



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 319

Elementary School K319

**360 Keap Street
Brooklyn
NY 11211**

Principal: Aleyda Zamora-Martinez

**Date of review: April 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Maribel Hulla**

The School Context

P.S. 319 is an elementary school with 142 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 1. The school's population comprises 2% Black, 95% Hispanic, 1% White and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled, and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the 2013-2014 school year was 93.0%.

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	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

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations for instruction and professional learning support. The school effectively partners with families to enhance student progress.

Impact

School-wide coherency of high expectations has established a culture of mutual accountability. Successful partnerships with families have led to parents supporting their children at home and guiding all students toward a path that links to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and the instructional specialist consistently track progress using the Danielson Framework for Teaching. During instructional walkthroughs, an analysis of the delivery of the lesson and strategies with explicit feedback is provided to each teacher. For example, during the implementation of Thinking Maps, instead of students developing the map, a teacher gave them a handout of a circle map. The principal gave feedback to the teacher, stating that not all students needed a template, and that high achievers could have been given the opportunity to display their understanding of a circle map by developing it themselves. After classroom visits, next steps include one-to-one conferencing with the principal, instructional and/or data specialist, demonstration lessons, and additional observations and/or inter-visitations. Additionally, the administration has implemented a school initiative to support the instructional focus of refining teacher practice in questioning and discussion techniques, engaging all students in dialogue, and in displaying their thinking through Thinking Maps', providing professional development to support teachers' use of this tool during instruction.
- The school arranges for ongoing opportunities to partner with families and engage parents in learning about the Common Core Learning Standards. Regular school-home communication includes phone calls, translated grade-level newsletters, individual and class conferences, and monthly newsletters that provide information on school initiatives, events, announcements, and learning supports. The school frequently provides parents with access to teacher-led workshops targeting academic goal setting and strategies to better prepare their children for the benchmarks of their grades. Parents feel informed and express that the school does an "excellent job of communicating and involving them in their children's learning".
- Interviews with the parents and teacher teams revealed that they have a high level of enthusiasm and trust for the school leader and the instructional support team. Parents said that the school "respects them as valuable members of the community who are welcome to take part in the school improvements". For example, the idea for school uniforms came from the parents. They wrote the proposal and held a vote. Parents also raised funds to support students who couldn't afford a uniform or supplies. At a teacher team meeting, the United Federation of Teachers representative shared that the school is a "family oriented community", that "everyone works closely", that staff "welcomes feedback from the principal and coaches", and that they "share a mutual accountability for all students", embracing learning from one another to improve on their instructional practices and prepare students for the next grade level.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While all teachers consistently provide multiple entry points and target instructional support across classrooms, discussions and work products do not reflect high levels of thinking and ownership in all classrooms.

Impact

While across classrooms, scaffolds for all students consistently provide access to the challenging curricula, some students are not challenged to work to their full potential through strategic supports or extensions thereby limiting opportunities for them to engage in academic tasks that further higher order thinking skills and ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

Across classrooms, there was evidence of targeted small group intervention. For example, in poetry lesson plan, the teacher included the names of each student in each group, the differentiated activities to support three groups and the particular handouts to support each group in writing a poem using similes. One handout guided students with planning their poem using their five senses, another handout displayed poetry language, and the other handout had a checklist so students could self-assess their poem. However, in an Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) classroom observed, one teacher led a group discussion while the other teacher sat on the side until they assigned students into small groups. When students broke up into groups they were supported by one adult. The activity, which was to unscramble words to develop sentences based on words given to them, did not reflect an activity requiring high levels of student thinking.

- Center-based classrooms support multiple entry points through use of a variety of manipulatives and throughout opportunities for students to work both collaboratively and/or independently. This supports the school's instructional focus, to engage learners in cooperative learning through small group and direct instruction. In prekindergarten classrooms, students rotated among self-selected centers, self-monitoring their time at each station, while the teacher worked with targeted groups of students in a skill-based center. Some students wrote words and drew illustrations to describe community workers, some used a circle map to help organize their writing and drawing, and other used props such as costumes to role-play various community workers.
- Support charts, thinking maps, word walls, classroom libraries, and paper choice was present across classrooms. Students were observed utilizing different paper choices, reading leveled books and supporting one another while engaged in group work. Most students knew how they were grouped but when it came to activities, it was not evident that all students were encouraged to express their thinking. In some classrooms teachers tactically provided question scaffolds shifting from knowledge based questions to interpretative thinking questions prompting students into deeper thinking, while in other classrooms questions asked remained at recall levels. For example, some first grade students were asked to define vocabulary words without explanation, while others were given examples of similes to discuss and then asked, "Why might a poet use a simile?" The school is currently focusing on strengthening teachers' skills in questioning and discussion leveraged by the Danielson Framework for Teaching.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Curricula, aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards, embed the instructional shifts and are planned and refined based on data to meet the needs of students.

Impact

Curricula and academic task planning and refinement promote coherence, increased cognitive engagement, as well as capacity for independent thinking and ownership that position all students including English language learners and students with disabilities for college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project for English language arts and Go Math curricula for math instruction. Teachers intentionally customize curricula to support integration of instructional shifts that reflect vocabulary and text-based evidence work and incorporate additional resources and lessons from Engage NY. All lesson plans in all grades and content areas, including science and social studies, include essential questions, rubrics, thinking maps, reading and writing tasks, and end-of-unit standards-based performance tasks. Additionally, members of the school support team collaboratively plan scaffolds and supports for each lesson based on literacy reading levels and math data.
- Grade level and vertical teams meet regularly to review curricula in terms of Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts to ensure integration and alignment. Specifically, in a social studies unit on Citizens Understanding Civic Ideas and Practices, the literacy team made adjustments to include the instructional shifts to highlight complex text and academic vocabulary.
- School teams have made decisions around pacing and supplements that include Engage NY, The Creative Curriculum for Pre-K and Foundations in order to meet all students' learning needs. Kindergarten students receive direct instruction around phonemic awareness along with emerging literacy skills that support fluency and comprehension from a Response to Intervention (RTI) specialist.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

While school leader and teachers gather a range of data to understand individual student's progress and instructional needs in order to make intentional adjustments to curriculum and instruction, the effective use of on-going checks for understanding is not yet evident across the vast majority of classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms, assessment results and ongoing checks for understanding are used to refine curricula and instruction that improve academic outcomes for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers utilize common assessments, including rubrics, checklists, Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) baselines, and unit tests to determine who will receive extra support from an intervention specialist. For example, an analysis of a math assessment from the beginning of the year and the middle of the year based on the major clusters showed that all students made progress. However, some students still needed support with adding numbers vertically and word problems so they were placed in a small strategy group.
- A system wide approach in instructional feedback was evident in classroom visits, student work, and in teachers' and students' comments. The school created their own post-its where teachers write a "glow" to reflect what the student did well and a "grow" to reflect next steps. Writing folders include monthly student published pieces including launching the writing workshop, labeling and adding details, opinion writing, and a how to writing. All writing pieces included a glow and grow feedback based on a level 1 to 4 rating rubric with student friendly language.
- Across grade levels and classrooms, teachers routinely check student understanding using a variety of templates to record their conference notes and checklists during lessons to determine if students are on target, need more support, or require an extension. In kindergarten classes, teachers were observed checking in with individual students who were using writing checklists and peer assessment to evaluate their writing. Teachers asked questions and prompted students to make changes to their writing based on student and teacher observations. Specifically, to support assessment, the school utilizes a template they created called, Lesson Revisions: After Looking at Student Work. This template reviews the implications for classroom practice, student work and the instructional focus assessed. In a review of a completed template, first grade teachers assessed that the unit presented a challenge for some students in grouping tens in different ways and identified reteach strategies and scaffolds including the use of manipulatives and/or the use of a math technology program. In addition, the school's instructional and intervention specialist use a communication log in which they identify student's strengths and weaknesses and develop strategies to support student learning. These specialists also assist teachers with supporting the whole child, socially and academically by adjusting curriculum maps, grouping for learning, and teaching an intervention group.

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

All teachers are engaged in professional collaborations around student achievement, and review of the Common Core State Standards, instructional shifts, student work, and data. Teachers play an essential role in key decisions that affect the learning across the school.

Impact

Vertical and horizontal alignment of instructional practices results in coherency in the daily work of teaching and learning that ensures student achievement. Teachers' input influences key school-wide decisions.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly to look at student work and analyze performance data. Teachers make decisions around instructional practices, student grouping, and modifications of curriculum maps based on Common Core learning standards and the instructional shifts focusing on vocabulary and text-based evidence. As a result of the inquiry work, teachers recognize which students are struggling and which students can receive enrichment on understanding informational and literary texts as well as writing from a variety of sources. An analysis of student grouping showed that groups changed throughout the year. Pre-kindergarten students who are ready to read join kindergarten classes for literacy instruction. Struggling students receive Foundations or are pulled out by the intervention specialist for direct explicit instruction and support with phonemic awareness.
- Teacher teams work collaboratively to support students to think critically, self-assess, and probe more deeply into the curriculum content. Every team meeting begins with a focus question. For example, the first grade teacher team discussed the implications for improving teaching poetry through the use of beautiful language and similes. Teachers analyzed student work and grouped students based on their success with the task. For the students who were still struggling, teachers suggested providing students with a visual tool such as a double bubble-thinking map to help them compare similarities and differences.
- Teachers shared that many teachers conduct workshops for their colleagues and participate in inter-visitations across grades. As evident in the professional learning plan, team meeting agendas and sign in sheets, teachers are leading professional learning opportunities for their colleagues along with the principal and specialists, and network support. Teachers also stated that professional collaborations support their instructional capacity building, especially in improving student engagement in questioning and discussions, and implementing Thinking Maps, two of the school's goals.