- Several lessons were teacher dominated, with students quietly listening to the teacher or to responses from a few peers who were called upon to answer predominantly low level, short answer questions that required very little thinking. For example, a class of third grade students spent over 10 minutes listening to the teacher read excerpts of a text, pausing frequently to ask questions such as, “What are consumers? What are producers? What is a food chain? Is a food chain important”? The students responded to these questions with simplistic answers such as, “a path”, “eat”, “make more” and “yes”, respectively.
- Teachers in some classrooms engaged students in challenging tasks, such as reading texts to cite evidence for responses to tasks and using academic vocabulary to explain solution to problems. For example, in one class fourth grade students worked with a partner on fluency and problem solving in mathematics, using models and manipulatives to demonstrate varied ways of multiplying numbers to solve the assigned problems. However, in other classrooms tasks were of low demand, including in an upper grade classroom where students were asked to read short excerpts of texts to complete writing (main idea) in a graphic organizer.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Using student work and data, the school has developed and implemented curricula aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and instructional shifts.

Impact

The school's commitment to continuously reviewing and modifying curricula results in all learners having access to coherently sequenced units of study with academic tasks designed to accelerate learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's Core Knowledge, Expeditionary Learning and Common Core Inc. units of study integrate the CCLS instructional shifts and include academic vocabulary, fluency and multi-step problem solving, informational writing and text-based responses.
- The school's English language arts curriculum is supplemented with NYC scope and sequence social studies and science trade books to improve student's comprehension, fluency and ability to demonstrate a balance of informational and literary texts and text complexity.
- Unit maps show tasks that require students to engage in complex tasks such as a fourth grade mathematics unit task that requires students to "use unit conversions and a problem solving with metric measurement".
- The school's mathematics curriculum is supplemented by Envisions and Math Exemplars to improve student's fluency, ability to demonstrate conceptual understanding and discussions in writing through problem solving in real world contexts.

Findings

The school is aligning shared assessment practices so that teachers make effective adjustments to instruction. However, there are inconsistencies in providing clear next learning steps to students in order to accelerate their learning.

Impact

Assessment results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction and not all student work products include feedback in the form of next steps for improvement, thus limiting student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- 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 was inconsistent across classrooms visited.
- Teachers use the Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA's) 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. However, across classrooms small group instruction was seen in one out of four classrooms visited during the literacy block.
- Bulletin boards with student work rarely indicated the use or presence of a rubric to offer feedback to students about their work.
- A few samples of student work in students' folders showed rubric-based performance level scores with teacher comments on post-its while others showed only checkmarks with no comments. In addition, in many students' folders, there were collections of work that showed no evidence of evaluation by a teacher.

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

Scheduled professional collaborations across grades and content areas allow teams of teachers to share content knowledge and instructional strategies for improving teaching and learning.

Impact

The inclusion of all staff in a multitude of teams empowers all teachers to assume responsibility for collectively improving teacher practice and student mastery of applicable performance standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly, using agendas and protocols that focus attention on meeting the goal of improving student achievement in writing through improved teaching practices.
- At team meetings, teachers refine curricula, evaluate assessments, and design instructional adjustments. For example, during a first grade meeting, one teacher reported that after analyzing student's writing work samples, she observed that students' capitalization and punctuation strategies needed support and introduced the "morning warm-up" to engage children in answering, what is wrong with this sentence?, as a conventions strategy which led to improvement in student performance on a follow up assessment.
- The principal indicated that team meetings include all teachers of the grade and related service providers, where lead teachers are providing support with data analysis, instructional resources, and next steps to improve student learning outcomes and teacher pedagogy. According to the principal, this has strengthened teacher practice and contributed to improvement in student performance on the 2013-2014 New York State English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.
- Teachers of the same grade are programmed for three common planning periods a week and on Tuesdays teachers engage in collaborative inquiry activities involving analysis of student work and data, including item skills analysis of the 2013-2014 standardized assessments.