



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Clara Cardwell School

Elementary-Middle School K308

**616 Quincy Street
Brooklyn
NY 11221**

Principal: George Patterson

**Date of review: March 9, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Evelyn Santiago**

The School Context

Clara Cardwell School is an elementary and middle school with 434 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 81% Black, 15% Hispanic, 2% Asian American and 1% American Indian. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 30% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90%.

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	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	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 communicates high expectations to staff and aligns professional development activities to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Frequent school-wide communications and student performance updates keep families informed of their child's development towards college and career readiness.

Impact

The school's structures for communication and systems of support result in staff and families working towards a clear path of higher student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal uses the Danielson Framework for teaching to inform expectations of classroom instructional practices and communicates these to teachers and staff at professional development workshops and during one to one conferences. Network support staff and the talent coach collaborate with the principal and teachers on the implementation of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the Common Core Learning Standards. In addition, professional development sessions include focus on using student outcomes and student work to identify trends and plan instruction, while other sessions include instructional strategies to support English language arts (ELA) and math.
- Teachers are held accountable to the instructional expectations via formal and informal observations with verbal and written feedback for continued professional growth. Feedback to one teacher included a discussion on using assessments to assess the level of student understanding and plan instruction based on the results.
- In addition to providing ongoing curricula and student progress information during parent sessions on Tuesdays, the school has hosted several parent workshops and held a "Curriculum Night" event in the fall where teachers and staff shared information with families on the school's curriculum and Common Core by grade level.
- Parents expressed that the school staff is caring and nurturing and maintain ongoing communication with families that includes phone calls, one to one conversations, school newsletters and monthly progress reports to keep families well informed of their child's progress in school.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

Although the school has begun to align pedagogy with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and instructional supports are provided, the emphasis on higher-order thinking skills and the use of multiple entry points that promote in-depth analysis, deep student engagement, and rich class discussion are inconsistent.

Impact

Teachers are beginning to align practices to the curricula and implement academic supports to yield meaningful student work products. However, there are missed opportunities for all learners, including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, to engage in high level discussions and create meaningful work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's beliefs of how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, include creating opportunities for student discussion and engagement at high levels to deepen students' thinking. However, these practices were not implemented consistently across classrooms. For example, in one lower grade classroom observed, the lesson activity consisted of completing math exercises with little student interaction while, in an upper grade class, questions were mainly low level "what" type questions that did not elicit responses reflective of higher-order thinking.
- Lessons in several classrooms did not include demonstrations of expected outcomes and learning that provided appropriate scaffolds and challenge for student subgroups. For example, during a math lesson observed, the lesson presentation was conducted whole group and consisted mainly of teacher to students question and answer with little evidence of group or individual student support to facilitate learning. There were few opportunities for students to interact, discuss, practice and share their learning with their peers.
- While bulletin board displays in the halls contained samples of student writing and learning in content areas, this was inconsistent across the school. For example, several classrooms in the lower grades had few samples of student work products that reflected high levels of thinking. The work samples consisted mainly of worksheet exercises.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has aligned curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers engage in the use of data analysis to plan tasks to promote rigor for all learners, including student subgroups.

Impact

The use of student outcomes to plan academic tasks, with an emphasis on higher-order thinking, is leading to access to the curricula for all students and promotes college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers work in grade level and vertical teams to ensure alignment of curriculum with the Common Core in all subject areas and to share curricula mandates with the grade above. For example, the eighth grade team informed the seventh grade team that the skill “refuting a claim” is necessary for eighth grade argument writing. This resulted in seventh grade teachers incorporating the skill in their planning to accommodate practice of the skill and increase the learning. In addition, teachers continue to collaborate to refine units of study that include standards from the New York City Scope and Sequence in science and social studies to support the school’s goal of college and career readiness.
- Based on analysis of student work, teachers have identified vocabulary and discussion as focus areas and plan lessons to engage all students in rigorous tasks that promote thinking. For example, in a sixth grade ELA class, students, including ELLs and students with disabilities, discussed with partners and shared with the class, using text evidence, how the author’s choice of words and use of figurative language helped the reader know more about the main character in a story.
- Teachers plan lessons and units of study in ELA and math using summative and formative assessments such as baseline and end of unit tests to inform curricula decisions and plan academic tasks that engage all learners. For example, in one math class, the students worked in pairs using a tree diagram and line plot to determine the probability of an event being likely or unlikely to happen and had the students share their outcomes and learning with the class. The teacher assessed the information shared by the students to determine levels of understanding of the lesson concept.

Findings

The school has implemented structures to measure learning progress through data analysis and during instruction that are consistently used to inform adjustments that meet students' academic needs.

Impact

Effective assessment practices lead to adjustments and refinements that positively impact student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of summative and formative assessments that includes results from state tests, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) and unit tests in content areas. The analysis of assessment results has informed goals for teaching and the targeting of skills for instructional interventions with an emphasis in ELA and math. For example, this year the school identified academic vocabulary and central idea in ELA and multi-step problem solving in math as areas in need of improvement for many students. In addition, information from these assessments outcomes is used to monitor progress for all learners.
- Teachers and teacher teams examine item analysis data from state tests to gather interim assessment data and regularly look at student work in ELA and math to determine levels of student learning, identify areas of need, and adjust instruction to ensure mastery of targeted skills. For example, in response to writing samples reviewed, teachers determined that refining the modeling of paragraph structure for students was needed to improve students' essay writing skills. Additionally, the use of manipulatives in math was increased to deepen understanding of math concepts presented during a lesson.
- Across the majority of classrooms there are ongoing checks for understanding such as questions, responses, student share outs and student written assignments. Teachers make instructional adjustments based on the information to support all learners including student subgroups. For example, in an ELA Socratic Seminar class, one of the teachers asked the students to share with their circle partners and the class their thinking on how setting in a story reveals aspects of a character's life while, another teacher worked with a group of students with disabilities to offer assistance with their responses. In a math class, the teacher had individual students explain to the class how they would apply the concept of linear equations to "real life" situations.

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

Teachers meet in professional collaborations and analyze assessment results and student work to share best practices that lead to achievement of goals for all students. The school leader promotes teacher leadership and encourages teacher input on key instructional decisions.

Impact

Inquiry-based teacher team work is building teacher capacity leading to increased student progress. Distributive leadership opportunities support staff collaboration and enhance pedagogical skills to increase student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams, led by teachers, meet weekly and focus on the implementation of the curricula and analysis of student work to plan lessons and improve instructional practices. For example, members of one math team discussed students who were having difficulty using algorithms to solve word problems. The team planned to support the students by providing opportunities for peer coaching, increasing the use of technology and computers and applying the learning to actual situations. The team planned to share the impact of the suggested strategies at future meetings.
- Network specialists and instructional consultants share information on effective instructional strategies with teachers at team meetings. In addition, teachers have taken the initiative to meet more often as a team, including meeting on Saturdays, to plan for instruction. In addition, teachers participate in visits to network and neighboring schools to increase their repertoire of best practices.
- Teacher grade and team leaders assist in planning the agendas for professional development that include data analysis and pedagogical practices aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework to improve teaching. For example, based on the need to promote thinking at high levels among students, academic vocabulary usage and group discussions became areas of focus and professional growth.