



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Dos Puentes

Elementary School M103

**185 Wadsworth Avenue
Manhattan
NY 10033**

Principal: Victoria Hunt

**Dates of review: March 13, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rafaela Landin**

The School Context

Dos Puentes Elementary School is an elementary school with 135 students from grade K through grade 5. The school population comprises 2% Black, 83% Hispanic and 15% White students. The student body includes 53% 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 2014-15 was 92.0%.

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	Proficient
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	Celebration	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	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	Focus	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:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers' instructional strategies strategically provide all learners with multiple entry points into the curricula so that all students demonstrate high levels of thinking; discussions and student work products reflect high levels of participation and ownership.

Impact

In all classrooms, students are challenged to work to their full potential and engage in rigorous tasks that promote higher order thinking skills and ownership of learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Across the vast majority of classrooms visited, students were observed engaged in high level thinking, with discussions promoting participation and student to student interactions. In a first grade math class, students participated in class discussions by responding to the teacher's questions after a read aloud. The teacher asked the students to estimate the number of spots on a fish and indicate the strategy that they used to come up with the number. A student responded: "In my mind, I circled ten, I technically looked at all the fish and then I looked at all the spots and now I know it is a little less than 100 and more than 60".
- During classroom visits, supports for high level discussions were identified in all classrooms. For example, in all of the classrooms visited, there was evidence of sentence starters and prompts to support student to student discussions. In all classrooms there was also evidence of teachers encouraging students to explain their thinking and/or justify their answers. Additionally, teachers insisted on students using domain specific vocabulary. In a math class, a teacher reminded the students to use complete sentences when working with their partners and wrote on the board the sentence starters for students to use.
- A review of classwork and tasks indicated that students' work requires high levels of student thinking, participation and analytical reasoning. Tasks in all content areas evidenced the school's instructional focus which is to develop oral language and analytical reasoning through math. For example; in a kindergarten class, students were given a task to write a math story problem and to ask a partner to solve it using two different strategies. This task promoted oral language development and engaged the students in using reasoning with numbers to come up with the answer.
- Tasks displayed on bulletin boards and a review of students' work during the student meeting evidenced extensions into curricula and students' ownership of learning. For example, the social studies work displayed on bulletin boards inside and outside of the classrooms demonstrated extension to the writing, reading, language skills, and listening standards. In addition, all first grade students were immersed in a study of the community which engaged them in defining their role in their community as a global citizen by writing opinion, informative and explanatory pieces, using text evidence. Students chose their inquiry groups, the texts and the mode of representation for their topics.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Using the Danielson Framework for Teaching, school leaders communicate high expectations for learning to all staff members and support them towards success in achieving the expectations. Family activities within the school are used to communicate expectations and provide ongoing feedback for families to understand student progress in meeting the expectations.

Impact

The school has established a professional learning community that conveys high expectations to staff and families and ensures accountability for the expectations; structures that support high expectations to ascertain a culture of mutual accountability for all stakeholders to provide students with a clear path to college and career readiness were not evident across the school community.

Supporting Evidence

- To communicate high expectations for teaching and learning, the principal organizes a retreat for 5 days in August for teachers. During this retreat, staff members utilize the Danielson Framework for Teaching to develop a shared understanding of high expectations for teaching and learning, including a common language about instruction. For example teachers are expected to read articles and analyze videos on best teaching practices to support their professional growth. The principal holds them accountable for these expectations via frequent classrooms visits, formal and informal observations and reflection sheets that they complete in assessing their instructional practice.
- Discussions with the leadership and parents revealed that the school has several structures in place to communicate high expectations for learning with families. Bi-weekly Family Fridays serve as a vehicle to provide parents with time in the classroom to understand the school chosen curricula and the strategies that teachers use in the classroom. Parents also learn about expectations linked to the school-wide instructional focus on oral language development and higher order thinking skills through math and have opportunities to partake in classroom activities with their children. Additionally, during some mornings and evenings the principal holds a series of monthly workshops designed to inform families about academic and social/behavior expectations for all students.
- Parents shared that the school sends frequent updates on the progress of their children towards expectations for learning. Additionally, the school sends newsletters, including a March Reading Madness Newsletter which highlights monthly events and activities to support students in developing literacy skills. Furthermore, the school has a homework policy that is distributed to all families in the beginning of the school year. This policy is sent home in English and Spanish. The policy explains the purpose of the homework, the materials and the setting needed for students to work at home, and the time that the students should spend completing their homework. The policy also indicates science projects and challenges that the students will receive throughout the year to support their progress towards meeting college and career readiness and the expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards. However there was little evidence of partnerships across stakeholders that illustrate a shared understanding of ways to further promote college and career readiness skills for all students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and teachers align curricula to the Common Core Learning Standards and ensure the integration of the instructional shift across all content areas. Academic tasks and units consistently emphasize rigorous work habits across grades and subjects for all students.

Impact

There are coherent curricula across grades and in all content areas and academic tasks promote higher order skills and student thinking across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Reading and Writing Project Literacy curriculum that is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards. This curriculum is integrated with social studies and science units and supports building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts. For example, a science unit on “Exploring Properties” shows alignment with the informational unit in reading, writing and math units. A science task for first grade showed that students had to research a variety of books, using the Internet or iPods to investigate their topic of interest. Students chose metal, wood, plastic, fabric, clay and rocks and created questions to research within their groups. Students measured, observed and took pictures of the objects to create an informational mural about their project.
- Curriculum documents show that the school uses Common Core aligned resources such as Engage NY, Teacher’s College Reading and Writing and Department of Education Scope and Sequence in science and social Studies for instruction across grades and content areas. Teachers adapt units to meet the needs of all students. For example, a Grade 1 Module 1 Unit in math, adapted from Engage NY, shows questions to be used to provide students with varied entry points into the lesson. Additionally, a review of math tasks in kindergarten and grade 1 demonstrated rigor and emphasis on Mathematical Practices as part of the instructional shifts. One such task required students to write mathematical problems, solve the problem using more than one strategy, share with a partner, ask the partner to solve the problem using multiple strategies, and then compare and discuss strategies used. The task demonstrated emphasis on the instructional shifts in math, offering students opportunities for improving fluency, building connections with numbers, exploring number sense and using more than one strategy to solve a problem.
- The principal stated that the school promotes higher order thinking skills and ensures access to rigorous curricula by creating tasks that provide opportunities for students to participate in field trips. For example, some students attended a trip to the Botanical Garden and this led to teachers linking the social studies curriculum to an art project which culminated in persuasive writing, the creation of a mural and oral presentations during family Fridays. All students, including English language learners and students with disabilities are provided with choice of tasks, visuals and inquiry work.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

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

Impact

Ongoing data analysis informs adjustments to curricula and instruction to address the learning needs of all students and generates feedback about students' progress towards learning goals.

Supporting Evidence

- As stated by the Principal and observed during classroom visits, teachers use rubrics to measure growth in the writing development of the students. The rubrics include structure, genre, details, vocabulary, spelling and audience. Using the rubrics and checklists, teachers provide students with feedback on their work. For example, rubric based "Glows and Grows" seen on students' work illustrated teacher feedback to the students, including next steps for improving the work and commendations on their published work.
- The school developed a spreadsheet to enter data from literacy and math assessments in order to monitor the progress of individual students and identify trends and patterns amongst the different subgroups. This system allows the school to look at the data for individual and groups of students, and the information gathered in the analysis of this data is utilized for planning instruction and to adjust the curricula to meet the individual learning needs of the students. For example in reviewing the fall data from Fountas and Pinnell, the school found that the students were lacking basic phonemic awareness skills and many students were at level B. Instruction was adjusted to target students and increase support via small group guided instruction. Similarly, analysis of math data revealed students struggling with fluency in math so "Number Talk" and "Mental Math" were added to the curriculum to support students in reasoning with numbers.
- Meetings with teachers and with the leadership indicate that the school created an assessment calendar and a grading policy that align with the school curricula and are used to provide ongoing feedback to teachers and students. The calendar showed that the school administers assessments such as Fountas and Pinnell in English and Spanish three times per year, with Running Records every four to six weeks. In math, beginning, middle and end of module assessments are given. Additionally, teachers conduct informal conferences with students in all content areas to measure daily progress and identify areas of need and adjustments to be made in curricula and/or instruction based on the data gathered.

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

Teachers are involved in structured inquiry based professional collaborations, analyzing student data and student work around the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and the instructional shifts.

Impact

The participation of teachers in structured inquiry based professional collaboration has resulted in school-wide efforts to achieve school goals such as improved teaching practice, effective implementation of Common Core Learning Standards and improved student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- To build teacher capacity and support teacher teams in data driven inquiry work, the school provides opportunities for all teachers to meet weekly in teams and participate in inter-visitations that allow them to share best practices and receive feedback from their peers and from the administrative team. Teacher teams and inquiry teams utilize a common agenda template and a protocol adapted from the School Reform Initiative “Tuning Protocol” for analyzing student work. Teachers reported that they meet in teams to analyze student work, brainstorm next steps for improving the performance of targeted students and use information gathered from analysis of student work and data to adjust instruction to meet the learning needs of students.
- Teachers read articles, analyze videos of best teaching practices in the classroom and use a common reflection sheet at the end of the teacher team meetings indicating next steps and adjustments and changes to their teaching practice as a result of their work within these teams. These practices as stated by teachers and the leadership were observed during the math inquiry team meeting. The teacher teams developed videos of math practices in the classrooms in order to analyze math routines and math practices aligned to the instructional shifts. Teachers discussed the videos and provided feedback to improve teaching practices and promote additional opportunities for student to practice using multiple methods for problem solving and expand language development in math.
- As part of team collaborations, The Danielson Framework for Teaching is used by teachers and the administrators to build a common language of best teaching practices. The principal holds teachers accountable for full participation in team meetings and the implementation of decisions that are made during teacher team meetings. For example there are follow up via inter-visitations to observe the implementation of best teaching strategies and practices discussed at the meetings. In addition, teachers select a practice that they want to work on for a few weeks and present their work to peers during inquiry team meetings.
- The school affords teachers opportunities to receive professional development facilitated by the office of English language learners, Network and the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In addition, the school is in a Learning Partners School Program which affords teachers multiple opportunities to strengthen their pedagogy by observing peers in other classrooms outside of the school and receiving cross-training and actionable feedback on teaching practices that are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.