Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Central Park East II

Elementary M964

19 East 103 Street
Manhattan
NY 10029

Principal: Naomi Smith

Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Rod Bowen

The School Context

Central Park East II is an elementary school with 261 students from grade pre-K through grade 5. The school population comprises 29% Black, 30% Hispanic, 24% White, 5% Asian, and 12% Multi-racial students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 22% special education students. Boys account for 47% of the students enrolled and girls account for 53%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 93.3%.

School Quality Criteria

Instructional Core		
To what extent does the school…	**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		
To what extent does the school…	**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		
To what extent does the school…	**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
Assessment data, student work and classroom practice are systematically analyzed. Distributive leadership structures are fully integrated into the school's professional culture.

Impact
Increased achievement for targeted students, as well as improvements in instruction, is the result of the work of the school's teacher teams. In addition, teachers are integral in making key decisions that impact teaching and learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- A team was observed reviewing writing assessment data. One of the trends noted was that students were having difficulty writing sub-topic sentences that clearly related to the topic sentences in their paragraphs. One of the strategies discussed would have students list up to ten words that they associate with the topic sentence and then partner to determine which words would produce sentences that are most aligned to the topic. Teachers agreed to revisit the effectiveness of this strategy at a subsequent meeting.

- While reviewing student data in a second grade team meeting, data showed that two students had not met their targeted benchmark levels. Support services through the reading specialist as well as focused work in reading stamina and decoding in the classroom resulted in improvement for both children as they both increased one reading level in the following month.

- One teacher noted, "I've never had so much say in what goes on in a school that I've worked in." Another claimed that if you have a good idea and are willing to plan and coordinate it into reality, then school leadership supports you. For example, all fourth/fifth grade students experience Readers Theater because a teacher from the fourth/fifth grade team identified the program and felt it would be an invaluable supplement to the reading curriculum. As a result, there has been a steady increase in student engagement, oral reading fluency, and comprehension across the grade.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across classrooms, teachers consistently provide multiple entry points into curricula, and student effort reflects high levels of thinking and participation.

Impact
The supports provided during instruction are not consistently strategic throughout the school so that all learners can engage in challenging tasks. In a small number of classrooms student effort does not reflect high levels of student ownership and discussion.

Supporting Evidence

- During a third grade writing lesson, the class was engaged in a discussion of seeing problems and imagining solutions. A turn and talk was used to allow pairs to identify solutions to a school related problem that would inform a persuasive letter they would write to the school's principal. As students discussed with each other, they continued to write down ideas in their notebooks. For pairs that were stuck, there was a chart to provide them with ideas. Students were overheard debating which solutions were the best as they worked to prioritize their options.

- A first grade math class was separated into four discrete working areas. There was a table where a student teacher worked with three students, supporting their efforts with manipulatives and brown toy bunnies used for motivational and emotional support. A student sat at a table working independently on a math task. A paraprofessional worked with two students in the back, and the rest of the class sat on a rug reviewing challenging problems from an earlier assessment with the lead teacher. The teacher continually pushed students to articulate their thinking. For example, after asking a pair why they agreed after a turn and talk, one of the students replied, "Me and my partner agreed because we counted on our fingers and the numbers are not the same."

- In a fourth/fifth grade social studies class, the teacher led a discussion informed by the question, "Why do you think people leave their homes to come to America?" As the lesson progressed, he referred to a chart of reasons with the words: political, economic and religious. Students were observed struggling with understanding these words as only a few evidenced some familiarity with the terms. After explaining the words, the teacher invited those who were still not clear to stay on the rug for further support.

- During a class where students were expected to classify sub-topics into the appropriate topics as part of a pre-writing exercise, some struggled with how to approach the word association activity. Though a graphic organizer was provided to scaffold their thinking, the process and expectation were not modeled.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks are refined using student data, and coherently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and subject areas.

Impact
All students, including those with disabilities and high achieving students, have access to cognitively engaging tasks that promote higher order thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- Curricular documents from a fourth/fifth grade social studies lesson, a second grade reading lesson, a third grade reading lesson, and a fourth/fifth grade writing lesson all contained tasks that required students to analyze informational text, referencing English language arts (ELA), and Common Core instructional shifts involving balancing informational and literary text and text-based answers.

- Other Common Core Learning Standards emphasizing higher order skills that are reflected in curricular materials included: writing arguments to support claims based on an analysis of topics or text, using a combination of drawing and writing to provide information about a topic, and representing word problems using equations with a letter standing for an unknown quantity.

- Lesson plans also showed coherent practices in embedding rigorous real world contexts as tools for learning. For example: a second grade social studies lesson utilized a discussion about the importance and effects of local East Harlem businesses and service providers; another lesson outlined how third grade students would write persuasive essays to the principal as part of a *Changing the World* unit; and a fourth/fifth grade writing lesson plan showed that students would use their familiarity with sports and their physical education class to classify topics as part of a pre-writing process.

- Half of the school's instruction is executed within integrated co-teaching classrooms. Partnered teachers are consistently looking at student work as well as reflecting on instruction to identify modifications for future lessons. In most cases specific students are named in lesson plans. For example, a math lesson read, "After a review of yesterday's work, I will work with students O, D and J in a small group to support understanding of tasks, directions read one step at a time, modify problems to solve up to sums of 10 and additional time to show their work." Another lesson plan which noted a few students who were likely to finish early stated, "Introduce the idea of 'push' and 'pull' factors and have them label each of their descriptions in their chart as push and pull."

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Assessment practices across the vast majority of classrooms are aligned to the curricula and accurately capture student mastery that is tracked over time.

Impact
Meaningful feedback and data analysis inform actionable next steps that improve teaching and learning for all students, including English language learners and students with disabilities, thereby supporting their progress toward goals across grades and subjects.

Supporting Evidence

- While describing aspects of writing instruction, fourth and fifth grade students spoke consistently about FADD and ARMS. They explained that the letters stood for words that describe steps they are to follow. A student shared her FADD sheet, yet without looking at it was able to state that it meant: feelings, actions, dialogue and description. Another added, "These are what we need to have a really good draft when we write." A student noted that they use FADD and ARMS when revising their own writing or when giving feedback to peers. The ARMS sheet outlines the school's revision expectations: add more, remove unnecessary parts, move parts around, substitute other words or phrases. Samples of student edited work evidenced the enactment of these processes.

- Teachers shared rubrics and related written anecdotes that clearly showed students' progress toward mastery and next steps that informed instruction. Examples of such feedback included: "She's showing an understanding of multiplication and the algorithm. I need to work with her on developing her mathematical language to explain her thinking." Another teacher from a different grade showed her record sheet from a math module that listed all of her students along with rubric scores for each topic taught as well as next steps. An example of such a next step is: "support student in reading double digit numbers and number sentences".

- All student independent reading levels are tracked and used to inform the strategic use of leveled texts as well as flexible small group instruction. Teachers shared color coded independent reading level progression data that clearly highlights by month, students that are exceeding, meeting, close to meeting and not meeting bench mark levels. In a sample class, of the 18 students that were assessed in both September, 2014 and January, 2015, 13 of them moved up two reading levels, while one moved up three levels.

- Common writing assessments revealed that students were having difficulty getting started and working independently, in particular some students with learning disabilities. Teachers responded with small group interventions as well as graphic organizers and other scaffolds that helped students plan their writing and develop their ideas before they started their first drafts. The result has been a marked increase in students' ability to engage writing tasks with decreasing amounts of adult support.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed

Findings
Danielson Framework aligned high expectations are consistently communicated to teachers. The school effectively communicates high expectations to parents regarding paths toward college and career readiness.

Impact
A culture of mutual accountability informs how the staff works to meet high expectations. The school partners with parents to help them play an active role in supporting their children's progress toward meeting high expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- In a memo sent to all staff in October, 2014, the principal communicated expectations regarding working collaboratively to look at student writing. Later in the memo, she went on to outline how teachers could reflect on the process of looking at student work together. By the time of the review, teacher teams had embraced the expectation and developed various practices such as: creating writing rubrics that are used when looking at student work, using student work data from one unit to inform the writing tasks of subsequent units, and developing a process by which their initial analysis of student writing is done without the rubric and then done with the rubric.

- Parents shared various ways in which the school has empowered them to have direct impact on their children's academic achievement. One parent noted that he regularly checks his daughter's reading log to ensure that she is doing the appropriate amount of reading over the course of any given week. Parents noted that teachers will notify them of questions they can ask their children regarding units of study. There are also projects that necessitate familial engagement such as the collection of family artifacts and creating a family historical timeline.

- The school provides comprehensive feedback to families for every student through individualized goal sheets and progress reports that incorporate both checklist and qualitative information regarding student progress. The content of these communications include feedback and next steps in social/behavioral skills, listening, speaking, reading, writing, mathematics and science. Suggestions for parents and guardians are also embedded in this process. One report stated," In order to support his growth as a reader, please encourage him to read from his fancy bags each night. He should work on the following strategies as he reads…"