



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**P.S. 328 Phyllis Wheatley**

**Elementary School K328**

**330 Alabama Avenue  
Brooklyn  
NY 11207**

**Principal: Barbra Gedacht**

**Date of review: February 25, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Joyce Stallings-Harte**

## The School Context

Phyllis Wheatley is an elementary school with 385 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 56% Black, 42% Hispanic, 1% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 15% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 54% of the students enrolled and girls account for 46%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 86.0%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Developing</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**3.4 High  
Expectations**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Teacher teams and staff establish a culture for learning that consistently communicates high expectations for all students and has created a system of feedback to families that expresses levels of student progress.

### Impact

Attributes of college and career readiness are communicated to staff and families that promote student progress toward goals and offer ongoing and detailed feedback and guidance/advisement supports that prepare students for the next level.

### Supporting Evidence

- High expectations include academic discipline which is celebrated throughout the building. Teachers provide access to computer-based programs such as Imagine Learning for English language learners, Achieve 3000 and Raz Kids for all learners including students with disabilities. The access to technology-based programs deepens student engagement in activities that capture their attention and promote attention to Common Core aligned tasks and on-tasks behaviors. Students were observed using Imagine Learning and the teacher uses assessment data to plan for guided instruction. Assessment data reflects an increase in student achievement in reading and increased engagement.
- Parents stated the school prepares their children for college and careers by focusing on Common Core Standards. Every month they are informed of the academic expectations based on Common Core via school newsletter in English and Spanish. The newsletter previews the units-of-study for each class and chronicles the work that students are expected to accomplish. Additionally, students maintain a homework folder with the expectations for homework assignments which is shared and reviewed by parents.
- Staff meetings, teacher teams meetings and administrative meetings provide opportunities to communicate high expectations. Teachers participate in professional collaborations with the instructional team that includes the administrators and literacy/math consultants establishing a culture for learning for all. Teachers report that they receive support in designing curriculum and lesson plans that reflect Common Core Standards and produce a list of skills by grade that students are expected to master, setting high expectations. Teacher team notes indicate benchmark assessments and state tests are used to develop the writing curriculum and address specific areas of student need to prepare for the next level. Students are able to monitor their progress using a checklist of mastery skills which is used during teacher/student conferences. Students report that teachers and school leaders expect them to use the school's code of conduct and academic policies to gauge their academic progress and performance that they monitor via goal sheets and progress checks. Academic performance and attendance is encouraged and celebrated via Student-of-the-Month assemblies. Ongoing writing conferences offer students opportunities to review their work and establish new writing goals.

# Area of Focus

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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## Findings

Although pedagogical practices are aligned to the school's affirmed principles about student learning these practices are developing and progressing toward alignment to the curricula. Instructional practices are being refined to engage all learners in challenging and engaging tasks that require thinking at high levels.

## Impact

Teaching practices that provide structured opportunities for all learners to engage at high levels in rigorous and challenging tasks are in development and are not yet consistently practiced and these practices are moving toward alignment to the Danielson Framework and the instructional shifts.

## Supporting Evidence

- In a math class, students worked on a multi-step problem with access to a graphic organizer for some students, allowing them to access the content and engage in discussion with their peers. Conversely, in another math class, one student expressed that she had learned the content in the previous grade and was not learning anything new or challenging. Another said they had practiced the skill yesterday thereby limiting deeper learning and progress for all students.
- The school believes that all children can learn, that instruction should consider individual learning styles and that students learn best with direct instruction, modeling and by practicing skills in small groups with supports as needed. In a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade math class, word problems were leveled according to the students' prior assessment results and the teacher worked with a small group who needed help with math vocabulary to understand the word problems. Conversely, across most classes, students worked on the same problems with few supports or leveled activities with limited opportunities for engagement at deeper levels. Pedagogical practices do not consistently offer opportunities for all learners, including student with disabilities and English language learners to engage in higher order thinking and tasks that call for deep thinking.
- The principal states that some students evidence difficulty with literacy skills and teachers focus on providing tasks that allow them to practice skills with opportunity for reflection and revision. Observation of work products and teacher comments on student work indicate lack of demonstration of higher-order tasks and work products. In one class posted work revealed fill in the blank for vocabulary development and work sheets for students while in another class students worked in varied groups of guided reading with the teacher and response to comprehension questions, vocabulary development with high frequency words and word families, while a third group that worked on sequencing to answer related story questions.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

School leaders ensure rigorous, coherent curricula in all subjects are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and incorporate higher order skills for all learners across grades and subjects.

### Impact

Curricula decisions provide coherency across grades and subjects while academic tasks promote deeper student engagement in challenging learning tasks and curricula decisions provide coherency across grades and subjects. Students have access to rigorous and challenging tasks.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and content standards with attention to the skill students need to achieve across grades. Curriculum maps include key standards, enduring understandings, resources and differentiated activities. Review of last year's Ready Gen writing journals indicated students produced writing pieces that were short and void of subject development. Maps were purposefully modified to include the NY Ready Writing program that strengthens language and vocabulary development and all units culminate with a writing performance task.
- All classrooms are using the EveryDay Counts calendar math program that promotes critical thinking activities involving number sense and mathematical concepts. Teachers have received professional development on how to effectively implement this initiative. Additionally, the newly hired math coach has focused on working with teacher teams to develop lessons and curriculum maps that integrate higher-level thinking skills and hands-on learning activities.
- The school notes technology in maps to support differentiated access for all learners including students with disabilities and English language learners and integrate iPads and laptops with programs such as iBooks for research. These targeted instructional tasks provide students with multi-leveled learning opportunities that offer a profile for students detailing areas of difficulty and the skills and concepts they need to work on with targeted instructional goals.

**Findings**

Common assessments and grading practices and rubrics are not aligned to curricula.

**Impact**

The results of multiple common assessments are inconsistently used to assess student strengths and needs provide limited feedback to students.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers have begun to use rubrics to score student work on performance tasks in English language arts and mathematics. Posted rubrics indicate inconsistency on actionable comments to help students improve. Feedback lacked attention to next steps for students, limits student learning, and progress. For example, in a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade class the teacher encourages students to use more details and connecting words on an informational report. Conversely, some posted work does not share next steps and students comment that they do not always use rubrics or receive comments to help them get better.
- The school has begun to use a conferencing system to provide opportunities to discuss where students are in reading and writing, Guided reading has begun to be incorporated in the literacy program across classes to target student reading needs. Teachers have started to maintain guided reading notes that indicate what students are working on in their reading. While teachers are developing the writing conference structure with the intention of providing strategies for improvement, a review of writing conference notes indicate teachers are not yet using the practice consistently to assess student writing and provide targeted instruction. As a result, the conferencing system limits student literacy growth across classes.
- Common assessments are beginning to be used to measure student progress toward goals across grades. A schoolwide literacy assessment, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), was given to all students in grades K-5 in September 2014, December 2014 and is scheduled to be administered again. The final administration of the SRI will be scheduled for the beginning of June 2015. Additionally, the Scantron Math Performance Series was administered for grades 3-5 in September 2014, December 2014 and is scheduled for March 2015 and June 2015. The Comprehensive Reading Assessment item literacy skills analysis was administered in Grades 3-5 in September. Several teachers also administered Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessments to use as a comparison to the SRI data. Although teachers have these assessment results, a review of data to date indicates teachers are beginning to use the assessments to inform instruction.
- While teachers use and review rubrics their use does not yield a consistent or common approach and is not aligned to a common grading policy as noted by the principal. Teachers in grades 3-5 have developed a system to record assessment information using a student notebook where students are asked to reflect and assess using a writing rubric at the end of the task. Students report that they do not always receive the rubric at the beginning of the tasks, which limits opportunity to perform at higher levels. A review of rubrics reveals loose alignment to grading across grades and subjects. Additionally, student work does not always reflect rubric alignment to the task.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Developing</b>
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### **Findings**

Most teachers participate in grade level teacher teams meetings where shared leadership is encouraged and have begun to use a looking at student work protocol to review student work and data.

### **Impact**

Teacher collaboration lacks a consistent inquiry approach and a lacks consistent use of a protocol for instructional adjustment and progress monitoring, and thus limits increased student achievement and improved teacher practice. Teachers are included in key decisions that affect student learning across the school.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Teachers meet for a double period weekly and the school provides common prep periods. Coaches and staff developers meet with teacher teams to facilitate meetings and reflect on implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and content standards connected to school goals of improving students' writing skills. According to the principal and teachers, they have only recently initiated a consistent structure with an agenda and protocol for reviewing student work. Initial data from these collaborations indicate students have begun to make progress based on Lexile scores and unit tests.
- Teachers have begun to review student-writing pieces and comment that they have started to submit notes to the principal. The principal reviews student-writing work in order to determine the areas of additional support for teachers and provides feedback notes directly to students. Teachers commented that recently the principal stated that she does see progress in student writing but the tracking of improvement for students based on instructional adjustments is not in place and hinders accelerated student achievement.
- Teachers have attended network professional learning opportunities, turnkey this information to colleagues and share the role of facilitator at team meetings. All teacher teams are focused on moving away from the whole class ReadyGen lesson to an instructional practice that includes student discussion, differentiation and small group instruction including guided reading. The goal is to develop lead teachers that will build capacity within the building.