

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 145, The Bloomingdale School

Elementary M145

**150 WEST 105 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY, 10025**

Principal: Dr. Natalia Garcia

Dates of review: January 28, 2015

Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul

The School Context

P.S. 145, The Bloomingdale School is an Elementary school with 407 students from pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 27% Black, 63% Hispanic, 6% White, and 3% Asian students. The student body includes 13% English language learners and 19% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013 - 2014 was 91.6%.

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.	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	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

The school consistently communicates expectations to staff, families, and students, as well as provides supports to meet those expectations.

Impact

Staff, parents and students work together to ensure that students are meeting the expectations of college and career readiness skills and prepared for the next grade level.

Supporting Evidence

- Professional development is determined collaboratively by a team of teachers across grade levels and areas of expertise. The sessions are aligned with the expectations of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and according to the identified needs of the teachers. For example, a session was conducted around designing coherent instruction and identified the elements of a cohesive lesson. The teachers then had an opportunity to meet in grade level teams to collaboratively plan. As a follow-up, teachers received feedback in the observation report. One teacher received the recommendation to include examples of differentiated materials and resources to ensure that all students have access to meet the learning outcome.
- Teachers provide families with progress updates on a monthly basis. The teachers send out newsletters and include the students reading level as well as areas that the student is struggling with in reading and math.
- Parents state that the school communicates with them on the progress of their children through conferences, newsletters, emails and phone calls. In addition, parents review their child's portfolio so they are aware of the progress. One parent stated that the teachers motivate her daughter and pushes her to do well and reach her potential; all parents were in agreement.
- The school presents two to three parent workshops a month on topics such the Common Core Learning Standards, the Go Math and Ready Gen programs, stress management, and the importance of music. In addition, the school welcomes families to join in the celebrations at awards assemblies, the winter spectacular performance and a parent library excursion.
- The school includes practices connected to college and career readiness. Students are expected to plan, organize and map out timelines for completion of all projects. In addition, emphasis is placed on students identifying evidence, learning the academic vocabulary and explaining their thinking when solving problems. Students utilize technology to support their learning. One student stated that the teacher expects them to be independent learners to prepare them for the next grade level. Another student added that the teachers will support them so they can improve.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework, classroom instruction inconsistently provides scaffolds and supports to promote high-levels of student thinking in class discussions and student work products.

Impact

The level of rigor in the lessons and cognitive challenge of the academic tasks varies among classrooms inhibiting increased achievement for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Principal states that the teachers introduce the objective through the workshop model with direct instruction and then provides opportunities for the students to work in small groups or independently. This structure was observed across classrooms but there was uneven engagement. In a fourth grade class, the teacher was modeling how to solve a problem and then had a gradual release of responsibility until she sent off a group of students to work independently while another group remained with her for an extension activity. Conversely, in a second grade class the teacher was modeling how to complete a planning sheet for a narrative and then students were to create their character to for their narrative but students' thinking was limited with the choices on the planning sheet.
- Across classes, vocabulary is introduced to support the students' understanding however the tasks didn't consistently challenge their thinking. In a first grade class, the students explained the three states of matter using molecules but the task required students to cut and paste without any cognitive challenge. In a fifth grade class, the students were introduced to the vocabulary in the unit on Explorers but there was limited discussion to ensure they understood the meanings and could access the text.
- To support all learners, the teachers utilize graphic organizers, introduction of vocabulary and questioning. In a fifth grade class, questions posed required students to cite evidence and synthesize their understanding but the students' discussion was to recall the facts and there were limited students participating. In a kindergarten class, the students were grouped with differentiated tasks however there were limited supports with the vocabulary to ensure the success for all learners to label their pictures and ensure an understanding of the places in the community.
- Review of student work indicates that students are writing informational pieces based on their reading, social studies, and science units of study. However, students are required to primarily state facts reflecting uneven levels of thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Developing

Findings

While school leaders and staff ensure that the curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, the level of rigor of the curricula and tasks varies across classrooms and are inconsistently modified to meet the needs of all learners.

Impact

Curricula and tasks provide students with varied levels of access and limit students' ability to demonstrate critical thinking and cognitive engagement in all lessons.

Supporting Evidence

- School has modified their curriculum units in science and social studies to align with the Ready Gen English language arts program. The sequence of the Ready Gen lessons has been revised. In addition, school increased their phonemic awareness lessons in the lower grades and is looking for supplemental materials to address the gaps in the students' writing achievement. MyOn, an electronic library, is utilized to support students' independent reading and students can self-assess their understanding.
- In mathematics, school is following the Go Math program. The teachers in grades 4 and 5 modified the curriculum to increase the number of lessons on fractions and patterns based on the data from the New York State mathematics assessment. Teachers utilize Think Central system for digital resources aligned with Go Math for planning tools and intervention supports.
- School believes in culminating projects however a review of student work inconsistently emphasized higher-level thinking. Projects primarily required students to research and gather information around a topic such as informative writing about an endangered animal, Native Americans or African American slaves.
- Curriculum units and lesson plans across curriculum areas indicate the content standards, the vocabulary, the essential questions, resources and assessments. One lesson plan indicates the groups based upon the mathematics data with a group of English language learners receiving a reteach lesson. Another indicates all students completing the same activity. Plans inconsistently provide supports and extensions to address the needs of all learners.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

While teachers use assessment data and rubrics to provide feedback to students, the results of common assessments and checks for understanding are inconsistently used to adjust the curricula and instruction.

Impact

The use of assessment data, formative and summative, is used to measure student progress however the limited evidence of adjustments to instruction is impeding the progress for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school-wide assessment calendar indicates deadlines for administering benchmark assessments, end of unit assessments in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, and quarterly administration of Fountas and Pinnell reading levels. This provides the teachers with clear expectations as well as common assessments for assessing student progress across the grades.
- The results of assessments are reviewed and analyzed during grade team meetings to identify the skills that students have mastered. One example from the analysis of the baseline assessment given in December indicated students' difficulty with comparing and contrasting and drawing inferences in non-fiction texts. As a result, it was stated that teachers are addressing these strategies within their instruction and during state test preparation. This adjustment was not evident consistently in curriculum plans, lesson plans or class visits.
- Principal stated that the use of checks for understanding varies across all classes. Teachers use checklists, one-to-one student conferences, listening in to student discussions, exit slips and review of homework. In two of the seven classes, the teachers were taking notes and utilizing a checklist to ensure mastery of the objectives. Teachers indicate that the checklists inform their planning for differentiated tasks and in those classes students were grouped according to their needs. Across all classes, there was inconsistent evidence of purposeful grouping.
- During the third grade team meeting, teachers were discussing the standards that the students were having difficulty meeting according to the benchmark assessment administered in December. Teachers were then brainstorming strategies to address the students' needs and to support the students in answering why and how questions. One teacher shared the strategy for identifying text evidence, annotating the text and numbering to assist the students in answering the questions. Teachers are in the process of utilizing the data towards making adjustments to the unit plan.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in collaborative inquiry work to ensure alignment with the Common Core Learning Standards. Teachers regularly analyze student work and share best practices.

Impact

As a result of professional collaborations, there is an increase in teachers' instructional capacity and progress towards achievement of school goals.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet a minimum of once a week in collaborative grade teams to analyze student work, plan instruction and share best practices. A web-based account has been established for teachers to memorialize their meetings with implications for instruction and next steps.
- Grade five teachers used the inquiry cycle to enhance student feedback. Together they identified a standard for effective feedback and as a result the administration has noted that the level of feedback to students has increased and became a coherent practice across the grade.
- Teachers state that during team meetings, they share and analyze student work on different levels. Together they calibrate their evaluation of the work using a rubric and discuss strategies for next steps including differentiation as well as a challenge for students would benefit from an extension. In a fourth grade meeting, after review of student work, teachers developed a strategy for all students to solve word problems.
- During the third grade team meeting, teachers analyzed the results of the fall benchmark assessment and identified students' difficulty with finding text evidence to support their answers. Teachers shared strategies that they tried with their class. One teacher indicated that he was going to go back and try it with his students. Teachers also shared supplemental materials to enhance their reading unit.