



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The John Harvard School

Elementary School Q034

**104-12 Springfield Boulevard
Queens
NY 11429**

Principal: Pauline Shakespeare

**Date of review: December 4, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray**

The School Context

John Harvard is an elementary school with 567 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 76% Black, 16% Hispanic, 1% White, and 6% Asian students. The student body includes 11% English language learners and 7% 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 95.1%.

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	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		
<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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school community ensures that curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and are seamlessly integrating the instructional shifts. The school leaders and faculty emphasize rigor and higher-order skills for all students inclusive of ELLs and SWDs.

Impact

The school's coherent curricular decisions consistently promote college and career readiness for all students. Rigorous habits, critical thinking and challenging academic tasks push student thinking.

Supporting Evidence

- The content area units of study integrate the Common Core Learning Standards, instructional shifts and include the Arts and technology. Teacher teams meet over the summer or early in the school year to design units with assessments. For example, the third grade team wrote the English language arts units using the standards as a guide. They decided to explicitly teach college and career readiness skills such as note taking, discussions with accountable talk and basic research and essay-writing skills.
- The school's curricular maps form the basis for developing and using rigorous academic tasks that challenge all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and Students with Disabilities (SWDs). These tasks are adopted and adapted from Engage NY, the Department of Education's Common Core Library and the New York City Social Studies and Science scope and sequence. The school stresses an inter-disciplinary approach with all instruction grounded in high quality literacy. For example, the fourth grade designed a unit on New York City's bridges that included field trips, detailed research and student work products that reflected the theme.
- Lesson plans were available in all classrooms visited. They included higher-order and critical thinking questions plus deliberate strategies for supporting English language learners, special education students and struggling readers. Examples of strategies include sentence starters, graphic organizers, and essential questions at the level of comprehension, discussion prompts and visual cues. Homework is designed to reinforce the concepts taught in the classroom and is tied to expectations of rigor.
- The school places a high premium on modifying the materials to reflect its instructional focus. The use trade books, materials from Mondo Balanced Literacy, Go Math and web-based content. Their focus is on tiered academic vocabulary, reading and math fluency and strong argumentative writing.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While teaching practices provide instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques, the use of multiple entry points and extensions that encourage deep reasoning in student work products varies across the school.

Impact

Across classrooms, curricula modifications support students in producing meaningful work products, yet there are some missed opportunities for all learners (including ELLs and SWDs) to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- In the classrooms visited, teachers used a modified workshop model of teaching in which students regularly talked to and interacted with their partners during the lesson delivery. Shared reading was common in which the teacher models fluency and strengthens vocabulary. Teachers use guided reading for English language learners, special education students and struggling readers. Guided reading is purposeful and moves students rapidly along to independent reading on grade level.
- Student portfolios in the vast majority of classrooms visited contained evidence of an increased volume of writing compared to the past school year. Students are systematically taught to use text-based evidence in their writing to support their ideas and conclusions. Teachers pay particular attention to the quality of questions that are posed to students so that high levels of discussion are stimulated. For example, in the math classes visited, students were required to work in partnerships and explain their reasoning. The correct answer or procedure is not sufficient; they must also justify their thinking.
- During a second grade ELA class, students were assigned to groups based on their individual progress. Students read books on their level and receive coaching from the teachers individually or in small groups. The teacher listens to student discussions which serve to engage students more deeply into the lessons.
- In a fifth grade writing class, students were publishing their pieces as they edited their work together. The teacher checked in on each of the five groups to determine their rate of progress and asked how they were doing. Some students had minor corrections to make while others made major revisions. Students were universally proud of their work and could explain what they were attempting to accomplish.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school uses common assessments, rubrics and grading policies across the vast majority of classrooms that are aligned to their curricula and provide accurate, actionable feedback to students and teachers. These common assessments create a transparent picture of student progress including ELLs and SWDs.

Impact

The school's systems to monitor progress using data analysis provide feedback to students and teachers enabling teachers to make instructional and curricular decisions. These decisions have led to student improvement across the school including ELLs and SWDs to demonstrate mastery.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses grade level rubrics for all writing and performance tasks. These rubrics are revised and refined by teachers working with administrators and taught to students so they can assess their own work. Students are able to discuss their current performance levels and their next steps for improvement.
- Benchmark assessment data influences the grouping of students in the English language arts block and provides a rationale for individualization. The common assessments, both formative and summative create a clear picture of student progress. Teachers are constantly writing anecdotal assessments of students throughout each English language arts and math lesson. These anecdotal notes are used to make effective adjustments to instruction and teaching materials.
- English language learners are assessed at the beginning and throughout the school year on their language mastery. Special education students are measured against the requirements of their Individualized Education Plans. Teachers use quizzes and questioning with these students to make mid-lesson adjustments as needed. Additional staff works with struggling students to build mastery under the teacher's direction. The special education students at this school perform above the district average for their subgroup in both ELA and math.
- The school uses their Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) assessments as a baseline in the fall. They conduct after-school academic programs to prepare students for promotion to the next grade. The assistant principals and staff developer conduct individual conferences with teachers to analyze student data and create plans for students who are performing below grade level.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations to the whole staff based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching with job-embedded training and messaging. Administrators and teachers partner with parents through workshops, classes and meetings while expounding a path to college and career readiness.

Impact

The communication and support structures that disseminate the school's high expectations build buy-in and accountability among the staff, students and families. This approach facilitates high parent engagement and a clear path to college and career readiness for students.

Supporting Evidence

- The school leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and use the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the rubric that defines high expectations in classroom practice. They provide individualized feedback on professionalism, instructional expertise and collegial collaboration. Training is provided by the staff developer and outside consultants on structures for mutual accountability.
- The faculty uses Tuesday afternoon sessions to prepare and distribute weekly newsletters to parents. The principal personally conducts an English class for parents weekly whose primary language is other than English. She is assisted by the parent coordinator. Regular parent workshops are held at the school on high interest topics such as the Common Core Learning Standards, changes in the math curriculum, and internet resources for student learning.
- The school partners with parents on early preparation for college and career culminating in career days and college days. Parents and community members are invited to assemblies and classroom visits on select days during the year to share a path to lifelong success. Even students in early primary grades can articulate that there is education beyond these walls and that college prepares them for a career. The school has two guidance counselors who support this initiative and provide social/emotional support for students in need of additional nurturing.
- Parents shared that teachers offer updates and support through regular communication between report cards. Students whose promotion is in doubt receive additional outreach. Parents are granted appointments throughout the year upon their request. Parents do report that communication is open and accessible with school staff.

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

The majority of teachers consistently engage in inquiry-based professional collaboration on teams. These teams work on all major aspects of teaching including classroom practice, assessments and student work products.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in expanded teacher instructional capacity and complete implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards leading to increased student achievement. The improvements in teacher practice have enhanced student mastery of individual and group goals.

Supporting Evidence

- The majority of teachers meet weekly in teams for inquiry-based, structured professional collaborations. Teachers take ownership of their data including the results of their conferring and their anecdotal notes. They analyze their student data to inform their next instructional steps as was observed with an early grade teacher team. Team can explain why students are grouped in a particular way. Students receive extra guided reading and shared reading sessions as needed. Assessment data is continuously updated.
- Teacher team meetings review the results from student work products and unit planning to develop a broader repertoire of skills that can be used right away in their classrooms. They facilitate inter-visitation and support each other with ideas for dealing with challenging students. Members of these teams spoke to stronger implementation of Common Core Learning Standards daily. The teams meet informally numerous times in addition to their formal meetings. ESL and special education teachers are integrated with grade level teams.
- The school-wide professional development action plan supports professional learning through a comprehensive model including workshops and differentiated activities that allow for teachers’ choice and coinciding inquiry cycles to assess the impact of professional learning on student outcomes. Examples of PD activities include planning of text-dependent questions, anticipating student responses to text-dependent questions and selecting rigorous text-dependent questions and tasks to be used as formative assessments.
- Minutes and agendas of team meetings indicate that all teachers meet regularly and engage in the collection, disaggregation, and analysis of data from assessments. Teachers stated that they use assessment data to form strategy groups with differentiated tasks. The principal described adjustments to math curricula that now incorporate content to provide deeper coverage of the “major work of the grade” and the improved alignment to “focus standards” identified for each grade.