



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

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

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Ann M. Short Elementary School

Elementary School M146

**421 East 106th Street
New York
NY 10029**

Principal: Dr. Mona Silfen

**Date of review: March 17, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Kim Lisa Hampton**

The School Context

Anna M. Short Elementary School is an elementary school with students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 24% Black, 71% Hispanic, 2% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 21% English language learners and 51% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 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	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	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:

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff and families, and those expectations are connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact:

School leaders provide training to the entire staff and have a system of accountability for those expectations. The school helps families understand student progress toward those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- The administrative team provides teachers with actionable, targeted and time-bound feedback including supports and professional development to ensure improved pedagogical practice. The ADVANCE ratings were reviewed, and teachers also articulated how their specific feedback and supports improved their practice. The school's professional development plan showed how supports were planned and executed as a result of observation data. Within the academic school year of 2014-2015, there was an increase in Effective Practice in Questioning and Discussion Techniques.
- Parents articulated how teachers provided them with targeted and actionable feedback. Teachers engaged in individual conversations with them regarding their children's academic performance. Specific strategies such as math flashcards, using details from the text and vocabulary flashcards were provided to parents. Parents received specific recommendations via parent workshops, Tuesday afternoon conferences, notes and emails. Parents were aware of what their children needed in order for them to be prepared for the next grade and beyond. Parents shared specific evidence from assessments and student work products that represented student progress.
- School leaders create monthly newsletters and grade letters for parents to communicate high expectations. The school also has a faculty and staff handbook, parent handbook, and homework policy. Several events have been established to communicate high expectations and help students become aware of their next steps and college and career readiness. Friendly Friday is when parents come into the classroom and become a part of the learning experience. They observe how teachers engage students in Common Core aligned curricula so that they can use those strategies, skills and questions at home to support their children. All of the parents at the parent meeting articulated how the school has supported them, and as a result their children have improved academically.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings:

Across classrooms, teaching practices are aligned to curricula and reflect an articulated set of beliefs about how students learn best, including teaching strategies that provide multiple entry points for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities, but instruction lacks opportunities for all students to demonstrate higher order thinking.

Impact:

Learners were engaged in appropriately challenging tasks that provided opportunities for them to demonstrate high-order thinking skills in student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has identified Questioning and Discussion as the instructional focus for 2014-2015. In almost all classrooms visited, teachers posed questions ranging from literal to higher order providing opportunities for all students to engage in discussion that demonstrate higher order thinking. For example, in one class the teacher asked several questions that required students to recall facts from the story. In another class, the teacher asked several questions that called for simple, one-word answers and then the teacher summarized the student's answer after the student had spoken. In other classes, questions were posed that required students to use textual evidence and support their thinking with the most relevant details as well as make connections, apply and synthesize the meaning of the story.
- In all classrooms visited, there was evidence of turn-and-talk as a result of teacher-generated questions. In several classrooms visited, students answered the questions, and they were engaged in a conversation that pushed their thinking. The questions posed led to discussion that represented entry points for almost all learners, including most high achieving students, to demonstrate their thinking. Students engaged in talk and turns to demonstrate high level discussion based on the questions that were posed.
- In the 5th grade math class, the two teachers posed high-level questions and created a high level math task that was appropriate for all learners to access. The ELLs and students with disabilities were cognitively engaged, and every student in the class demonstrated their thinking. Students used anchor charts and made connections to solve a real world problem.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings:

Curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Higher-order thinking skills are emphasized for learners across grades and content areas, including ELLs and students with disabilities.

Impact:

The purposeful decisions that were made build coherence and promote student readiness for their next grade as well as for college and careers. Academic tasks push rigorous habits and higher-order think skills across grades and subjects for ELLs and students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Lesson plans in all content areas include examples of questions that range from Depth of Knowledge (DOK) 1 to DOK 4 that require students to think on a higher level. For example, the seven lesson plans that were collected included a variety of questions that the teachers planned to ask during the lesson. Also included in additional lesson plans collected was evidence of instructional shifts. For example, students were asked to cite textual evidence, explain their thinking and apply concepts to solve real-world problems.
- Unit plans in content areas illustrated multiple designs of academic tasks, with different scaffolds and entry points for all students including ELLs and students with disabilities. For example, the 2nd grade math lesson was designed for station teaching so that students could access curricular tasks based on their respective entry points. In the 5th grade class, there was evidence of visual aids and graphic organizers to support a variety of learners, including higher achieving students.
- Curriculum maps show that the school uses rigorous programs such as EngageNY, Core Knowledge Language Arts and Expeditionary Learning. Lesson plans and curriculum maps show integration of instructional shifts using academic vocabulary, complex texts and word problems, in which students have to demonstrate their thinking.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Proficient
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-------------------

Findings:

Across classrooms, teachers use assessments and rubrics that are aligned to the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessments.

Impact:

Teachers provide actionable feedback to students and make effective adjustments to the lessons to meet all students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers use data from assessments to work with students to create individual goals aligned to key skills identified in units and lessons. For example, there was evidence of student goals in folders and on pieces of student work as a result of teacher feedback. Every student in the student meeting articulated a work goal as a result of the rubric and teacher feedback. One student articulated that his goal was to use more details in his writing; another student's goal was to learn how to multiple and divide with two digits.
- The use of rubrics accompanied by specific feedback from teachers and students is an established ritual for improving student achievement across the school that the principal, teachers and students were able to explain. Teachers in teacher team meetings discussed how they used rubrics to grade student work, and students explained how they used rubrics to assess their own learning for their next steps and create goals for themselves in order to prepare them for the next grade, and college and careers.
- Across classrooms, there was evidence of various ongoing checks for understanding whereby teachers were able to use mid-level checks to adjust practice and meet the needs of all learners. For example, in a self-contained class, the teacher realized that the students were struggling with text-based vocabulary, so she had a student come to the front of the class and demonstrate "stomping". In a 5th grade math class, the teachers used a checklist and conference notes to adjust the learning experience of the task. There was also evidence of assessment-based questions, thumbs up/thumbs down and turn and talk.

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

Findings:

The majority of teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry-based professional collaborations, and teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact:

Teacher collaboration on inquiry teams promotes achievement of school goals and strengthens the instructional capacity of teachers and progress toward goals for groups of students.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers meet biweekly to examine student work through the lens of the CAN Protocol in order to identify trends and patterns in student work products across the grade. The 5th grade teacher team analyzed student work products that represented their low students. As a result of this data, teachers articulated that students needed help with drawing visual models. They agreed upon the strategy that they would begin to implement across the grade. In two weeks they were going to meet to examine more student work in order to ascertain if the strategy had an impact on student performance.
- Teachers at both sessions expressed how they identify and share best instructional practices connected to targeted areas of focus identified by the examination of student data and how these collaborative meetings have led to a culture of inter-visitation among staff members. These inter-visitations have led to teachers receiving more targeted feedback from peers about their practice. According to the teachers and administrators, there has been a shift in improved instruction as a result of this collaborative practice.
- Pedagogical practice is strengthened and developed through a focus on classroom instruction during professional development cycles. An example of this is teachers practicing conferring with students while their colleagues coach them during the session. Information is posted on a cloud-based document sharing site to ensure instructional consistency across grades. Teachers implement this school-wide practice, and during teacher team meetings or collaborative inquiry they share how that practice has impacted their instruction, which has led to improved student outcomes. For example, the team collaboratively worked on a strategy for teaching inference. They visited one another, analyzed student work and identified that extended response writing had improved as a result of the teaching strategy.