

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Anderson School

Elementary- Middle M334

**100 West 77th Street
Manhattan
NY 10024**

Principal: Jodi Hyde

**Date of review: April 30, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Sandra Litrico**

The School Context

The Anderson School is an elementary/middle school with students from grades kindergarten through grade eight. The school population comprises 5% Black, 10% Hispanic, 54% White, and 28% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 3% special education students. Boys account for 48% of the students enrolled and girls account for 52%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 97.0%.

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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	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	Additional Findings	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school has a rigorous and clearly articulated approach to interdisciplinary curriculum design that is aligned to Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and incorporates the instructional shifts. Rigorous habits and higher order thinking skills are embedded across grades and subject areas. Curricula and tasks are refined using student work and data.

Impact

All students have a range of opportunities to both build skills and dig deeply into important topics. The curriculum ensures that students are engaged in challenging tasks that require them to think, reflect and problem-solve.

Supporting Evidence

- The school implements Teachers' College reading and writing Units of Study with an interdisciplinary project based approach. Administrators and teachers ensure CCLS alignment of the reading and writing curriculum by writing additional units, supplementing and making revisions when necessary.
- Teacher teams constantly review and revise curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all children and is rigorous and challenging. The kindergarten team developed a word study curriculum to address decoding. The first grade revamped the persuasive writing unit. The second and third grade teams rethought their work on teaching the theme of a story through strategy lessons. The fourth through eighth grade teams refined their reading notebooks so that students could use them as a resource to transfer skills across grades.
- Grades one through four use the Context for Learning math units for higher order thinking and rigorous academic tasks. All math units include real world application and essential questions which push students thinking such as "How are the area of a rectangle and triangle related?"
- The school won a Facing History grant and embedded additional higher order thinking within their 8th grade social studies unit on the Holocaust. The school also worked on a Facing History pilot to enrich the 5th grade social studies unit on civil rights.
- All curriculum units contain learning objectives, content objectives, standards and higher order assessment-based questions. Tasks are engaging and require student to research, problem solve, engage in discussions, and participate in Socratic seminars and book clubs. Lesson plans include anticipated misunderstandings, groupings and supports with multiple entry points.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

School leaders and staff align assessments to curricular, use on-going assessments and grading practices to analyze data on student learning outcomes, and make instructional adjustments at the team and classroom levels. Teachers use on-going checks for understanding to inform them of next instructional practices.

Impact

The school's use of common assessments, data analysis, descriptive reviews and feedback allows teachers to make thoughtful instructional adjustments at the classroom and school level to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal, administrators and teachers use common assessments to track student progress towards goals and adjust instructional practices accordingly. Teachers also use rubrics, checklists, and checks for understanding to give students meaningful feedback.
- In reading, the school utilizes Fountas & Pinnell reading benchmark systems. They accelerate the reading level expectations to meet the needs of their gifted and talented population. The school created an intervention and enrichment small group program called Goal. Teacher's guide and support students towards meeting their goals based on assessment data. Students are also placed in reading level groups and book clubs to continue to push their skill development.
- Baseline, midline and end of the year assessments are used in every grade. Teachers assess student work and meet to review their findings. They plan lessons and small group instruction based on results,
- Students use rubrics that were created by the school and are aligned to CCLS for a grade above their level to ensure rigor. They engage in peer assessments and self-reflection.
- In math teachers give pre-unit assessments to inform instruction and arrange groupings. For example, a small group re-teaching mini lesson was planned according to the pre-assessment analysis in the 5th grade math class on finding the area of rectangles and triangles.
- Committees of teachers work each summer to upgrade the school grading policy. Student report cards now include a section on transfer so that teachers assess how the student can apply a skill from one area to another.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Teacher pedagogy promotes the ideas of multiple entry points and student engagement. Every classroom demonstrated meaningful ways in which different students could access complex ideas or concepts and engage in high level questioning and student-to-student discussion.

Impact

Teaching strategies are aligned to the instructional shifts and promote college and career readiness. Learners are actively engaged in multiple learning opportunities that incorporate higher order thinking skills and high-level discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- The staff believes that students need challenging high-level engaging curriculum to meet the needs of every student. As a result, teachers provide scaffolded instruction with extensions and enrichment. Teachers encouraged high level of student voice and participation in all lessons observed.
- Multiple entry points with supports and extensions are included in all lessons. Advanced students are given an enrichment assignment matching their ability, I Station, an online literacy program is provided to support students in K-4. iPads and other technological devices are provided for those with special needs. Students have folders/baskets on their desks with additional challenging extension materials.
- Lessons are engaging, and student led conversations push student thinking. In the sixth grade ELA Unit entitled Inherit the Wind, students had read various informational texts about the Red Scare during America's Cold War with the Soviet Union. In this lesson, students discussed primary source documents from the time of the Scopes Monkey Trial in order to gain a deeper understanding of the public sentiment the time of the trial. Political cartoons and newspaper articles were read and discussed in groups. Students went to various stations that had different questions and directions for students to respond to. The cartoon analysis worksheet had high-level questions including "Which words or phrases in the cartoon appear to be most significant? Why do you think so?" The reading workshop focus was "How can we lift the level of our book club discussions?" The teacher used the Fish Bowl to model good discussion etiquette.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school's deeply embedded, holistic approach to supporting students, and its commitment to perpetuating a democratic community results in a high degree of efficacy among students and staff. The staff is committed to rigorous instruction as well as high expectations for all students.

Impact

Structures for communication and collaboration result in mutual accountability for student achievement and school improvement.

Supporting Evidence

- The school embodies a strong learning environment that values and encourages student voice, choice, creativity and critical thinking. Students are expected to do their best work and collaborate with their peers. Students are given the support that scaffolds independent and group tasks. Students develop their voice and have choice in their work.
- There are school wide expectations regarding attendance and lateness. The principal established face-to-face meetings with families of students having excessive tardiness. As a result, there has been a significant decrease in the number of students late to school.
- The school fast tracks students by offering Regents exams through their accelerated curriculum. They also have high-level electives including: debate, law, science and Olympiad. In addition the school offers academic team participation in chess, math, science and debate. An 8th grader, the student council president, is a member of the SLT and brings up student concerns and opinions. GOAL, a school-wide intervention, offers support to students at lunchtime, during and before school to ensure all students stay on track.
- The guidance counselor is involved in the high school articulation process and offers workshops to families beginning at the end of 6th grade. The school holds a high school information night for public and private school admissions. They help students with applications and interviews
- Parents have an active voice in the school and partner with the staff to support school initiatives. They are invited to publishing parties and other school celebrations and events. They have access to their students grades online using Engrade in middle school. Parents receive communication regarding their child's progress through emails, phone conferences, meetings and progress reports. The parent coordinator sends weekly recaps that include highlights, events, success stories, student and class recognitions, reminders and trip information. The principal sends a letter once a month to keep parents informed.
- Teachers have clear expectations based on the Danielson Framework for teaching and the mission of the school. The principal sets clear expectations for the entire school community. The principal has communicated clear expectations to her staff and has developed a comprehensive system of support for all. She provides meaningful feedback, next steps and arranges professional development, which has resulted in improved teacher practice.

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

All teachers are engaged in professional inquiry that focuses on curricula coherence, instructional practice, and the achievement of all learners.

Impact

The work of teacher teams results in instructional coherence, strengthened teacher capacity, and improved student performance for student groups.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in regular teacher team meetings structured by grade level and content area with several cross-grade meeting opportunities. Focus on student work and data helps the teachers determine the GOAL group in which the student will participate, as well as, guiding the mini lessons and groupings within the classroom
- The school began collaboration with the two other schools in their shared building so that specialty teachers like art and physical education, could meet with their colleagues on a bi-weekly basis. During this time they focus on the implementation of the CCLS within their content.
- Teachers have academic conversations around the analysis of student work and the necessary next steps required to move students ahead. Teachers are held accountable for their meetings through their agendas and minutes, as well as, evidence in the classroom. The Monday professional development time is another opportunity to collaborate, self-evaluate and develop next step plans.
- Distributive leadership is evident through the development of teacher led teams and initiatives. These include: community service, Engrade, Pi Day, inquiry, multi-cultural night, peer tutoring, a subcommittee to refine vocabulary development and mentor advisory group.
- The first grade team met to determine areas most needed for whole class lessons and small groups in writing to address specific needs. They looked at weekend news notebooks and Teachers College Writing Checklist (2nd grade) to identify trends. They decided that small group lessons on developing a lead, on effective repetition in poetic devices and a whole group lesson on the use of commas needed to be included in this week's plan. They set next week's agenda, which included reviewing the pre-assessment in math on measurement to inform whole group and small group instruction to meet the needs of all students.