



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Adam Clayton Powell Jr.

Elementary School M153

**1750 Amsterdam Avenue
New York
NY 10031**

Principal: Karen Bailey

**Date of review: March 16, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

The School Context

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. is an elementary school with 876 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 78% Hispanic, 3% White, 1% Asian students. The student body includes 29% 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 93.2%.

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	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	Well Developed
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	Celebration	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	---	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

The majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations to systematically analyze student assessments and work to identify trends and agree upon strategies to improve student learning. Distributive leadership structures are embedded within school practices.

Impact

Inquiry practices result in shared improvements in teaching and learning. Teachers are encouraged and supported in developing leadership skills and contribute to key decisions that affect student learning school-wide.

Supporting Evidence

- The third grade teacher team meeting focused on looking at student work using a tuning protocol. Every member on the team had a role of being a presenter, facilitator, timekeeper, or participant. One teacher presented three students' writing samples on comparing and contrasting two texts entitled *Storm in the Night* and *Knots on a Counting Rope*. The other teachers listened and took notes, asked questions, and gave warm and cool feedback. The teacher reflected on colleagues' feedback and decided to improve her students writing by getting them to be more specific and detailed when describing similarities and differences. The team then discussed next steps to implement as a grade, which included: incorporating more lessons on how to write a conclusion, using models and mentor texts, and teaching a variety of linking words. For their next meeting, they agreed to make revisions to the upcoming unit's assessment rubric to make it more specific and challenging, and to develop mini lessons on skills identified as next step areas.
- Teachers said they feel empowered to make instructional decisions based on student data, noting that they receive support from administrators and coaches and participate in professional development opportunities, many of which teachers conduct. Administration used a teacher survey to give teachers input and to ensure that professional learning offered would meet their needs. Many teachers have taken leadership roles in the role of lead teachers, as teacher effectiveness leaders and coach, and as members of the principal's decision-making cabinet. Teachers formed a reading task force and decided to change the implementation of the ReadyGen curriculum into a workshop model with a balanced literacy approach. They added guided and independent reading to the instructional literacy block and focused teachers' attention on conferencing and strategic grouping. This model was adopted school-wide and students reading levels have increased according to Fountas and Pinnell running record assessment data.
- The math team analyzed the State math assessments and realized that the students needed additional support in multi-step problem solving. Teachers on the team attended workshops to enhance their knowledge of problem solving strategies. They turn keyed their learned through modeling, videos, and inter-visitations. This emphasis focusing on developing mathematical thinking through a more constructivist approach to teaching has led to improvements in students' ability to solve problems using different strategies. The school now uses Exemplars and Think Central as resources in grades 3, 4, and 5.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Teachers' practices exemplify a common articulated belief in students' active engagement in their learning and in providing differentiated supports for all learners.

Impact

Teaching practices that consistently provide multiple entry points enable all students' engagement in challenging tasks and collaborative learning with peers, however such entry points are not always strategically planned so that all students have the tailored high quality supports and extensions to support their individual learning needs in order to demonstrate high-order thinking skills.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms there is a common belief that students learn best through small group instruction with scaffolds and strategies that support students' to think critically and participate in discussions. In a fifth grade math class, students worked in groups and used the problem solving procedure to solve real world problems. Students were asked to explain the problem to ensure they understood what was being asked, then come up with a plan, solve the problem, communicate their solution and then make a connection.
- Teaching practices that foster multiple entry points of learning include: small group work, partnerships, use of technology, manipulatives, projects, arts, writing choices, and team talk. A third grade literacy lesson on understanding point of view supported student learning through scaffolded small group instruction. The teacher worked with students who struggled in distinguishing different points of view focusing on close reading strategies and questioning to support students who had difficulty reading the text. The lesson was extended for higher performing students who were asked to compare different characters' points of view.
- Teachers have increased accountable talk through conversation protocols to scaffold learning and enable and deepen student thinking. In a first grade classroom, the teacher asked students to answer questions with text-based evidence as they read *The Family Tree*. She asked "How did the author keep you interested in reading? What lesson did you learn from the story? Students turned and talked and cited evidence in their responses. In a third grade classroom students engaged in a team talk discussion as they pondered the question "Do you think being so big made life easier or more difficult for Paul Bunyan? Students used team protocols including reciprocal teaching and cooperative learning during discussion and accountable talk prompts such as "I agree", "I disagree", "I would like to add to...", and "I further support his thinking..." as they answered questions citing text-based evidence.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, strategically integrate the instructional shifts, and make purposeful decisions to build coherence in emphasizing academic tasks that emphasize higher-order thinking for all students.

Impact

Curricula promotes college and career readiness within embedded higher order tasks that challenge all students to demonstrate their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Teams incorporate backward planning to develop a rigorous curriculum aligned to Common Core Learning Standards. The school adopted Ready Gen and included components of the workshop model including guided reading and independent reading. Go Math is supplemented with Exemplars which engages students in real world problem solving activities. FOSS is used to provide hands on science learning. Units of study are planned using the Understanding by Design model to ensure that students are prepared for the performance-based assessments at the end of each unit. Curriculum units emphasize the instructional shifts of use of fiction and non-fiction, writing from sources, building academic vocabulary and deep understanding of real world application in math problem solving. Lesson plans include essential questions, higher order questions, student groupings, and team talk activities.
- A curriculum-pacing calendar was developed in all core subjects and includes a list of assessments, common core standards, and objectives and strategic interventions for each lesson. These interventions include using math boards and dry erase markers for problem solving, using color pencils for color coding, presenting animated math models, using fraction strips, using graphic organizers for vocabulary, and drawing models.
- Lesson plans provide access through use of leveled groups, tiered activities, and partner work. The lesson plan on regrouping, for example, listed intensive, strategic, and on level interventions. The grade one literacy unit lesson plan included scaffolding instruction through questioning and use of graphic organizers and templates. Vocabulary support is also included through the use of pictures and context clues and strategic support in identifying the central message of a story. Students engage in close reading as well as a read aloud and higher level questions are included in the plan to promote discussion during team talk and text based conversations. All lessons include activities for small group instruction, independent reading practice, and extensions.
- Project based learning extends the curriculum and includes tasks that involve research, oral speaking, presentations, art, and performances. This allows for multiple entry points and provides enrichment for all students. Students have choices, depending on their strengths, in how they present their learning through written reports, PowerPoints or visual art presentation. Technology is incorporated in all curriculum units and includes research skills.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	-----------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers use assessments that are aligned to Common Core Standards and the schools curricula. Assessment practices consistently reflect use of checks for understanding and student self-assessment.

Impact

Curricula-aligned rubrics and assessments provide actionable and meaningful feedback to students and teachers regarding student achievement. Teachers make effective instructional adjustments for all students based on data and students are aware of next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses a variety of formative and summative assessments to guide their instruction including Go Math chapter and mid-chapter assessments, Think Central online math assessments, baseline assessments in English language arts, Fountas and Pinnell reading-level assessments, conferencing, performance based assessments, Exemplars and Degrees of Reading Assessment (DRA2) assessments, as well as end-of- unit assessments with rubrics in all content areas. Teachers use baseline and benchmark assessments to determine student groupings and differentiated needs. Based on the data from the math analysis and performance based tracker forms, teachers developed literacy and math interventions that targeted the needs of all students. Interventions included strategy based reading groups and skills-based math interventions.
- Teachers also monitor daily progress through the use of various checks for understanding and student self-assessment through use of rubrics, exit slips, literacy checklists, turn and talk, think pair share, and team talk discussions. These assessments drive daily refinements to lessons and student groupings. Conference notes reviewed included objectives, scaffolded instruction notes, and next steps. Students were able to articulate their next steps to improve their work and set goals based on feedback received. One student said that she needed to improve her reading stamina by reading for longer periods of time. Another student said that he needed to include more supporting details and elaboration to support his claim.
- Student work in portfolios and on bulletin boards included rubrics, teacher feedback, and student reflections. Teacher feedback on student work included ways to improve thesis statements, making introductions more inviting to the reader, and adding evidence to support claims/opinions. Students also do peer assessments and give each other feedback on their writing based on rubrics.
- Guided reading is based on Fountas and Pinnell reading assessments. To date, 52% of second graders have progressed at least two levels or more since September and are now at or above grade level. Specific skills and strategies and independent reading levels are based on these assessments. This has supported and targeted growth in all grades with an emphasis on raising the bar in second grade. This data is reviewed by the school leaders and is disaggregated by grade, class, and individual students in order to make adjustments and provide support.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
---------------------------	------------------------------	----------------	-----------------------

Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations, and provide training to the entire staff and partner with parents to promote a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

School staff members are mutually accountable to each other and successfully partner with families to help students progress towards set expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Handbooks, emails, the school communication board, and memoranda's convey clear expectations of instructional expectations. Family workshops, grade newsletters, resources provided by the school, and progress reports all provide means of feedback and an awareness of practices toward preparing students for college and career. There is a communication screen for parents, parent flyers, and a school website which is updated with school activities and current units of study. Professional learning activities are aligned to the Danielson framework. They are designed to support teacher growth in identified areas and support rigorous instructional practices.
- To ensure that high expectations are promoted, the school holds weekly community building meetings to review school goals and data, student award assemblies, and a parent academy.
- The school believes strongly in establishing partnerships with parents to support students' progress. Teachers meet with parents before, during, and after school and send written communication including progress reports to inform parents of their child's progress. The following resources are available for parents: a parent handbook, workshops on how to support your child at home, a curriculum night, a school website and parent teacher conferences.