



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

John Wayne

Elementary School K380

**370 Marcy Avenue
Brooklyn
NY 11206**

Principal: Elsa Nunez

**Date of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Steven Chernigoff**

The School Context

John Wayne is an elementary school with 658 students from grade pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 15% Black, 77% Hispanic, 7% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 23% English language learners and 23% special education students. Boys account for 46% of the students enrolled and girls account for 54%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.2%.

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	Well Developed
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 and staff effectively communicate expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to students and families and establish a culture for learning that has a unified set of high expectations for all students.

Impact

High expectations allow the school to successfully partner with families to support student progress and provide effective feedback and advisement supports, to ensure that all students own their educational experience and are prepared for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- All parents receive the school handbook, which details the school's mission and expectations. The mission statement is prominently displayed in the corridors of the school as well. Parents receive regular communication from staff. Each grade has a newsletter that goes home and the school puts out a calendar of events for every month. Teachers call parents frequently, for good news as well as for things students need to improve. If teachers do not see a parent they ask another to "tell your friend" to call them. The school has held a variety of parent workshops, such as on the Common Core Learning Standards and how to use technology to support their children's learning. All parents and students have passwords to on-line textbooks related to subject courses. In the parent coordinator's office is a basket for every grade with material that students are studying so that parents know what their children are learning and to help them study.
- Students report that they love the school and have a voice in making it the best place it can be. The student council, which meets regularly with the principal, put up a suggestion box and the council uses it to give the principal information about what students want. The school has hosted a carnival and shops for students to buy things, as well as trips, such as to the United Nations. A Respect for All Day makes everyone feel respected and accepted. Students report that the school is a bully-free zone and they feel safe. The school uses a character education program, the Six Pillars of Character. Students know how they are supposed to behave and the entire school community supports them to do so and recognizes them when they do.
- Students receive constant feedback from teachers about their learning and feel confident that teachers will help them understand material if they have difficulty. Students know teachers are pushing them to high standards and give them the information to push themselves. Students report that their work is always rated on a rubric and that teachers conference with them one-on-one and give them written feedback on their work. One student said, "You get a score but also a one-to-one conference." Another student said that teachers tell you what you did well and what you need to improve. A third student said, "If you want to get a high grade, look under level four on the rubric." Yet another student said, "One time I got a level two but I improved to a level four. It was on a math project, the teacher said to show the process and the steps and I improved."

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best. Student work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

The school focus on student engagement and rigor is informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the instructional shifts but opportunities are missed for deepening student ownership and learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's belief is that clearly articulating and modeling instruction guides students through the learning process and leads them to independence. In a second grade Integrated Co-Teaching (ICT) class, a teacher began the lesson by asking the students, "How do we show data?" One student said to fill in a chart and another said to use pictures [as in a picture graph]. Then the teacher said that today they would learn to use tally marks and asked, "When would we use them?" A student replied, "When we take a vote for cookies or cupcakes!" The teacher elicited some more examples from the students and demonstrated how to record information using tally marks, including what students should do on the fifth mark of each group. The students then picked different colored cubes out of an envelope and recorded how many of each color they found. But students did not discuss or check their answers with each other, limiting opportunities for discussion and deeper learning.
- In a fourth grade literacy in social studies lesson, students worked to create a political campaign for one student in each group to run for president of the class. The teacher circulated to each group, asking, "What will you say to the class [that you will do if elected]?" Students replied that they would make more activities or make tests easier or improve the school lunch. In another group one student said, "I'm reliable and trustworthy." Her group mate said, "I'll help people." Students discussed their ideas with each other and created a campaign poster in each group.
- In a third grade math lesson, the teacher distributed large colored straws for students to bend into the L-shape of a right angle. He bent his straw into a variety of shapes and asked if they were right angles, or more or less than 90°. Students responded with "Yes," or "More than" or "Less than" each time. The teacher also had the students compare their own straws' shapes to an index card he gave out, to see if the straw were at a right angle. In a fifth grade literacy lesson, based on the students' reading of *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the teacher asked, "How is a bully disrespectful?" and "Can someone who is brave also be cautious...who says yes or no? What does cautious mean?" Finally, she asked, "What's a victim?" In both classes, the teachers asked low-level Depth of Knowledge questions, limiting students' opportunities to think deeply about the topics. The teacher questions also prevented students from getting into their groups quickly so they could take ownership of their conversations, and did not advance the lesson in an appreciable way.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the common core learning standards and/or content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Aligned curricula result in coherence across grades and subject areas that promote college and career readiness for all students. Individuals and groups of students, including the lowest- and highest-achieving students, English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs), have access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Go Math! as its math curriculum. Previously, the school had used modules from EngageNY but it changed to Go Math! so there would be greater coherence and structure across the grades. But the principal and teachers wanted even more support for word problems, especially in the upper grades, so the school incorporates elements of Exemplars to help students in grades 3 through 5. Next year teachers in all grades will supplement with Exemplars. In literacy, the school uses the Reading Wonders program. However, teachers found it difficult to implement, as well as being too broad but not deep enough in content, so the principal worked with teacher teams to restructure and prioritize certain concepts, as well as changing the structure of the lessons themselves. Wonders uses a five-day cycle: four days of instruction and one assessment day. The school restructured its units to go to a seven day cycle, which includes five days of teaching, one day re-teaching and one assessment day, to serve student needs.
- Go Math! helps teachers incorporate the instructional shifts by having students solve word problems and work on using mathematical models through Exemplars to have deeper understanding and increase fluency and rigor. A greater focus on questioning and discussion techniques in literacy, and requiring students to cite evidence from text in all grades also promotes college and career readiness.
- Based on New York State testing data, in which students' literacy skills showed the least growth last year, and the early data on the Wonders program, the school revamped its curriculum. School leaders recognized that teachers needed to plan a language objective in each lesson, in addition to content objectives, for ELLs and students with disabilities, so teachers are doing that. Teachers realized that many students need both visual and verbal support with vocabulary and lesson objectives. Teachers look at student work and assessment results to see who needs re-teaching and more practice throughout the literacy and math cycles. Teachers now use three different levels of text and meet with different groups of learners each day.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use or create assessments, rubrics and grading policies that are aligned with the school's curricula. The school uses common assessments to determine student progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

Impact

The school's assessment and grading policies provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Data on student progress is used to adjust curricula and instruction so that all students demonstrate increased mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses the literacy and math curricula's assessments. Teachers analyze students' reading levels four times per year. Rubrics are utilized to provide both teachers and students with a model for expectations of each assigned task. Feedback is provided to students in both oral and written form that is aligned to the rubric and designed to help each child progress to the next level. Teachers report that their rubrics are "kid-friendly," so students understand how to get to a Level 3 or four on a task. This year, grade level teams began using a common rubric, such as the grade 2 General Writing Rubric, to ensure that all students understand the expectations.
- Assessment to differentiate instruction is another of the school's areas of instructional focus. Math assessments include a diagnostic, mid-chapter check and chapter test. These assessments help teachers formulate groupings for differentiation. Wonders assessments have been modified by teachers to include a deeper focus on vocabulary development, which data shows is an area of need. Reading levels are assessed quarterly to help teachers form small groups.
- Baseline practice English language arts (ELA) and math tests are given in October to students in grades 3 through 5, to identify the needs of every class and each individual student. Teachers and administrators analyze the data and target reading levels for each grade, class and student, and develop instructional plans. Teachers keep conference sheets for each student with supports and explicit instructional strategies they will use. In math, teachers do an item analysis to pinpoint the standards that students did not master and then focus their instructional strategies to help students learn that content. Teachers then give clear, explicit feedback, with next steps. Throughout each math chapter, checklists are used to create groups and reteach skills and concepts utilizing various approaches.
- Summative data from ELA and math exams is analyzed at the beginning of the school year to see where students are strong or weak. From this, the school identifies its lowest third students and intervention strategies. It was determined that many ELLs were not passing the speaking part of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test. Therefore, teachers now make explicit language objectives in their lessons. They focus on vocabulary and give more visuals. After reading levels are assessed each student receives a laminated bookmark with his/her learning goals printed on it. The bookmark is reviewed with all students so they are aware of the next learning steps.

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

The vast majority of teachers are engaged in inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations, where distributed leadership structures are embedded into the regular functioning of the teams.

Impact

Teachers' professional collaborations strengthen their instructional capacity and promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and give teachers an effective leadership role in key decisions in the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams for each grade level meet every week at a designated time as well as Tuesday afternoons after parent engagement time. Other professional learning teams (PLTs) meet during Monday afternoon professional time. Teams focus on modifying and adjusting curriculum to implement the shifts of the Common Core Learning Standards. The Writing PLT met and adjusted the curriculum of the Teachers College Writing Workshop in kindergarten and first grade, based on student writing data. Members of the math team went outside the building to a series of three workshops on Exemplars and turn-keyed the material for the rest of the team, and also for their grade-level teams. School leaders and teachers then decided to supplement the Go Math! curriculum with Exemplars material in grades 3-5. The percentage of students meeting promotional criteria per their cut scores on the 2015 NYS math exam improved by 2.7% this year For the NYS English language 12.2% more students met the criteria per their cut scores.
- The kindergarten team analyzed student work and adjusted their teaching of writing. The teachers agreed upon a common topic, imagining a trip to a farm based on a book students had read, and gave them a picture as a supplement. The teachers realized from a previous assignment that the task needed to be developmentally appropriate for students, and that they needed to give the students sentence starters so they could write more details. The team is keeping a list of all strategies used throughout the year to teach writing; what works well with low, medium, and high-level students; and is constantly updating it based on how students respond to the strategies.
- Teachers came together and decided that the former writing curriculum was not working for their students. They proposed to change it to give their students the foundational writing skills they need to be successful in the upper grades. The principal responded by arranging for a teacher to see the Teachers College Writing Workshop curriculum being used at another school. At team meetings, that teacher explained the concepts of the curriculum and procedures for how to implement it. The teachers decided that they wanted to use it and the principal allowed them to do so. One teacher said of the principal, "She heard our voice." Another said, "She's very receptive to us, she knows it's a team effort. And now students love writing, they're very excited about the work." The school will have its first writing celebration soon.