

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 002 Meyer London

Elementary School M002

**122 Henry Street
Manhattan
NY 10002**

Principal: Bessie Ng

**Dates of review: March 27, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jacqueline Grossman**

The School Context

P.S. 002 Meyer London is an elementary school with 760 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 4% Black, 8% Hispanic, 2% White, and 86% Asian students. The student body includes 44% English language learners and 17% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-14 was 97.2%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core

<i>To what extent does the school regularly...</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.	Focus	Developing
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	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	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

Findings

School leaders have communicated high expectations to staff, and teachers in turn communicate high expectations and a clear culture for learning to students and parents in order to promote awareness and readiness for the next level of education.

Impact

There is a common language and expectation for classroom practice that has also elevated expectations for students and enables everyone to be focused on future educational attainment.

Supporting Evidence

- Efforts to ensure that the Danielson Framework is purposefully implemented have helped teachers to gain clarity about what is expected of them in their classrooms. At the beginning of the year, the principal clearly laid out her expectations and she follows up with weekly newsletters, ongoing observation feedback, and through the work of the teacher teams. Teachers share that the very clear directive around the school's instructional focus has also helped them raise expectations for students.
- In addition to parent orientations for each grade during the month of September, the school also sends home regular newsletters reaffirming important expectations for students. There are also Family Fridays, where families can come in and experience the classroom environment with their children. Parents share that this helps them to see exactly the level of work that is expected of their child and how it is preparing them for further education.
- Parents are expected to sign every test and the nightly homework log. They shared that they appreciate having to do this because it keeps them well informed about what is going on in school. Teachers communicate regularly to parents through phone calls home, progress reports and standards-based report cards. Parents also participate in workshops to help them better understand the requirements of the State tests, including the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test which is taken by many students in this largely bilingual community.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While there has been some work done to ensure curricular alignment and integration of the instructional shifts, as yet the school does not have fully developed or cohesive curricula across all subjects.

Impact

Levels of challenge vary such that not every student has access to tasks that are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- The school describes their literacy curriculum as a "hybrid" of Teachers' College and their own, self-written units. Although they have spent a lot of time working on alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), as yet it has not yielded a fully cohesive, fully aligned curriculum that represents adequate cognitive challenge for all learners. There has been some attempt to integrate instructional shifts, but the lack of a foundational, research-based literacy curriculum is impeding this progress.
- In some classrooms, evidence of curricula and planning to meet all students' needs was very clear. In the third grade, triad classroom and the self-contained special education classroom, students were being challenged and were engaged in activities that promoted higher order thinking. However, in several general education classes, it was not clear how English language learners or students with special needs were being distinctly supported to meet high standards.
- Although science and social studies have been more fully included in the school's curricula, students still express that they would like more, as do parents. Parents are concerned about too much test preparation taking the place of the rich curricula of the past. Some students report being bored or unchallenged in math. While the school utilizes a scope and sequence for social studies and science, curricular documents do not reflect planning to engage a wide variety of learners.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

A clear instructional focus and a better understanding of the Danielson Framework are helping the school to become more cohesive in practices to meet the needs of all learners.

Impact

There are still some inconsistencies across classrooms that limit the levels of student thinking, participation and appropriate scaffolds and extensions for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- There was evidence of the school's instructional focus on speaking and listening in some classrooms, reflecting the school's work in trying to ensure a common vision for school improvement, and the shared understanding that the student population, who are largely English language learners, benefit from increased opportunities to use language. There was also some evidence of the instructional shifts, including a few classrooms in which students were crafting written arguments or engaging in debates with one another.
- Seeking to address the needs of their very significant English language learner population, the school has put a focus on supporting these students. In an innovative pilot program of a triad model of teaching, two classroom teachers are matched with an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher who spends half a day in each of their classrooms, supporting students in small groups. In the fourth grade triad classroom, there was strong evidence of supporting students with language and there was evidence that the teachers adjusted their groupings, in the moment, to meet student needs. In addition, a fifth grade ESL class was demonstrating deep thinking around the topic of slavery, using language such as "humane vs. inhumane," "differing perspectives," and developing arguments on the difference between the northern and southern reasons for supporting or not supporting slavery. However, in other classrooms, the levels of differentiation and challenge varied widely. In some classrooms, there was little evidence of scaffolding for special needs students, and low level tasks being completed by all.
- Of eight classrooms visited, we observed small guided group work in two of them. In most classrooms, there were missed opportunities for rich student discussions. Student work presented also varied widely in both scope and level of product. There were some classrooms in which student independence and chances for students to push one another's thinking was clearly valued, while in others, some students appeared disconnected or bored, reflecting what some of the students had said in the student group as well.

Findings

Meaningful and relevant assessment practices are becoming embedded in the school, but are not yet utilized efficiently or consistently enough to impact on student outcomes.

Impact

Inconsistent assessment practices mean that some students receive limited feedback and that instructional adjustments are not made to curricula or in the classroom quickly enough to impact on student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The creation and use of rubrics has been a major endeavor at the school this year. Rubrics have been developed for every major unit of study by the teacher teams. While this has helped to strengthen the conversation about grading and quality work, there is still some misuse of rubrics, either in terms of language that is not student friendly or in terms of when and how they are supposed to be used. Students knew what rubrics were, but their experiences using them varied widely. Some students reported rubrics are provided after a task, and not before, while other students were unable to explain what the feedback provided meant for their future work. In addition, the rubrics are not yet normed from grade to grade, providing limited opportunity for teachers to use them effectively for curricular purposes.
- Teachers have worked together to create pre- and post- unit assessments for the major units of study. This has enabled them to do some refining of units and identify students who need intervention or support. However, results of these assessments are not used consistently to improve practice or adjust instruction for all learners. In addition, as a school, the assessments are not consistently used by each grade to track progress towards goals, both for individual students as well as groups of students.
- There is some positive practice developing in the school with respect to student self-assessment. Some teachers are beginning to encourage ongoing reflection and providing mechanisms for students to do so. Others however, do so in a perfunctory fashion or do not adequately support the students in the process of self-reflection. Some teachers use ongoing checks, such as exit tickets or thumbs up, thumbs down procedure, but often these checks are not followed by an adjustment.

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

All staff participate in inquiry teams or other professional collaborations and these teams are the driving force behind the ongoing improvements in curricula and instruction, as they work together to target specific student needs.

Impact

By placing an emphasis on the school's instructional focus, and implementing practices that engage all team members and focus on student outcomes, the teacher teams have become a key venue for the school's improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- Based on past feedback received, the school undertook the strengthening of its teams this year. This work has become embedded in the school culture and is helping to contribute to many curricular and pedagogical improvements. By incorporating the use of the ATLAS protocol regularly, as well as ensuring that all meetings have agendas and minutes, the teachers are now holding one another accountable for the quality of their work on these teams. Through the course of this year, teams have worked to align curricula, create assessments, and most noticeably, implement the school's instructional focus. All teams are focusing closely on this work and this is strengthening the instructional capacity of the teachers.
- The third grade team was observed analyzing student work and working together to determine next steps both for themselves and for a group of targeted students. While they were focused specifically on the work of one teacher's students, they each generated numerous ideas about how to proceed with their own students. Teachers that were interviewed spoke about the impact that the improved quality of team work has had on their own practice. For example, one teacher spoke about how she has improved in working with interactive notebooks, and how her own skepticism about this practice has been mitigated as a result of the support of her colleagues. The teachers also spoke about the increase in inter-visitation to one another as a result of their inquiry work.
- Many teachers participate in and lead various committees throughout the school, including an active professional development committee that has driven much of the work this year. On teams, teachers play varying roles, and the use of protocols has helped to provide equity to participation. The school wishes to continue growing its teacher leader capacity.