



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Wortman

Elementary School K273

**923 Jerome Street
Brooklyn
NY 11207**

Principal: Melissa Avery

**Date of review: February 12, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Kristine Mustillo**

The School Context

Wortman is an elementary school with 343 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 79% Black, 18% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 2% English language learners and 26% special education students. Boys account for 44% of the students enrolled and girls account for 56%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 91.0%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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
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Findings

School leaders have established a culture of learning that communicates high expectations to staff and to families in support of student learning.

Impact

Parents have a clear of understanding of the academic and personal behaviors associated with college and career readiness. Teachers have a common language and understanding of the expectations associated with the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has designed a Parent Teacher Community Alliance Workshop series. These workshops allow parents to look at student work and data to deepen their understanding of student expectations and strategies so that they can support their children in meeting those expectations. Resources for parents include educational games and web-based programs that support math and literacy development. Teachers provide parents with support as to how to ask higher-level questions during at home reading and staff use parent engagement afternoons to meet 1:1 with family members to discuss activities and resources that can be used to support their children at home.
- Teachers host curriculum nights at the beginning of each year to review grade level expectations with parents. Teachers send monthly newsletters to discuss content units. Teachers have created Common Core Learning Standards' videos for parents, accessible on the school website, to address common misunderstandings.
- Teachers receive a handbook from the principal each year which addresses the expectations for professional responsibilities and instructional bottom lines. This handbook informs teachers of the school-wide data from the previous year and the school goals for the upcoming year. Teachers are expected to use this information in the development of their professional goals.
- Teachers receive professional development in the Danielson Framework for Teaching along with Marzano's Nine Instructional Strategies for Effective Teaching and Learning. As a result, teachers develop their professional goals aligned to these frameworks with consideration given to student data and their own observational data. A Wall of Fame acknowledges highly effective teacher practices. Furthermore, administration reflects on teacher practice and student data in collaboration with teachers to build accountability by making direct links between instructional decisions and student performance, examining which practices accelerate student learning.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Across grades and classrooms, teachers use common summative and formative assessments, aligned to curricula, to provide actionable feedback, measure student progress, adjust curricula, and inform instructional decision making at the teacher team and classrooms levels.

Impact

The school is not yet triangulating data to evidence a clear alignment between teaching practices and increased mastery for student groups.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use Fountas and Pinnell, administered school wide three times each year, to track student's reading progress and performance. These reading inventories give teachers information on student decoding and comprehension levels. Teachers use this information to plan instruction for guided reading groups. Teachers monitor individual student performance and make adjustments accordingly. It is not clear, however, that progress is being monitored for student groups who are receiving intervention services outside of the classroom.
- Rubrics are used across classrooms to provide feedback to teachers and students on performance towards English language arts and math standards. However, teachers are not consistently using rubrics at the initiation of tasks to provide students with actionable next steps throughout the progression of a unit.
- Teachers use Performance Based Assessments aligned to Ready Gen and Go Math to assess student understanding and modify curricula and instruction. Teachers use item analyses to plan for re-teaching and small group instruction. Yet the school does not have consistent practices in place to track progress for student groups to provide a clear picture of the impact of instructional decision making on student performance and progress.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has adopted Common Core Learning Standards aligned programs in English language arts and math and utilizes additional high quality resources to ensure integration of instructional shifts and access for a diverse population of learners.

Impact

Curriculum is vertically coherent and promotes college and career readiness for all learners. Curricula and tasks reflect planning to give access to and support engagement of all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The school adopted Ready Gen and America's Choice Writing to support instruction in English language arts. The school has embedded four to six formative assessment opportunities within each unit in order to make adjustments that meet student needs. When designing these added assessments the school uses Depth of Knowledge and other matrices that support higher order thinking to assess the rigor of the tasks.
- The school has adopted Go Math. The school also utilizes exemplars to give students practice in applying skills to complex problems and ST Math to provide web-based practice at each child's instructional level. Teachers utilize reports from ST Math and exemplar performance to inform next steps for curriculum planning and guided math instruction for groups of students.
- Collaborative planning opportunities that involve teachers across content and specialties allow students access to literacy and math skills through science, social studies and the arts. Teachers use Webb's Depth of Knowledge and Marzano Teaching strategies to ensure the higher level questioning, student talk opportunities, and support strategies such as visuals, manipulatives, graphic organizers and student choice are embedded throughout the curriculum for all grades and content areas.

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices that are aligned to the belief that students learn best through collaborative study of rigorous content support students in their work and discussions.

Impact

Across classrooms, high levels of student thinking and participation were reflected in work products and discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- In a third grade Integrated Co-Teaching math class, during the lesson the two teachers used the ‘one teach, one assess” co-teaching model. Students explored division, making connections to repeated subtraction, and related problems, and then moved into exploring this concept with arrays. The teacher who was assessing during the instruction identified which groups activities students would be working on in order to be flexible and responsive to student understanding.
- Across English language arts classes, students work to strengthen their comprehension through close reading, interacting with, and questioning the text. In a fifth grade class students worked to understand actions and reactions/problem and solutions through non-fiction texts. Students worked in small groups taking notes and organizing information to show understanding, analyzing a realistic fiction piece along with non-fiction texts on wild life conservation. Similarly in a fourth grade class, students engaged in a close reading of *Skeletons Inside and Out* and *Movers and Shapers* to determine what skeletons can tell us about people and animals, connecting this to a social studies unit on Richard III who suffered from scoliosis.
- Across classrooms there was evidence that student discussions and work products in English language arts and math incorporate higher order thinking skills. In math, exemplars require students to explain their thinking through multi-step word problems and teachers ensure students share the different strategies utilized to solve each problem. In English language arts, student work products include writing across fiction and non-fiction genres. Student work includes an overarching demand to support claims and big ideas with relevant evidence. Students engage in classroom discussions around unit readings with tiered questioning facilitated by the teacher.

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

All teachers engage in professional collaborations focused on strengthening their instructional and leadership capacity as they implement the Common Core Learning Standards, and instructional shifts.

Impact

Professional collaborations result in teachers expanding their instructional capacity and making decisions that impact student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers have three common preps each week to plan with their colleagues on the grade and meet once a week in vertical teams. Teachers discuss instructional strategies that are appropriate to a particular unit, “try them out” and bring outcomes back to the team to discuss what accelerated or impeded student learning. A first grade team was working on students formulating their own questions throughout the unit as well as introducing students to rubrics as a form of self-assessment.
- Teacher led inquiry teams utilize protocols to explore problems of practice. Peers ask probing and clarifying questions to better understand problems and offer potential resolutions. The goal of this work is not necessarily the solution but to build critical thinking among teachers around teacher practice and student performance. Teachers then implement suggested practices and resources and report back to their peers on what worked and what didn’t work. For example, while working on main idea teachers noted that some students were unable to give supporting details. Teachers then utilized graphic organizers which helped some students to organize their thinking. Teachers then tried working backwards with some students, starting with details and working to determine the main idea. Teachers also implemented close reading strategies such as margin notes and highlighting to support skill acquisition. Practices were implemented across grades based on grade level appropriateness.
- In math, vertical teams note gaps across grades in student fluency and accuracy with multiplication and division as well as solving multi-step word problems. Teachers implemented close reading strategies for word problems and multiplication games school-wide to give students. ST Math and exemplars were brought in as a response to teacher team findings.