



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Sarah Anderson

P.S. 009

**100 West 84th Street
New York
NY 10024**

Principal: Diane Brady

**Date of review: January 20, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

The School Context

Sarah Anderson School is an elementary school with 654 students from grade pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 7% Black, 22% Hispanic, 59% White and 8% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 15% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 97.0%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed
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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school has a rigorous and clearly articulated approach to interdisciplinary curriculum design that is aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and incorporates the instructional shifts.

Impact

All students have a range of opportunities to both build skill as well as dig deeply into important topics. The curriculum ensures that students are engaged in challenging tasks that require them to think, reflect and problem solve.

Supporting Evidence

- Using Hess' Depth of Knowledge Matrix as a guide, the school has enriched their curriculum units by implanting higher-order thinking skills within each subject. The staff has developed current, rigorous units of study and continues to align, analyze efficacy, and revise these units to meet the (CCLS) in the Understanding By Design (UBD) format. Additionally, in the Social Studies units in grade 3-5, students are guided through demanding simulations that call upon the application of skills from nearly every content area.
- In mathematics teachers are integrating more sophisticated and explicit lessons around how to make connections and have added new tasks which emphasize this higher level skill. They have refined the exemplars, open-response problems, and multi-step problem solving. The curriculum provides increased opportunities for students to apply their "connections" skills and integrates the "Number Talks" program to build mental mathematics computation fluency. Students explain their thinking and share strategies to solve problems. Lessons promote students working collaboratively to seek out the connections between simple arithmetic and more complex scenarios.
- The school's English language arts curriculum is congruous with the CCLS and incorporates the instructional shifts. The school has utilized the following programs to guide the adaptation of their units: Teachers College (TC) Workshop Model, TC Writing Pathways, Fountas & Pinnell, Rigby Strategic Reading, Harvey and Goudvis, Orton Gillingham Multi-Sensory Reading and Writing Institute and The Six Traits of Writing. Each program functions as a stepping-stone, providing the best pedagogical practices, rigorous assessment models and the supportive points of entry for all students. In addition, each unit of study is embedded with differentiated/tiered support.
- Grade-level specific social studies and science nonfiction content has been embedded in the English language arts curriculum and writing units are rooted in text-based evidence. As a result, in both social studies and science, unit lessons ensure that students are consistently using evidence-based reasoning with the support of content-rich non-fiction and informational texts. All students are reading complex texts (including primary documents), analyzing and inferring within discipline-based tasks, and communicating their findings in evidence-based essays and discussions with other students. Students are taught to engage in "accountable talk," in order to build their skills in the area of authentic academic discourse.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

A variety of assessment tools are used to create clear portraits of students' strengths and challenges that supports the processes of individualizing instruction to meet student needs.

Impact

Assessments provide teachers with a portrait of student progress towards goals and inform decision in adjusting curricula and giving meaningful feedback to students. Peer feedback and self-assessment by students was evident and consistent across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff articulated that assessments are used to drive instruction at PS 9 rather than to categorize or label students. Instruction is adapted to students' needs through carefully chosen assessments and conscientiously gathered data. The theory of action in Richard Elmore's "Breakthrough" has guided the schools work around assessment. The school developed the, "Assessment for Learning: the PS9 Bottom Lines for Assessment." When teachers assess for learning, they use the classroom assessment processes along with a continuous flow of student achievement information, in order to advance student learning. The direct classroom effect of "Assessment for Learning," is that student progress is underscored by the belief in the growth-mindset.
- Using CLSS data, achievement goals are set for and with students While units of study are organized around assessments, it is assessments that inform the continued revision of their units. Units of study are continuously developed and refined by teacher-teams through an Understanding by Design (UBD) process. A unit is framed around identified Common Core State Standards to be addressed and assessed. Rubrics and checklists are a tangible representation of the unit's goals as they are tied to the unit summative assessments and student self-monitoring. The school values empowering our students in maintaining ownership over their learning. Students are part of the rubric development through reflection of I can statements. The school believes that this ownership is necessary to foster a growth-mindset and high sense of self-efficacy in each and every learner.
- Formative assessment is the school's foundation for every implemented unit of study. Teachers maintain sets of conference notes and skills checklists in order to record data gathered from individual conferences, guided-instruction groups, and strategy groups for Literacy and Math. Notebooks and assignments of all kinds are routinely collected for review and assessment, and to provide actionable feedback to students. In both Literacy and Math, there has been a great deal of professional learning around the norming of assessment administration and evaluation.
- Student assessment data indicates that student progress is increasing. In English Language Arts student progress increased from 63% to 80%. In Mathematics, the increase went from 38% to 65%. This increase is due to the commitment of teacher teams analyzing and monitoring student assessment data including Fountas and Pinnell book levels, Exemplar Open Response Tasks, Quick Writes and summative assessments.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teacher pedagogy promotes the ideas of multiple entry points and student engagement. Every classroom demonstrates meaningful ways in which different students could access complex ideas or concepts

Impact

The delineation of grade level expectations, and the holding of students to those grade level expectations, was clear in work products. As a result, the full range of student needs is being met consistently throughout the school.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers' pedagogy focuses on questioning and discussion using Hess' Depth of Knowledge: analysis, application, evaluation, and synthesis. During classroom visits, student engagement was evidenced in teachers' implementation of best practices like "talk moves," "accountable talk," and "Number Talks," which pervades every facet of the school. Students are asked to self-assess using rubrics and rubric aligned checklists. They engage in peer revisions and provide actionable feedback to their classmates. During independent work time, questioning think marks help students focus their thinking and deepen their comprehension.
- Teachers encourage student independence, choice and develop their research skills by engaging students in project based learning. In 2nd grade, students write educational blogs which are developed from outlines created from internet research on the social studies topic of "communities" and science topic of "habitats". In 4th grade, students explore using Internet research combined with classroom reading on Explorers and develop i-Movie documentaries. In addition teachers create educational blogs on Native Americans of NY and presentations based on one of the 50 states using the software of their choice such as Voicethread/ Powerpoint/ Prezi.
- The workshop model provides the time and space for focused, guided groups and for individual conferences. Integrated Co-Teaching classrooms are organized to apply the parallel teaching model when relevant and effective in accommodating students. "Content" is supported through front-loading of background information, academic/organizational skills, and vocabulary. For example special education providers "frontload" a lesson for students, doing a "vocabulary text talk", previewing a text or a set of skills or pre-reading. Teachers utilize leveled texts, multimedia content, manipulative tools and models, collaborative and independent work opportunities, and experiential learning to provide all students access to standards. Teachers plan for the use of graphic organizers, technology assistance, language supports, predictable intervention groups, and timing or location to meet the needs of individual students. Teachers have created checklists that students use to think about their own work. The second grade is beginning to pilot "Cognitively Guided Instruction" in mathematics, the focus of which is to deepen student's thinking about mathematics problem solving through modeling and discussion.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school's deeply embedded, holistic approach to supporting students and its commitment to perpetuating a democratic community results in a high degree of efficacy among students and staff. The staff is committed to rigorous instruction as well as high expectations for all students

Impact

Students are empowered and student voice is at the heart of the school's commitment to creating a democratic, positive learning environment for students. In student meetings and during classroom visits, one can readily observe the high degree of confidence and empowerment students have when they speak to one another.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff highly values empowering their students in maintaining ownership over their learning. Students are part of the rubric development through reflection of I can statements. They maintain that this ownership is necessary to foster a growth-mindset and high sense of self-efficacy in each and every learner. Regular assemblies focused on character development are held for both the upper and lower grades. Teachers plan and incorporate routine class meetings based around positive discipline and character development. Charity and service is emphasized throughout the school. The Grade 4 students work with the parent coordinator to run the Penny Harvest fundraiser for leukemia research. The Grade 5 students organize a yearly Food Drive and also volunteer for safety patrol
- Actionable peer feedback, both commendations and constructive criticisms, is internalized by students and applied to their own work. When students need support, they know that they can rely on anchor charts, graphic organizers and mentor texts, in addition to their classroom teacher. Staff articulated that It is through these structures and practices that the school develops confident, intrinsically motivated students who are prepared for the next level and will be college and career ready.
- The PS 09 handbook outlines all school protocols and expectations. It is available at all times on the PS9.org website. Administrators also have set clear expectations to their staff in regards to professional responsibilities including planning comprehensive and rigorous units of study and daily lesson plans. They have met with staff to set goals that are aligned to the Danielson Framework based on the school's data and teacher observations.
- PS 9 strives to maintain ongoing, clear lines of verbal and written communication with the community. The principal said that they endeavor to both deepen family understanding of what "college and career readiness" means for their children as well as empower families to support their children in exceeding those expectations. They orchestrate numerous events and opportunities to partner with and engage families in learning. These events foster community participation, in a culture of high expectations connected to college and career readiness.

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

Strong professional collaborations drive ongoing refinement of curriculum resulting in a shared accountability for student success.

Impact

The current level of curricular coherence is due to the work of these teams, as well as, changes in pedagogical practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Units of study are continuously developed and refined by teacher-teams through an Understanding by Design (UBD) process. A unit is framed around identified Common Core State Standards to be addressed and assessed. While planning the unit, teacher-teams brainstorm possible misconceptions students may have, determine what will indicate that intervention is needed, and pre-plan tiered lessons and differentiated strategy groups to address those needs. This was articulated by teachers during one of the team meetings.
- In both literacy and mathematics, there has been a great deal of professional learning around the norming of assessment administration and evaluation. Administrators have dedicated professional learning sessions to Looking At Student Work (LASW). During teacher team meetings, teachers not only norm grading expectations, teacher teams determine the implications of student derived data. With these implications discussed, entire units are revised with new content or resources, a reorganization of the lessons, and/or refinement of the assessments used. Teacher-teams also integrate lessons and interventions based on the data collected by the state test. This work is done by determining areas of indicated weakness outlined by the skills item analysis documents provided by the state. As a result 38% of the schools lowest performing students received a 3 or higher.
- There are numerous professional learning teams organized throughout the school. Some long-term teams include: The Coherency Team, Grade-Level Teams, The Staff Development Committee (SDC), Cross-Grade Subject-Specific Teams, The Measures of Student Learning Committee (MOSL), Out of Classroom Teams, and Special Education Teams. Professional Learning Teams work together to make all teachers capable of promoting high-expectations in the classroom, in order to cultivate college and career ready learners. Teams work to create vertical alignment and coherency, develop CCLS aligned units of study, differentiate and tier instruction to meet the needs of every learner, evaluate the accuracy of assessment measures, and integrate the CCLS into the arts, technology and physical education. The teacher teams that were observed discussed student work and used data to make adjustments in upcoming lessons. Teachers also articulate that they were empowered to make decisions and teacher investment in professional growth is extremely prominent. As a result of improved teacher practice in mathematics, the growth percentile for the schools lowest third as measured by the math state test increased from 60% to 73.5% . In addition 81% of all students are meeting grade level reading standard as measured by Fountas & Ponnell assessments.