



**Department of
Education**

Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Wright Brothers School

Elementary School M028

**475 West 155 Street
Manhattan
NY 10032**

Principal: Awilda Baez

**Date of review: May 5, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rafaela Landin**

The School Context

Wright Brothers School is an elementary school with 816 students from grade Pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 12% Black, 85% Hispanic, and 3% White students. The student body includes 40% English language learners and 17% 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 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	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	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school's curricula are aligned to the Common Core State Standards and content standards and strategically integrate the instructional shifts across grades and subjects for all students. Across the school, the leadership and teachers utilize student work and data to plan and refine curricula and academic tasks.

Impact

The school curricula are coherent and the refinements of academic tasks promote student engagement and college and career readiness across grades and subjects for all students; including the lowest- and highest achieving students, English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs).

Supporting Evidence

- Conversations with the leadership and with teachers revealed that the school has adopted ReadyGen, Go Math and the NYC DOE scope and sequence in social studies and science. Furthermore, they have created curriculum maps aligning all units in order to build coherence across grades and content areas. For example, a review of a fourth grade curriculum map evidenced unit 1 in ReadyGen, students were engaged in a study about becoming researchers. In social studies, students studied Native Americans in New York State history and in science students were immersed in a unit about the food chains and webs. The kindergarten curriculum map showed students in literacy learned about living together, home and environment, in social studies the topic was my family, others, and myself and in science they learned about trees.
- Lesson plans across subjects cite essential questions, Standards and learning objectives aligned to the Common Core State Standards and Content Standards, domain specific vocabulary, use of multiple representations and strategies to model teacher's thinking, guided practice and independent practice, differentiated activities for ELLs, SWDs, and high functioning students. For example, a lesson plan in fifth grade includes differentiated tasks to solve problems with an "explore context" strategy for language support for emergent bilingual students and mental math for enrichment to solve problems involving percentages.
- Curricula and tasks are planned and refined using students' work. For example, after a review of the second grade performance based assessments' data and unit plan, teacher teams decided to revise the unit on rural communities from ReadyGen due to the lack of rigor found in the tasks and lessons. Teachers readjusted and refined the unit by including extended writing tasks, and illustrations where students had to compare and contrast their community with other communities. In Go Math, teachers looked at the rubrics and found that students in the bilingual classes and in the lower grades were having a difficult time with the language. They readjusted the rubric to include visuals thereby, providing access and engagement into the curricula for all students.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Teachers' pedagogy consistently provides scaffolds to ensure students experience rigorous instruction and engage in high-level thinking and discussions. Strategies and extensions to produce meaningful work products, however, are not always strategically planned.

Impact

As a result, opportunities for extended learning and demonstration of high level student thinking, participation and ownership are inconsistently reflected across most classrooms.

Supporting Evidence

- A review of classwork, portfolios and other tasks completed by students, indicated that students' work illustrates high levels of student thinking, participation and analytical reasoning. Tasks in all content areas also evidenced the school's efforts in providing multiple entry points to accommodate the individual learning needs of all students. For example, in a third grade integrated collaborative team teaching class students were provided with tiered activities, graphic organizers and model of the activity to engage students in determining the main idea of a text by recounting supporting details and using context clues. Although the task promoted higher order thinking skills, extensions and ownership of the learning was not evident.
- In classrooms visited, teaching practices evidenced multiple entry points into the curricula to ensure that all students are provided with scaffolds, questioning and the use of strategic use of native language instructions to engage all students with challenging tasks. Classrooms visited evidenced word wall with illustrations and pictures, use of cognates, and the use of technology programs such as ST Math and Waterford to accommodate the individual learning needs of all students.
- During class visits, students were afforded with opportunities to turn and talk and to use the school's created "discussion sparks" to promote high levels of student thinking and participation and to engage students in rigorous tasks. The "discussion sparks" is aligned to the depth of knowledge levels and it is used for partner talk, small group discussions and whole class discussion. Students were observed using this practice during whole class discussions centered around their approaches to problem solve in a math lesson or when giving their opinion around a topic. However, in two out of the seven classes visited, students were not fully engaged in the discussion and didn't take responsibility for their role within group discussions.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school uses common assessments aligned to the school chosen curricula to provide feedback on students' performance, determine student's progress and adjust curricula and instruction.

Impact

Students receive feedback from teachers that help them improve their performance across content areas. The school has systems and structures that help teachers to monitor students' progress and make adjustments that address the learning needs of all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of common assessments determined by MOSL selections, running records, performance tasks aligned to curriculum units, and Fountas and Pinnell assessments. The school analyzes the reading development of all students and they target the emergent bilingual students by reviewing the data on a monthly basis. A review of the monthly agendas, minutes and discussions with the leadership revealed that teachers use the results of the Fountas and Pinnell data to identify best strategies to implement with emergent bilingual students. Current data has revealed that thus far, targeted students are approaching their target level. The school has identified nine emergent bilingual students with IEP in grades 3-5 not making significant progress. The school will continue to differentiate instruction based on proficiency levels, use close reading and intervention services for those students who are not making progress.
- The school uses common assessments and rubrics aligned to the Common Core State Standards to determine progress towards curricula goals and provide feedback to students regarding their academic achievement. A review of portfolios during classroom visitation and conversation with students showed evidence of the use of rubrics and feedback given to students to advance their learning. Furthermore, students were able to articulate the purpose of the rubrics and checklists and they were able to explain what they needed to do to improve their work. For example, a fourth grade student received the following feedback from her teacher on a science task: "Your essay is organized, focused and well developed. You use language that helps connect this science topic to everyday life. Next time, be careful of the order in which you present information. Your first paragraph would have been better to include as your last paragraph because you want to first inform the reader of the different types of rocks and then reflect on the different uses of rock in our world today".
- The school has systems and structures for teacher teams to analyze student work and use this data to inform decisions for teaching and learning, evidence of this practice is consistent across grades and subject areas. For example, the school has an adjustment to curricula calendar and rationale for adjustments based on student work data.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders and staff consistently embed high expectations in all aspects of school culture, focusing on the Danielson Framework for Teaching and college and career readiness, and successfully partner with families.

Impact

Systems and structures that support a culture of high expectations, responsibilities, and professional collaboration for staff, students and families effectively communicate mutual accountabilities amongst all stakeholders for achieving the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers shared that they receive a handbook at the beginning of the school year delineating all expectations in terms of instruction and the day to day operation of the school. Additionally, teachers are given “bottom line and non-negotiable” expectations for all content areas; such as “math instruction must take place every day”. They also received a “planning a highly effective lesson” template which includes the teaching point, the standards, vocabulary, introduction of the lesson and engagement, modeling strategies, guided and independent practice, questions to facilitate discussion, assessment, differentiation for all learners, and closure and reflections on what students learned. The leadership conducts daily classroom visits and all feedback given to the staff is aligned to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. Reviews of observations reveal that teachers receive feedback on questioning, engagement and assessment of student learning. Teachers are given opportunities for inter-visitation to strengthen their practice.
- School leaders work with the Parent Association and parent coordinator to translate documents and coordinate frequent communication to parents through weekly and monthly newsletters. The school uses Jupiter, an online system to provide information to parents about their child’s academic, behavior and attendance. Parents shared that they have attended workshops on strategies to use at home to support students in their learning and Common Core workshops on what their child needs to know by the end of the grade.
- Parents shared that the school sends frequent updates on the progress of their children towards expectations for learning. The school sends “Great News” on a monthly basis informing parents of the individual reading level of their children. Furthermore, the school creates several school wide events throughout the year to support students’ progress towards meeting college and career readiness and the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. These activities include: Fifth graders visiting colleges with their families to learn about social and academic expectations of college life, career week, student newsletter, and student council.

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

Teachers participate in structured inquiry based professional development focused on the school's instructional goals. Team collaborations provide a vehicle for teachers to have input on key decisions regarding the curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide efforts to effectively promote the school goals, including the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, and has built leadership capacity for staff to have a voice in key decisions regarding student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams promote the implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts. The school has structured times for teachers to meet in vertical and horizontal planning and inquiry time a minimum of two times per week. The school schedule includes the Citywide Instructional Expectations team weekly meetings on Fridays from 3-5 p.m. This team focuses on student work data analysis across the grades, curriculum planning and adjustments. During a team meeting, the teachers were observed reviewing student work. The team had an agenda, including a plan for instructional next steps, student work, rubrics, and a student work analysis protocol for looking at the narrative performance task. Additionally, teachers had an exemplar from Appendix C in the Common Core State Standards.
- Teacher leaders plan and facilitate professional development sessions, establish agendas and keep track of minutes. The administrative team holds them accountable and ensures that decisions at these meetings are implemented through twice per month meetings with teacher leaders and the principal to ascertain alignment of the teacher teamwork with school-wide goals. During the teacher team interview, some teachers reported that they have assumed leadership roles within teacher teams. This allows them to share expertise with the staff and to have a voice in key decision making at the school level. For example, teachers decided to revise the school wide talking stems after teachers engage in a review of how students were speaking during student to student discussions. The school developed "discussion sparks" to support students in questioning each other, adding ideas, challenge each other and engage in authentic discussions.
- During teacher team meetings, teachers articulated that the school provides them with opportunities to assume leadership roles. For example, teachers provide feedback to each other on revisions and adjustments made to the curricula maps. Teachers engage in inter-visitation with the lens of looking at students' work, and have begun to vertically align the curricula to ensure rigor across the grades and content. The school has two grade leaders per grade and four lead teachers that support all school wide initiatives that affect student learning across the school.