

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Sixth Avenue Elementary School

Elementary School M340

**590 Sixth Avenue
New York
NY 10011**

Principal: Patricia Carney

**Dates of review: April 17, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Darryl Alhadeff**

The School Context

Sixth Avenue Elementary is an elementary school in its first year of operation with 83 students from pre-kindergarten through grade kindergarten. The school population comprises 5% Black, 17% Hispanic, 55% White, and 10% Asian students. The student body includes 0% English language learners and 11% special education students. Boys account for 41% of the students enrolled and girls account for 59%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2014-15 is 93.2%.

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	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	Additional Findings	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.	Focus	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	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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

3.4 High Expectations

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school leader uses a wide range of strategies to promote high expectations across the entire school community. The staff partners with families to ensure student progress and communicates the content knowledge and skills students are expected to learn.

Impact

Professional development and Danielson's Framework for Teaching help the principal hold the staff accountable for instruction and professional responsibilities. Families support the school through communication with teachers and are able to help their children at home.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates high expectations for teaching and learning. She has created a calendar for professional development around best practices that support the needs of the students. The principal has created cycles of coaching, supports teachers with inter-visitations and modeling. The observation data from the Danielson Framework is supported by specific professional development. This year the staff is working on questioning. The principal gives immediate feedback and provides direct coaching to meet the needs of the staff.
- Parents reported that the principal followed her goals from the inception of the school. At the parent meeting all of the parents raved about the schools open door policy and high level of communication. The parents feel that they are partners in the schools decision making process. Presently they are working together on creating community service projects for the children. The principal sends a newsletter to parents every Sunday night focusing on both curriculum and the weekly happenings. Teachers also communicate with parents weekly. Parents receive narrative progress reports three times a year. Student goals are individualized to ensure that parents are aware of next steps. Parents know what needs to be worked on at home.
- The principal organizes events for families to communicate high expectations. Some of these events are: Family Fridays, writing celebrations, a restaurant morning and PTA meetings are organized around an instructional issue. In addition, chats with Pat (the principal) take place weekly and draw a large group of parents. During the school year the principal sends a letter to parents updating them on instructional topics happening in the classrooms. The school also has a software application that allows parent to listen to their child reading their writing pieces.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school is in the process of strengthening common assessments practices and results are inconsistently used to adjust curricula and instruction. Ongoing checks for understanding and student self- assessments are not a fully embedded practice across all the classrooms.

Impact

Assessments do not consistently result in instructional adjustments and next learning steps to improve student outcomes are not always evident.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal has kept track of the students reading levels since September. She has a large chart in her office without names to constantly monitor the students that are not making reading progress. In kindergarten there are seven students that are not on level. Each child receives guided reading four times a week in the classroom. The principal has assigned extra personnel to support the children. The school is working to delve deeper into assessment to discover why each child is not progressing. Guided reading may not be the need of each student. The school has not yet identified specific areas of concern.
- Teachers in some classrooms check for understanding and goal setting. The school uses a rubric for scoring pre and post assessments for writing. Then goals are created for each student. For example, in a kindergarten class visited the children finished a post assessment in narrative writing and one student's work showed that she was confused about spacing and that became her goal. The goal was written and placed in the front of her writing folder; however it was unclear what the teacher was doing to help the student reach her goal.
- Across classrooms there are inconsistencies with peer assessments. For example, in a kindergarten class visited most of the students were able to turn and talk to a partner about the shared reading piece the class was doing. The teacher asked "What was the big idea"? With their peer the students successfully responded to the question. However, in a second kindergarten visited, the students were working on a narrative piece of writing. When asked to turn and talk about editing the beginning of the piece, the students had difficulty and the conversations were not all on topic.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Instructional practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect the schools beliefs about how children learn best. Entry points into the curricula and supports for at risk learners vary across classrooms.

Impact

In some classrooms, teaching strategies were not fully refined to ensure multiple entry points for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Center based classrooms support multiple entry points. The centers support the school's core beliefs on instruction that students learn best when actively engaged, challenged, and involved in inquiry. In a pre-k classroom students rotated among self -selected centers. The children were able to self-monitor their time at each station. The teacher worked with targeted small groups.
- All classrooms were involved in small group instruction. However, in one classroom visited the students were working on word study in four groups. Two groups were teacher directed. Two groups were cutting and pasting the same word sorts. This task did not reflect high level of student thinking and was not differentiated to meet individual needs.
- In a kindergarten during reading workshop, each student brought their How to Book that they were working on to the rug. The teaching point for the lesson How to add voice at the end of your book was clearly displayed on the board. The teacher made a connection for the students using students How to Book and a mentor text. She posed a high level question, "How will you add voice to your book"? The children turned and talked with their partner. The teacher modeled adding voice to her book, How to Boogie Board! Then the students tried it with their own book with partner support. The students went off to work independently. The teacher pulled a group that needed additional support.
- In a pre-k class visited, the students were doing letter of the week. The range of reading levels went from a student reading on grade level at level c, to a student who did not know his name. The task didn't meet the needs of all learners. In a kindergarten classroom visited the class was involved in writing workshop. The mini-lesson was over and the students were beginning the independent work time. The student with special needs in the class has a plan taped to his desk giving him break times from the classroom. A specific plan was in place for writing. The child was expected to write two pages and then take a break. He had a break basket on his desk with an iPad and other supportive tools. He said, "Now it is time for my break"! After several minutes he was able to resume writing.

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school has aligned the curricula to the Common Core and offers the students an instructional program that has both rigor and higher level thinking skills across grades and in all subject areas.

Impact

Rigorous instruction and common core aligned resources promote college and career readiness for all students including students with disabilities.

Supporting Evidence

- Two project based units of study per year infuse big ideas from social studies and support high interest and conversation for students. The units are related to the interconnectedness of people, places and things. For example, in a kindergarten class they had just finished a restaurant study. The focus of the study was restaurants are community organizations that are structured in specific ways to meet the needs and wants of people who live there. The unit included mentor texts, interactive writing, shared reading, shared writing, videos, mapping, Venn diagrams, note taking, mathematics, and trips. The end product was a school restaurant created and run by the kindergarteners. Academic and interpersonal skills were intertwined as teachers grew student's ability to question self-assess and to challenge thinking.
- The school has created a balanced literacy curriculum in literacy and math that is aligned to the Common Core, promote rigor and includes the instructional shifts. The students have reading and writing workshop every day. The school follows the Teacher College units in literacy. This is in addition to two interdisciplinary studies every class does during the school year. For example, in a kindergarten writing unit on All About Books included a lesson on how to add voice to your book. Materials included a basket of tools to use when not writing. In reading students are currently completing a unit titled Readers are resourceful: Hard words and tricky parts in books.
- The Responsive Classroom is a program that supports the creation of learning tasks that are interactive, challenging and connected to student's interest. The program is being used in all classrooms at the school. Students spend time interacting with the community around them. The classes are involved in a structured morning meeting with student conversations that is supported by Responsive Classroom. Teachers strategize to nurture a sense of belonging and risk taking for students as meetings progress.

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

Teachers are engaged in structured, inquiry based professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work for groups of students.

Impact

School-wide team structures and decisions demonstrate an increase in teacher capacity and student learning.

Supporting Evidence

- The teacher teams work with rubrics and use a protocol when meeting. The teams plan strategically to support the academic development of students. For example, the kindergarten team met together to look at writing samples to decide next steps and to determine what type of writing conference would work to meet the needs of the students. Two students were brought up at the meeting. The teachers had their work sample and discussed the students at length. The teachers brought tools with them. For example, the teachers used *A Guide to Predictable Conferences in Primary Writing Workshop* and *A Guide to Different Kinds of Writing* as a guide. The meeting began with the teachers reviewing what they did last week. At the end of the meeting the team decided to do transcripts of the meetings with the students so everyone could have a voice. The plan was to examine the transcripts at the next meeting.
- Ps 340 is a brand new school with pre-k and k. There is one teacher in the school that is an experienced pedagogue. She is an integral part of all teacher team meetings. The teacher's analyze Fountas and Pinnell reading levels closely. They use a protocol and come to the meeting with an agenda. Running records for students who are not meeting benchmarks are examined carefully to see what the students need are. When visiting the school there were 7 students not on level that were being discussed. The students were already getting guided reading daily and the team was working on next steps.
- Teacher teams are highly structured and meet two to three times a week. If they need more time the principal covers them. The teams receive guidance from teacher leaders in literacy and math, responsive classroom for social emotional and the principal who is very skilled in instruction and curriculum. There are vertical and horizontal meetings taking place. For example, in the beginning of the year the principal, teachers and literacy leader refined the interdisciplinary unit to meet the student's needs. For example, outside the pre-k windows construction of a building had begun and the students were fascinated with the cranes and building materials and the unit was adjusted to reflect the construction.