Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Clement C. Moore

Elementary School Q013

55-01 94th Street
Queens
NY 11373

Principal: Evelyn Velez

Date of review: May 14, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Jorge Estrella

The School Context

Clement C. Moore is an elementary school with 1,603 students from kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 10% Black, 57% Hispanic, 2% White, and 30% Asian students. The student body includes 36% English language learners and 6% special education students. Boys account for 51% of the students enrolled and girls account for 49%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 95.4%.

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**	**Developing**
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**	**Developing**
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**	**Developing**
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	**Celebration**	**Proficient**
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	**Additional Findings**	**Proficient**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the entire staff in alignment with the Danielson Framework for Teaching and provide training for teacher teams. School leaders and staff effectively communicate high expectations to families connected to a path to college and career readiness.

Impact
The school has built a system of accountability for students and teachers, while providing supports to staff, students and families to achieve those expectations, which prepares students for the next level.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders set high expectations and a system of accountability for teachers during pre-and post-observation conferences and ongoing Danielson Framework for Teaching based professional learning opportunities. Professional learning on adapting curricula to meet the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards and Danielson Framework for Teaching has been provided. Additionally, weekly emails from the Principal note teacher and school progress and convey important reminders and underline administrative initiatives. For example, in a May communiqué to staff, the principal set expectations for all bulletin boards including the use of rubrics and a cohesive grading system of 1-4.

- The school's instructional focus is to develop students' skills in using evidence to support arguments in discussion and in writing. Advance data revealed that teachers struggled with evidence in argument and Danielson component 3b: questioning and discussion techniques. The school has created a professional learning committee consisting of administrators and teachers to design and lead professional learning opportunities each Monday. Ongoing professional learning for teachers by teachers and school leaders in these areas occur at least once per week. Specifically, teachers may choose from a menu of differentiated professional learning opportunities including English as a second language (ESL), Integrated Co-Teaching models, and the use of higher order thinking questions in math.

- The school's website is used to communicate with parents on a daily basis. The "Welcome Parents" area, meet the staff, and upcoming events sections help keep parents informed of key events and provide updated information to the school community in a timely fashion. Further, ESL classes are provided weekly for all families and are well attended as evidenced in attendance logs. Additionally, in the school's Family ESL program, teachers designed an entrance assessment to identify parents' English language needs and surveys are used to improve parent-learning practices.

- The school provides monthly parent workshops on ways to support student goals in literacy and math. For example, workshop topics provided by instructional coaches were; "Reading and Math for K-1 and 3rd grade" and "Literacy and Math Game Night". Progress reports, communication logs, and detailed resources for parents to collaborate with the school are used to assist families in supporting their child in meeting expectations connected to college and career readiness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Pedagogical strategies do not consistently include targeted instructional supports, scaffolded questioning and discussion techniques, or learning extensions to engage all learners in rigorous tasks and high-level discussions.

Impact
As a result of inconsistent teaching practices, students are not consistently engaged in appropriately challenging tasks or rich classroom discussions that lead to high levels of thinking or accurate understanding of content as demonstrated in their work products and group discussions.

Supporting Evidence

- It was reported that the school incorporates the Danielson Framework for Teaching by teaching the students how to answer higher-order thinking questions and how to deconstruct the questions. It was also shared that teachers provide multiple entry points, as well as extension activities, which are expected to be provided for higher achieving students, along with the use of complex texts throughout the grades. However, across classrooms, teachers inconsistently provided supports and multiple entry points for all learners. In the majority of classrooms, students received identical materials and in some, academic vocabulary was presented only verbally, without providing English language learners with an entry point into the texts. For example, in an ESL class, the teacher used different strategies to introduce new vocabulary, but did not offer opportunities for students to use and practice those words and dominated the lesson by doing most of the talking.
- The school's instructional focus for the year is evidence in argument, where students will develop the skill of using evidence to support arguments in discussion. The implementation of this strategy was inconsistent across classrooms visited. For example, in a science class students were engaged in a measurement activity where they had to explain their findings using evidence to support their claims and in an English class, students were engaged in group discussions about identifying main ideas of a text and explaining how they were supported by key details. However, in other classes, students did not have the opportunity to engage in meaningful interactions to promote the use of critical thinking skills to further their progress to meet their instructional targets.
- While some teachers use questioning techniques that engage students in accountable talk resulting in meaningful student work products, most teachers still execute teacher-centered lessons, with dialogue typically being between teacher and students; giving students minimal opportunity to engage in independent work. For instance, in one first grade math class, discussion was organized by the teacher asking rapid-fire questions and individual students answering in one word responses. Furthermore, across classrooms, teachers inconsistently scaffold learning by not reviewing vocabulary to ensure that all students are able to access the content, which lead to uneven student engagement and missed opportunities to make connections or self-reflect about their learning.
- Although students were well-behaved during lessons, assigned tasks did not promote consistent engagement or higher-order work products across grades or disciplines. Accordingly, most student workbooks, notebooks, homework books and work folders did not reveal evidence of tiered supports to ensure consistent progress for struggling learners or higher achievers. As a result, teachers were not fully aware of what students learned and if timely instructional supports would benefit the progress of those students.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Curricula and academic tasks inconsistently emphasize rigorous habits and higher-order skills across grades and content areas. Academic tasks reflect planning to provide all students access to the curricula and engaging learning experiences.

Impact
Although teachers are refining curricula, the curricular decisions and adjustments do not consistently provide access to rigorous tasks that promote student thinking for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal and faculty decided to implement curricula aligned to Common Core Learning Standards to promote coherence and alignment around the instructional shifts in literacy. The principal stated that the goal is to improve instruction around the shifts in literacy by establishing a school-wide focus on evidence in argument across grades and content areas. In addition, the principal stated that the refinement of academic tasks to provide all students with access to the Common Core Learning Standards, is the key lever to developing the instructional core at the school. For example, the literacy coach and the data team analyze data from a text-based opinion writing assessment and instructional implications are discussed in team meetings and adjustments are made to the curriculum.
- While the school's total population includes 36% English language learners (ELLs) and 6% students with disabilities, teacher's plans do not include academic tasks that reflect diversity and challenge to meet the needs of all learners. Most students were engaged in simple or low-level tasks with no evidence of scaffolding for ELLs or students with disabilities. For example, while one science lesson plan included vocabulary development strategies and the use of visuals to engage all students in the lesson, however, other lesson plans did not include or mention vocabulary strategies. This approach to instructional planning does not create learning opportunities to have all students effectively engaged in activities that meets their needs, and limits their potential to meet their learning targets.
- Across content areas unit plans do not consistently demonstrate scaffolds and entry points to meet the needs of all learners including those performing at the highest and lowest levels. As a result, designed tasks do not always challenge high achieving students. In some instances, students are asked to perform the same task, although some may display mastery of the concept. For example, a kindergarten task included students' learning how to compare 3-D to 2-D shapes, where all students used the same worksheet, with most not being challenged and completing the task quickly, with no further challenging tasks planned. This level of planning misses opportunities to cognitively engage all students.
- Although some teachers plan lessons to cognitively engage all learners; curricula and tasks are not consistently planned and refined using student work and data. For example, an English lesson plan noted individual students' reading levels and identified appropriate text and task goals aligned to the analysis of student data. However, math and ESL lesson plans did not include a reference to student data or planned refinements to the task or text provided to students, based on specific needs or trends identified within data results; which prevents teachers from making informed decisions to refine curricula and craft lessons to address students' needs.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Teachers utilize assessments, rubrics and grading policies aligned to the school's curricula. Teachers' assessment practices inconsistently reflect the use of ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessments.

Impact
Assessments and rubrics provide limited feedback to students regarding achievement and next learning steps. The limited use of checks for understanding during instruction results in inconsistent adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal reported that the school has an assessment plan where teachers administer assessments to determine if students mastered the concepts taught, and administrators provide feedback to teachers about assessments, such as how assessments align to units of study. For example, the school administered benchmarks assessments in September and in February and utilizes a solid data system to report itemized reports for these assessments. This information is used during common planning meetings to make adjustments to the curriculum and to redefine teaching practices and assessment tools. However, across classrooms visited, a review of assessments in student portfolios revealed that teachers inconsistently provide actionable feedback to students with next learning steps. On several student work products and assessments reviewed, teachers gave feedback such as "nice job" and "great work". This type of feedback does not provide students with actionable next steps to improve their work.

- Within some classrooms, teachers used ongoing checks for understanding, such as asking and answering questions, circulating around the classroom, observing students, and providing verbal feedback to individuals or groups of students, and in some cases collecting data on a chart to annotate students' strengths and areas for improvement. For example, in a math class, students were provided the opportunity to work within groups on a learning task around dividing equal shapes into parts with equal areas, while the teacher provided students with one-to-one support as needed by providing insights into multiple ways they could develop their math task. However, in most lessons, these practices inconsistently led to on-the-spot instructional adjustments that addressed all learners' needs, especially ELLs and students with disabilities.

- Students reported that some teachers provide them with rubrics to help them determine what is needed to meet the standards, and with verbal or written feedback to support them in their next learning steps. However, some students disclosed that they sometimes do not receive feedback from homework assignments and in most cases; they just receive a check or a grade. For example, student work reviewed did not reveal a consistent feedback structure that provided students with actionable next steps. As a result, some students are unaware of their next steps to meet their learning targets.

- Rubrics are used across classrooms including English, math and science. On student work posted in classrooms, hallways and portfolios there was inconsistent levels in the amount of actionable feedback. For example, in an English classroom there were attached rubrics with next learning steps on student work, but in review of students' portfolios, rubrics attached to their work, simply included circled ratings, with no next learning steps articulated.

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

Findings
Teachers are engaged in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of the school's goals and the Common Core Learning Standards. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact
Structured professional collaborations have strengthened teacher practice and improved student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams in fifth grade noted that students were having difficulty in two-dimensional shapes. Teacher teams designed additional units of study on graphing point grids to solve real-world math problems and classifying 2D shapes by properties. Preliminary evidence from the Measures of Student Learning assessments note increased student achievement in use of 2D shapes rising from 9% to 38% approaching grade level ability.

- Data specialists meet with teacher teams to provide high-quality supports to impact curricular and instructional decisions. Detailed, color-coded data analyses provide teachers with insight on student performance for individual students, subgroups including ELLs and students with disabilities and class level data. Data is used by classroom teachers to inform flexible groups and determine curricular decisions and task design. For example, student performance data provided to the grade 4 math team on math operations and algebraic thinking, allowed teachers to design differentiated student tasks using all four operations to solve problems, factor-work, and analyze patterns.

- The professional development team comprised of administration and teacher leaders meet weekly to discuss professional learning opportunities for staff. Professional learning topics include the Danielson Framework for Teaching, questioning, Webb's Depth of Knowledge, and use of teacher team protocols for all teachers. Teachers are provided with related scholarly articles, class coverage and other opportunities to engage in inter-visitations, both formally and informally each month. Teachers reported that these professional learning opportunities have strengthened their practice as well as student outcomes through sharing teaching strategies, developing questions and learning targets, and developing resources to meet the needs of all their students. As a result, there is an increase in students' outcomes. For example, in the writing baseline analysis, fourth grade results indicate that in September 2014, 18% of the students were able to accurately make an inference/state a claim based on text and in February 2015, 32% of the students scored at level 3 or higher in this area.

- Teacher teams use exit slips to collect data and identify trends in student work analyses in professional collaborations across grades and subjects. For example, the grade 3 teacher team identified that students did not understand some of the tasks and that more clarity in instruction was needed. Teams added more explicit teaching and modeling during mini lessons.