

# Quality Review Report

## 2014-2015

**Cynthia Jenkins Elementary School**

**Elementary School Q037**

**179-37 137<sup>th</sup> Street  
Queens  
NY 11434**

**Principal: Beverly Mitchell**

**Date of review: November 6, 2014  
Lead Reviewer: Lenon Murray**

## The School Context

Cynthia Jenkins is an elementary school with 555 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 89% Black, 8% Hispanic, 1% White, and 2% Asian students. The student body includes 5% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 53% of the students enrolled and girls account for 47%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.3%.

## 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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Focus</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>Celebration</b>	<b>Well Developed</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>Additional Findings</b>	<b>Proficient</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>Well Developed</b>

## Area of Celebration

**Quality Indicator:**

**2.2 Assessment**

**Rating:**

**Well Developed**

### Findings

The school uses common assessments in all subject areas across the vast majority of classrooms that are aligned to their curricula and provide actionable feedback to students and teachers. The common assessments provide a clear illustration of student progress for all students including English language learners and students with disabilities.

### Impact

The school's systems that monitor progress through data utilization and during classroom instruction are used continuously to make adjustments in curricula and daily lessons to meet the learning needs of all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams determine which topics are the most significant to assess with common formative assessments. Teachers analyze standards and align the instructional shifts for essential topics. They identify the concepts and skills that their students need to know and should be able to do at the end of each unit. For example, the third grade team worked on assessing and developing the students' ability to write using references and quotations from texts that inform their arguments.
- The validity and reliability of school level assessments are maintained through consistent and collaborative approaches to norming and interpreting evidence used to evaluate student work. For example, teachers on the fifth grade agree on learning goals and benchmark performances for lessons, units, and tasks prior to designing or modifying formative assessments to measure student mastery of the concepts to be taught.
- Teachers and administrators can explain the rationale for their assessment choices. Assessments are carefully aligned to the Common Core learning standards. The pre, mid and post unit assessments in Ready GEN and Go Math are modified to meet the school's needs. Writing is considered an essential part of benchmark assessments and is used to identify students' strengths and areas of need across all content areas.
- English language learners and students with disabilities receive frequent informal assessments to capture the incremental growth to support students' needs. Teachers accurately identify specific instructional responses to the data by re-teaching content, changing an instructional approach, or increasing the challenge and level of the questions, were some strategies that were articulated. For example, in a second grade class, a teacher was observed reading the questions aloud to facilitate quicker student responses.

## Area of Focus

**Quality Indicator:**

**1.2 Pedagogy**

**Rating:**

**Proficient**

### Findings

While instructional practices provide consistent instructional supports, including questioning and discussion techniques, the multiple entry points and individual coaching that support all learners including English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) with high quality work products varies across the school.

### Impact

Across classrooms, curricula extensions support students in the development of meaningful work products; however, there are missed opportunities for all learners including ELLs and SWDs to take ownership of their learning.

### Supporting Evidence

- Teachers organize student groupings based on data and are varied depending on instructional objectives and tasks. In a third grade classroom during a math lesson, the teacher grouped strong students with peers who were less adept and encouraged students to discuss the word problem with their partners. The teacher then circulated the room to posed questions to students to increase the cognitive demand of student participation and thinking.
- The school's instructional focus is writing across all curriculum areas. Student portfolios across the vast majority of visited classrooms contained evidence of increased writing compared to the beginning of the school year. However, there was a wide range in the quality of student work products as some student work indicated students continued to struggle to use text-based evidence.
- In all classrooms visited, students actively participated in classroom discussions. For example, in a second grade English language arts classroom, students were able to use academic language in their conversations to agree or disagree with their peers by referring to the text about Johnny Appleseed. They quoted from the text and sometimes paraphrased it in their own words to support their points. However, in other classrooms visited, these discussions were heavily facilitated by teachers and were dependent upon teacher-generated questions. Students asked questions in only half of the classrooms and the questions were entirely informational or for clarification. While evidence was present in student writing of deep thinking, students are not yet generating effective discussions on their own that lead to student ownership of material they are engaged in.

## Additional Findings

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>1.1 Curriculum</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Well Developed</b>
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### Findings

The school community ensures that all its curricula are aligned to the Common Core learning standards and teachers actively integrate the instructional shifts. The school leaders stress rigor and higher-order skills in all subject areas while including ELLs and SWDs.

### Impact

The school's curricular decisions build coherence across all grades and subject areas and promote critical thinking through challenging academic tasks that lead to college and career readiness for all students.

### Supporting Evidence

- Curricula development focused on adjusting units of study to cover the Common Core learning standards comprehensively as possible and strategically integrating the instructional shifts. The school uses Ready GEN and Go Math and supplements the available texts with online resources that reinforce college and career readiness skills. For example, the school uses accountable talk prompts to deepen student-to-student discussions. The teachers incorporate note-taking strategies during lessons and annotation during independent reading.
- Curricula maps demonstrate that school leaders and faculty develop rigorous academic tasks utilizing resources such as EngageNY and the Department of Education's Common Core Library. ELLs and SWDs are held to the same quality standards and are provided with individualized supports and scaffolds to meet expectations. Examples of support include graphic organizers, leveled texts, and conferring with teachers when they struggling.
- Teachers' lesson plans that were reviewed included higher order essential questions crafted to stimulate critical thinking and tasks directly tied to concepts being taught. For example, students learn to answer questions extracting information directly from texts and responding appropriately to the question prompts. Teachers explained that professional development was provided to the faculty over a period of a year that helped them refine and streamline the planning process.

<b>Quality Indicator:</b>	<b>3.4 High Expectations</b>	<b>Rating:</b>	<b>Proficient</b>
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### **Findings**

School leaders communicate high expectations to staff around the elements of the Danielson Framework for Teaching using workshops and consistent messaging through various forms of communication. Workshops and student performance updates keep families informed of student progress.

### **Impact**

The structures that support the school's high expectations build accountability and collaborative approaches among staff, students, and their families. This provides a defined path towards increased student achievement and college and career readiness.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- Monthly parent newsletters, teacher phone calls, emails, flyers, and the school website provide details on the progress of the school and individual student achievement. Parents indicated on the school survey and in the parent meeting that they are supportive of the school's expectations for their children.
- School leaders conduct frequent classroom observations and provide feedback utilizing the Danielson Framework for Teaching as the standard for professionalism and high quality instruction. Monday afternoons are devoted to professional development sessions that provide training, keep communication open, and reinforce accountability throughout the learning community. Teachers stated that they voluntarily conduct inter-visitations and hold each other accountable for the expectations that are continuously expressed. The parent coordinator organizes workshops that explain the changes in state testing as a result of the Common Core learning standards and the expectations for college and career readiness. Career days are held annually as well as college information days. Both of these events include professionals from the community speaking to parents and students.
- The school has several teachers trained in the principles of Positive Behavior Intervention. Each child is well known by at least one adult in the building in addition to the classroom teacher. The school calls parents for positive information as well as during crises.

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

The vast majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based professional collaboration on teams regularly. These teams work diligently on key elements of instructional practice including classroom teaching, student assessment, and student work products.

### **Impact**

The work of teacher teams has resulted in increased teacher capacity and improved implementation of Common Core learning standards leading to student progress on assessments and student attainment of individual and group goals.

### **Supporting Evidence**

- The third grade teacher team articulated how they conduct their structured professional collaboration using protocols to examine student work. They revise and adjust the units of study before they are taught in their classrooms. The team initiates inter-visitations and group planning. After lessons are taught, the team reflects on the outcomes in de-briefing sessions.
- Teacher teams document reasons for their decisions on teacher practice adjustments based on student data. For example, the fourth grade team realized from student writing that students weren't supporting their arguments with text-based evidence. Through collaborative research, they developed an effective methodology and systematic approach to teach students on to how cite evidence from texts.
- Teacher teams review results from recent benchmark assessments to make instructional decisions and share ideas to adjust teaching practice. For example, the school and students have set strong writing goals that they are working towards. A teacher team leader shared a strategy that would facilitate students' ability to write supporting ideas to strengthen their central theme.