



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Margaret Douglas

Elementary School M036

**123 Morningside Drive
New York
NY 10027**

Principal: Heather Jn Baptist

**Date of review: February 25, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Gale Reeves**

The School Context

Margaret Douglas is an elementary school with 547 students from pre K through grade 5. The school population comprises 49% Black, 48% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% other students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 25% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 90.0%.

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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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	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	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
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Findings

Administrators consistently convey their expectations to staff during trainings and other modes of communication. Workshops and performance updates keep families informed of student progress towards a path for middle school, high school and college and career readiness.

Impact

Training structures aligned to school leaders' verbal and written feedback offer support leading to shared accountability. Additionally, families have high praise for the support their children receive, resulting in home-school collaborations that support student success.

Supporting Evidence

- At the beginning of the school year, school administration met with staff in order to assess their needs and review written feedback from the quality review. Teachers then completed a school designed staff survey providing additional feedback in support of their pedagogical needs. As a school community, there is a focus on fostering and developing student engagement practices aligned to Danielson component 3c. Using the Danielson Framework for Teaching (DfT), school leaders provide verbal and written feedback after classroom observations. As such, the school's professional learning plan is well aligned to the identified needs of staff. Staff and administrators participate in inter-visitations to other district schools. Consequently, school leaders expect that teachers apply their new learning when designing lessons for students.
- The faculty handbook detailing the school's grading policy, attendance and work habit expectations serve as a central hub for all resources, including daily expectations. The principal's weekly updates are emailed to staff each Friday and keep them informed of expectations. In varied correspondence, the principal expresses her appreciation to individual staff members, informs them of assembly programs, spirit day activities, identified deadlines, as well as any anticipated changes to their daily schedules. As such, school administrators have developed varied communication structures and hold staff accountable for them.
- Parents shared that teachers and school leaders are continually "accessible" to them and their concerns are immediately addressed. One parent stated that, because of the school's vision screening program, her child was referred to the Ophthalmologist and his vision concerns are now being addressed. They also stated that the staff's expectations are guided by the goal of ensuring that all students are grade level proficient. Parents' attendance at award ceremonies and appreciation events such as the Father's Day breakfast and Grandparents Day has increased, thus demonstrating their commitment to the school.
- Progress reports inform families if students are performing below, at, or above the expected reading and math level. For example, one student's progress report stated that he shows initiative but needs to routinely use the strategies taught in math when solving multistep multiplication problems. Text messages, phone calls, monthly newsletters, homework sheets, school calendars and face-to-face meetings enable staff and parents to exchange ideas and discuss the goals aligned to the staff's expectations for student success in readiness for middle school and beyond.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Instructional practices do not consistently incorporate questioning and discussion strategies. Although student work products at times reflect rigorous tasks, the use of multiple entry points to support learning is uneven across classrooms.

Impact

Teachers ask thought provoking questions but, across grades, teaching practices do not consistently require all students to productively struggle with tasks that maximize their opportunities to demonstrate higher order thinking skills. This limits the level of student engagement resulting in uneven levels of participation across classrooms and lost opportunities for students to demonstrate high order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- During a math lesson, the teacher posed open-ended questions and continually pressed for understanding. Both the teacher and students used content language appropriate to the unit of study on equivalent fractions. The teacher challenged students' assumptions and allowed students to productively struggle with the assigned task. This level of engagement was not consistent across classrooms. In others, questions and discussions remained primarily between the teacher and individual students and all teachers did not require students to struggle with complex tasks that met their individual needs.
- To meet students' needs some teachers provided scaffolding tools such as graphic organizers and process charts. However, in some classrooms, although the charts are displayed, the teachers and students do not reference them. Additionally, in some classrooms the teachers did not provide math manipulatives or other tools to help students understand the taught concepts.
- Although teachers plan tasks to challenge English language learners and most students with individual learning plans, students work products displayed on bulletin boards and in work folders do not consistently provide evidence that tasks and discussions challenge all students, especially those performing at high academic levels. Students are not frequently given extension activities that challenge their thinking.
- In all classrooms visited, students participated in class discussions by responding to teacher generated questions. However, students only posed their own questions in two of the seven classrooms, thus limiting their ability to expand their thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The English language arts and math curricula are aligned to the common core learning standards, however faculty are beginning to align the social studies and science curricula to standards. Academic tasks across content areas are not consistently rigorous.

Impact

All learners do not consistently have access to coherently sequenced curricula units of study and tasks do not always cognitively engage high performing learners. As such, all students are not consistently challenged and, at times, have difficulty transferring their learning to new contexts.

Supporting Evidence

- The social studies unit plans are not consistently rigorous or aligned to state standards. For example, in several classes, students conducted research for a project celebrating Black history. Students prepared reports, which required them to summarize basic facts demonstrating low levels of depth of knowledge. Similarly, in another class, students were asked to cut, sort and glue symbols on a T chart distinguishing between American and non-American symbols.
- The principal stated that teachers are expected to use New York City's scope and sequence to plan social studies and science lessons. Although the scope and sequence depict essential questions, unit plans are not fully developed across both curricula areas and teachers do not plan lessons aligned to the essential questions to ensure that lessons are rigorous, sequenced and aligned to state standards.
- Across content areas unit and lesson plans do not consistently demonstrate scaffolds and entry points to meet the needs of all learners, including those performing at the highest levels. As such, at times, designed tasks do not always challenge high achieving students. In some classrooms, tasks are not real world aligned and all students are asked to perform the same tasks although some may display mastery of the concept.

Findings

Teachers align assessments to the curricula and use the data to determine student progress towards established goals.

Impact

Data results help provide an accurate snapshot of students' progress enabling staff to adjust curricula and instruction in order to support student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal shared that an analysis of Fountas and Pinnel data revealed that students lacked decoding skills, especially in the lower grades. As a result, all K-2 teachers use Foundations on a daily basis to further develop students' phonemic skills. Thus far, identified students have made gains in the area of fluency.
- The school's assessment calendar demonstrates that common assessments are used to assess students' progress of the taught curricula. Ready Gen and Go Math baseline assessments were given in October across grades K-5. In addition to these assessments, teachers also analyze end of unit assessments every 4-6 weeks. Teachers conduct item analysis and use the results to create and modify skills and targeted academic intervention services. For example, the school uses Achieve 3000 to support intervention services for English language learners and students with disabilities.
- Teachers administered mid-year assessments in January. Staff members collect these results on data trackers and use the information to inform daily planning. For example at the second grade level, teachers noted a need to revisit using addition and subtraction with 100 to solve one and two-step word problems in order to strengthen student learning.
- The data specialist assists classroom teachers with data analysis leading to instructional adjustments such as re-teaching concepts, use of graphic organizers or changing students' groups.

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

Teachers participate in weekly professional collaborations across grades and departments. Leadership structures enable teachers to have input on key decisions about curricula and teaching practices.

Impact

Team meetings strengthen teachers' instructional capacity and enable them to assume collective responsibility for improving student outcomes. Distributed leadership structures enable teachers to build their pedagogic practices resulting in improved academic goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Grade level teacher teams meet weekly. The schedule also enables teachers to meet multiple times throughout the week for common planning. Third grade team members shared that, based on their review of teachers' designed tests and midyear assessments; they have determined the continued need for a focus on problem solving. As a result, they introduce multiple strategies to students and are encouraging students to use those strategies that best fit their learning style and the desired outcome.
- Teacher teams review formative and summative results, share strategies and make instructional decisions. For example one team devised higher order thinking (HOT) Thursdays as a fun way to provide extensive support to students. Team meeting agendas reflect a focus on analyzing student work. Fifth grade teachers shared that they moved one Ready Gen unit to February since they thought that the texts and tasks were better aligned to Black history.
- To support their skills, grade team leaders participate in monthly Raising Educational Achievement Coalition of Harlem (REACH) professional learning at Teachers College. These teachers are responsible for turn keying and sharing new learning with their grade level colleagues. Additionally, identified mentors support new pedagogues in the areas of curriculum planning and instruction. Teachers note that these additional responsibilities have contributed to their leadership growth.
- In addition to school administrators, the school's Coherency Team is comprised of grade leaders, the English as a second language (ESL), data/academic intervention and SETSS teachers. Three teachers serve on the Paper Reduction Committee and others serve on the school's professional development committee. These teachers solicit feedback from their peers regarding needed professional development topics / supports; recommend curricula changes and make suggestions for services to meet the identified needs of selected students. For example, teachers helped write grants, which provide additional tutoring, and social-emotional supports during the school day. Additionally, during the vertical team meeting teachers across grades discussed their input in making curricular recommendations. Likewise, members of the coherency team lead classroom visits in order to note whether practices are aligned across grades. This has resulted in the sharing of strategy charts to support students' understanding of close reading strategies. Teachers shared that school administrators listen to their input. Consequently, they note that these structures allow them to play a key role in shaping and supporting the school's goals as well as developing their leadership capacity.