



**Department of  
Education**  
*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

Office of School Quality  
Division of Teaching and Learning

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Central Park East I**

**Elementary School M497**

**1573 Madison Avenue  
Manhattan  
NY 10029**

**Principal: Lindley Uehling**

**Date of review: March 12, 2015  
Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen**

## The School Context

Central Park East I is an elementary school with 191 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 24% Black, 28% Hispanic, 29% White, 8% Asian, and 10% multi-racial students. The student body includes 3% English language learners and 9% special education students. Boys account for 52% of the students enrolled and girls account for 48%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.4%.

## School Quality Criteria

<b>Instructional Core</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
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	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
<b>School Culture</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
3.4 Establish a culture for learning that communicates high expectations to staff, students, and families, and provide supports to achieve those expectations	<b>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
<b>Systems for Improvement</b>		
<i>To what extent does the school...</i>	<b>Area of:</b>	<b>Rating:</b>
4.2 Engage in structured professional collaborations on teams using an inquiry approach that promotes shared leadership and focuses on improved student learning	<b>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## Area of Celebration

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

High expectations are consistently communicated to the entire staff. In addition, families successfully partner with the school to support high expectations connected to college and career readiness.

### Impact

Staff hold themselves accountable for the school wide high expectations. Families embrace roles in supporting their children's progress toward meeting the school's high expectations.

### Supporting Evidence

- The principal commented that staff set their own high expectations. Observing, documenting, and discussing the whole child, result in fluid communication across grade-level and subject area teachers regarding student achievement and wellbeing. Teachers hold each other accountable for revisiting students' progress and challenges by engaging in a cyclical process of identifying and monitoring students who are in need of and receive additional support.
- Every parent has access to the school's dropbox platform where assignments and feedback are uploaded. Parents spoke to being able to read correspondences between their children and teachers regarding progress on assignments, allowing them to follow up with their children as necessary.
- All families receive individualized narrative reports that provide anecdotal updates on their children's progress in areas of physical presence, social, and behavioral development, language arts, and math. In one narrative, the teacher concluded the math and numbers section with, "We will continue to work on developing his mathematical thinking, strategies, and building stamina to get his work done." Another report stated, "We have been wondering about how he makes sense of characters in a book. When we have asked him about a character's feelings and motivations he has strong statements. We are curious to explore some more nuanced ideas about characters' feelings and motivations." Parents spoke of how such clear and detailed feedback about their children's efforts inform how they engage reading, writing, and other academic activities at home.
- Parents noted that the school has helped them engage their children in ways that are aligned to strategies the school uses to push student thinking. Specifically a parent noted that she started explaining things by using the strategy of comparison, which she learned from a teacher. Another parent stated that he now asks questions such as, "What do you like about this? Why?" in order to elicit his child's opinions and have her support them with examples.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.1 Curriculum**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

Alignment to Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts is present but not yet strategically integrated in the school's curricula. Teachers' awareness of their students as learners informs the development of curricula and academic tasks.

### Impact

Curricula across grades and subject areas are not sufficiently coherent in promoting college and career readiness. Curricular documents do not consistently reflect how individual and/or groups of students, including high-achieving students have access to rigorous tasks that are cognitively engaging.

### Supporting Evidence

- Common Core Learning Standards embedded in curricular documents include: analyzing the structure of text, knowing the spelling-sound correspondences when two letters represent one sound, and representing and interpreting data.
- The instructional shift of balancing informational and literacy text was found in the lesson plans in social studies, literacy, and science. For example, in one lesson, groups of students were to use informational text to support identifying and describing characteristics and elements of specific habitats. Another plan required groups of students to glean important facts from non-fiction text and write them in their own words. However, curricular documents across grade and subject areas did not highlight clear or coherent processes to be used in engaging informational texts.
- Most, but not all curricular documents reflected the intent of supporting a diversity of learners with references to differentiation, guided support, and grouping. Such measures included having the book available for students who needed to look and point and/or providing a laptop for students to engage in research to access illustrations and information. However, only three planning documents strategically named individual and groups of students with targeted support measures based on teacher awareness of student need. In one such plan, a co-teacher would be assigned to support three specific students with sound pronunciation, stamina, and attention. Another plan noted how the teacher would support a student's "planning prior to writing, and be there to listen to her ideas as she considers the outcome of each."

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.2 Pedagogy</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Teaching practices are informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching and a clear set of beliefs about how students learn best.

### Impact

Across classrooms teaching practices show a commitment to student centered instruction that promotes high levels of student thinking and participation.

### Supporting Evidence

- The school's pedagogical value of student voice was honored in most of the classes observed. In a lesson focused on Roman markets, a student made the connection that given the various goods sold it reminded her of Target. In a math class, the teacher directed students to generate the checklist they would use to self-assess their line graphs. In another class, a part of the lesson was dedicated to students offering familiar words to replace challenging words found in a complex text.
- Teachers were observed directing student misunderstandings to other students as opposed to answering or addressing the questions themselves. For example, when a student claimed that a butterfly came out of a cocoon, the teacher asked, "Do butterflies come out of cocoons?" Volunteers were quick to offer chrysalises as the correct answer. As students engaged in a phonics lesson, the teacher consistently asked other students to correctly pronounce letter combinations to support those who struggled.
- Students worked constructively, either independently or in pairs, during project time. A student explored revision as he chose to re-do a painting because the figure in the first draft "was too big and there wasn't enough room for the shoes and hair". Two students explored the creation of "Oublat", a mixture of cornstarch and water. "Mine is too watery compared to hers" one noted. She then asked a teacher to add more cornstarch to her basin. When asked why, she replied, "the more cornstarch you add, the more gloopy it is, and that's what I want." Another pair worked together on baking banana muffins. In referring to the printed directions, they were able to point to exactly where they were in the process. They were exact in their measurements of ingredients and clear on how to stay organized.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>2.2 Assessment</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### Findings

Across classrooms teachers employ common assessments and grading policies that yield information highlighting student progress.

### Impact

Actionable feedback informs instructional adjustments and student awareness of their level of achievement.

### Supporting Evidence

- All teachers noted that the constant reflection on their notes and student observations informed instructional adjustments that resulted in the improvement captured on their student performance trackers. In kindergarten through grade 2 the school assesses the mechanics of student writing over a five stage continuum, tracking when students' progress from stage-to-stage over the course of a school year. Dates for when students meet the expectations within stages are memorialized on writing continuum forms along with feedback that informed instructional adjustments. For example, Stage 1 of a student's form read 9/23/14 – pencil grip takes a lot of energy, 11/18/14 – Still grappling with pencil grip, 1/20/15 – More consistent with pencil grip.
- The school employs a reading assessment framework, which assesses student ability from Stage 1 - Emergent Reader A (Fall/Kindergarten) through Stage 10 – Fluent Reader B (fifth grade). Using a read aloud assessment process, teachers track student progress by noting stage, the book read, and comments relative to student performance. One analysis showed that in September a student was at Stage 6 and reading *The Quest for Paradise*. Comments included, "reading slowly and carefully, pauses and closes his eyes when sounding a word." By January, the same student was in Stage 7/8, reading *Amulet the Last Council*. According to the comments, the student was, "reading with expression, using letter and sound combinations, and making text-to-text connections."
- The school administers number assessments that are aligned from kindergarten through grade 3. Counting, numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are all assessed as student responses are memorialized along with teacher comments. Such comments include, "needs time to process: fingers, paper, and drawing."
- Two students shared emails between themselves and their teachers. In one such email correspondence, after a student forwarded a reading response, the teacher replied and noted, "But, what do you prefer and why? What is it about writing and putting together stories that allows authors to choose which direction to take, or, do you think it might have anything to do with the author wanting his or her reader to participate, to take part in the "making" process." As a result of this feedback, the student was clearer about his perspective in the subsequent reading response, to which the teacher commented, "You're response is clear and thoughtful."

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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**Findings**

Teacher teams consistently analyze student work and other aspects of the whole child. Structures are in place that allow teachers to have a voice in key decisions that affect student development and learning across the school.

**Impact**

Teacher practice has improved as a result of weekly teacher meetings. In addition, teachers' leadership capacity has grown given the impact they have on school-wide decisions.

**Supporting Evidence**

- Multi-grade teacher teams meet weekly to have protocolled conversations about struggling students. A team was observed discussing a second grade student. Of those teachers participating, three had taught him. The presenting teacher shared samples of the student's work, information about the student's interests, the student's strengths and challenges as well as instructional measures implemented to date in support of the student's learning. A specific point made was, "He can phonetically sound out letters individually in a word, but not the whole word." Teachers asked clarifying questions, and the protocol showed that recommendations would be provided.
- Teachers noted that weekly meetings have impacted their instructional practice allowing for strategic grouping, student engagement practices, (like using dice for a counting game), and honing effective implementation of the writing continuum.
- Teachers were integral in identifying reading assessments to be used school wide, as well as developing and implementing a multi-grade writing continuum. Based on an awareness of the preferences and talents of their students, and budgetary constraints conveyed by the principal, teachers determine which arts disciplines will be offered in after school programming, as well as which vendors will provide the services. Teachers are invited to participate in the revision of the school's governance procedures. In reviewing this work in progress, the school governance document addresses the school's approach to family and child crisis intervention, traditions, events, uniform assessment practices, as well as the function of various regularly scheduled meetings including those dedicated to curriculum planning and looking at student work.