

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

**P.S. 208 Alain L. Locke Magnet School for
Environmental Studies**

Elementary 03M208

**21 WEST 111 STREET
MANHATTAN
NY, 10026**

Principal: Susan M. Green

**Dates of review: January 15, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Ilene Altschul**

The School Context

P.S. 208 Alain L. Locke Magnet School for Environmental Studies is an Elementary school with 164 students from 3 through grade 5. The school population comprises 62% Black, 34% Hispanic, 2% White, and 1% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 26% 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%.

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.	Celebration	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.	Additional Findings	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:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

School leaders and faculty ensure that the curricula across grade levels are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate content standards and the instructional shifts. Curricula and tasks are planned to emphasize higher order thinking for all students.

Impact

As a result, curricula are coherent and planned to promote college and career readiness for all students including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWD).

Supporting Evidence

- School has adjusted curriculum units from Ready Gen to align with the science and social studies units around the theme of stewardship and sustainability standards. For example, grade four shifted the units to start with a unit on ecosystems. Also, in fourth grade, the teachers supplemented the Ready Gen lesson with a shared text to model annotating. Students were then to practice the strategy reading the grade level text, "The Tarantula Scientist" from Ready Gen.
- Throughout all lessons and curricula plans, there was evidence of planning to meet the needs of the ELLs and SWDs. All lessons include tiered activities to support all learners. For example, in a fifth grade class, students were writing about the main idea in "The World Made New" based on cause and effect relationships. The students were working independently on the writing task but depending on the students' tier, there were prompts to assist in focusing and developing their writing. Teachers also include small group instruction in their plans to provide additional support.
- The teachers meet regularly for collaborative planning and to ensure coherent instruction across the grade. During the fifth grade team, the teachers all referred to the Common Core and aligned the next unit on explorers emphasizing the standard to explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text. This was identified as a crucial standard and will prepare the students for middle school. They also discussed the supports needed in the next unit for the ELLs and SWDs such as other resources on varied levels to match the students reading level to provide access to the content.
- Within each unit of study, writing is an integral component. In math, students are expected to explain their thinking. In environmental studies, students are matched up to a pen pal from Kenya and are communicating with the students to better understand their sustainable practices.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While teaching practices are aligned to the school-wide beliefs of articulating the objectives and providing supports for all students, high levels of student thinking and participation were not evident across all classrooms.

Impact

Across classrooms teachers tier the tasks for students to ensure access, however in some classrooms students are inconsistently engaged in high levels of thinking and participation as evidenced in class discussions and student work products.

Supporting Evidence

- Across all classrooms there was evidence of consistent practice with the learning target being identified as well as the success criteria. Students understand the expectations of the lesson through the use of “I Can” statements and what they need to do to be successful. Teachers review the “Keys to Success” for every lesson outlining the content and procedures that are needed to complete the task and meet the objective. During class visits, students were able to clearly articulate the purpose of the lesson and the task that they were to complete.
- Teachers provide multiple entry points into the lessons to meet the needs of all students. For example, in a third grade math class, one teacher was working with a small group providing guided support and manipulatives to teach the concept of multiplication by zero and one. The other teacher was extending the lesson for another group of students to understand the relationship between multiplication and division. The third group of students was working independently with peer support as needed to solve a problem applying the multiplication properties of zero and one and explaining their thinking. In other classes, tiered tasks, vocabulary supports, translated materials, process charts, checklists and videos are strategies that were utilized to support all learners.
- Across classrooms there were uneven levels of student participation and thinking. In a fifth grade class, students were providing feedback to their peer after presenting the essay. Alternatively, in another class students were to engage in a similar activity however it was teacher directed with a series of low level questions. There were opportunities for turn and talk but not all students were cognitively engaged in high level thinking.
- Students indicate that they are reading and analyzing text and writing essays and research reports. A review of student work shows coherent projects across grade levels however, work products reflect varying levels of challenge and deep thinking.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The school uses common assessments to determine student progress and to make adjustments to their curriculum and instruction. Teachers utilize rubrics to provide feedback to the students.

Impact

Tracking systems are in place to ensure student progress and identify next steps resulting in increase in student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- School uses a variety of assessments across all grade levels such as Fountas and Pinnell reading levels conducted quarterly, performance tasks, and end of unit tests. Teachers have analyzed the item analysis from the state test results to track individual student's strengths and weaknesses as well as identify patterns and trends across the grades.
- In mathematics the data revealed students have difficulty with multi-step problem solving as well as groups of students struggle with mathematics fluency. To address that gap, students receive academic intervention services in math Voyager program. A school goal is to increase student achievement in mathematics comparing the baseline to the end of year assessment. Preliminary results of the Voyager program and end of unit assessments show student progress.
- For each module in Ready Gen, teachers track students' success indicating whether each student is meeting, approaching or did not meet the standards. Teachers then reflect the overall strengths and struggles. In a fifth grade class, the teacher identified that they had the most difficulty with supporting their ideas with details from the text. The teacher stated that the students were most successful with the introduction and establishing the purpose of the essay. As a next step, teachers decided that further modeling and an exemplar writing as a demonstration.
- Flexible tiered groups are formed based on the assessment results. During class visits, this was evident and teachers are familiar with the specific needs of their students.
- Across classrooms, teachers assess student work with a grade and subject specific rubric. Students receive feedback and state that the rubric helps them know what they need to do. One student indicated that he didn't include enough facts in his research paper.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders and staff establish a culture for learning through professional development and observational feedback. Teachers have developed a rapport and communicate their expectations with students and families.

Impact

As a result, the expectations for learning and success are communicated to the teachers, students and families to ensure that all students are prepared for the next grade level.

Supporting Evidence

- Administration communicates their expectations through professional development sessions, weekly message and memos, and during the post observational feedback sessions. Teachers have mentors and inter-visitations are conducted regularly. Based on the data from the Advance system, questioning and discussion has been identified as a targeted area. Teachers are reading “Thinking through Quality Questioning” by Jackie Walsh and Beth Sattes to enhance their questioning strategies.
- Teachers stated that the feedback they received from the administration helps to identify their next steps and areas for growth. They stated the feedback is specific, timely and aligned with the Danielson framework. Teachers also indicated that the professional books that they are reading support their professional growth.
- Parents were all in agreement that the school sets high expectations and there is open communication with the teachers. They specified that teachers stress the importance of students explaining their answers. The parents indicated that the school sends out progress reports with student work in between report card distribution that informs them of their child’s progress. In addition, they stated that the work is graded by a rubric which clearly tells them what their child needs to work on. The school also sends out newsletters from the teachers and principal to keep them informed.
- Parents feel that their children are prepared for the next grade level and that the school has put in more supports to address the students’ needs including homework help. The teachers send home web links to support their learning.
- Students state that the teachers challenge them and push them to make sure they are ready for the next grade. Students use the “Keys to Success” to ensure that they complete all tasks and projects. They also stated that if they need help, the teachers will work with them in a small group.

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

The majority of teachers are engaged in grade level teams for collaborative planning and analyzing student work that promotes the achievement of Common Core and the instructional shifts. Teachers take on leadership roles and are empowered to give input in key school-wide decisions.

Impact

As a result of collaborative planning and teacher voice in curriculum and professional development, there is an increase in teachers' instructional capacity.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers meet more than once a week to plan curricula and ensure that the school is on track to meet their goals. Most of the time is spent planning and revising the arcs of instruction for literacy, math, science and social studies. Teachers also use the ORID protocol (observation, reflection, inference, decision) to analyze student work.
- During the grade five teacher team meeting, teachers were reflecting on the Ready Gen lesson and the use of the jigsaw protocol as they planned the next unit. They discussed possible revision for next year. They then referred to the Common Core Learning Standards and discussed the need to increase the teaching for students to identify evidence in a text.
- Teachers indicated that the work they do in the teams have strengthened their practice as well as student outcomes through sharing their strategies, developing questions and learning targets, and developing resources to meet the needs of all the students. The team structure enables the teachers to have control and influence over curricula decisions.
- Teachers have taken on leadership roles as a grade leader, a math, literacy or special education liaison or mentors. The grade leaders participate on the professional development team and are integral in deciding the professional development plans for the school. The liaisons in math, literacy and special education represent the school at the network meetings and turn-key the information to their colleagues. As part of a small school, all staff members feel vested and committed to the success of the students.