



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Jackson Heights Elementary School

30Q069

**77-02 37th Avenue
Jackson Heights
NY 11372**

Principal: Martha Vazquez

**Date of review: November 25, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Lucia Perez-Medina**

The School Context

Jackson Heights is an elementary school with 1,159 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 1% Black, 42% Hispanic, 8% White, and 49% Asian students. The student body includes 20% English language learners and 4% special education students. Boys account for 50% of the students enrolled and girls account for 50%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 96.1%.

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	Proficient
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	Additional Findings	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	Focus	Developing
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	Proficient
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	Developing

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

The schools' curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrates key instructional shifts in tasks, regularly using student work to make curricular refinements.

Impact

The school has made purposeful decisions to ensure coherence of units of study across content areas, and student work analysis informs curricular enhancements, so that a diversity of learners has curricular access.

Supporting Evidence

- English Language Arts (ELA) and Go Math units of study integrate the CCLS instructional shifts and include academic vocabulary, fluency and multi-step problem solving, informational writing and text-based responses.
- The school's Teacher's College curriculum is supplemented with Ready Gen to improve student's comprehension, fluency and ability to demonstrate a balance of just right books and grade level texts to ensure students have more exposure to text complexity. For example, lesson plans show use of academic vocabulary, assorted graphic organizers and visual aids.
- Through a blended curriculum which incorporated Teacher's College (TC) and ReadyGen, tasks provide opportunities for students to cite evidence during close reading group discussions and written responses.
- Unit maps show tasks that require students to engage in complex tasks such as a fourth grade math unit task that requires students to "use models to divide whole numbers that do not divide evenly".

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Developing

Findings

The school is aligning shared assessment practices so that teachers make effective adjustments to instruction. However, there are inconsistencies in providing clear next learning steps to students in order to accelerate their learning.

Impact

Feedback in the form of next steps for improvement is not consistent across classrooms and student work products, thus limiting student progress.

Supporting Evidence

- The school collaboratively scores learning tasks in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics throughout the year. This data is used to identify grade level strengths and areas of need, to determine learning gaps across the school, and to target additional supports and resources to students and classrooms where students are performing in the lowest one third.
- A review of teachers' conference notes indicated that formative assessments lead to instructional adjustments, such as regrouping students and re-teaching concepts. However, these practices were inconsistent across classrooms visited.
- Teachers use the Teachers' College Benchmark Assessments to monitor students' independent and instructional reading levels in order to plan small group work to address deficits in the grade level reading progressions. However, across classrooms small group instruction was seen in one out of four classrooms visited during the literacy block.
- Bulletin boards with student work rarely indicated the use or presence of a rubric to offer feedback to students about their work.
- A few samples of student work in students' folders showed rubric-based performance level scores with teacher comments on post-its while others showed only checkmarks with no comments. In addition, in many students' folders, there were collections of work that showed no evidence of evaluation by a teacher.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

The school uses instructional strategies across classrooms and embeds multiple entry points so that lessons fully challenge student thinking however student work does not fully reflect high levels of engagement.

Impact

Lessons do not consistently challenge all students, particularly high performers, to their full potential, thus limiting opportunities for them to engage in higher order thinking tasks and demonstrate ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- While students were engaged in a task that was challenging for most students including English language learners and students with disabilities, in most classes, students are presented with the same task and receive limited feedback from the teacher, several students quickly completed the task with no further direction while others struggles with minimal support.
- During a fourth grade science lesson, students were asked to complete a circuit by making a drawing; the lesson was a group lesson: nine students had completed the assignment and were not on task while waiting for further directions.
- In most classes, student discussion was limited by low level questioning or low level tasks provided by the teacher. Many questions were recall and relied on a student's memory. For example, during a mathematics lesson, the teacher asked, "Is the frame full?" and the task asked students to put nine counters on a ten frame. During a social studies lesson the teacher asked, "Could we be called a clan, yes or no?"
- In most classrooms students worked in groups but in most cases all students worked on the same task, with no visible modifications for the most struggling or accelerated learners.
- In classrooms visited, some students participated in class discussions. In one of the seven classrooms visited, students were able to explore their thinking, justify their conclusions and use evidence or examples to support their reasoning.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school conveys high expectations that promote parental involvement and support learning so that staff, students and families work together toward achieving school goals.

Impact

Staff, students and families are well supported towards progress in meeting school expectations and parents understand the schools expectations for their children.

Supporting Evidence

- In an effort to communicate high expectations to all school constituents, staff and parents receive handbooks specifically designed for each constituent. Also, a yearly calendar is distributed with annual events such as “parents as reading partners”.
- The principal creates and distributes monthly letters to parents focused on academic and personal behaviors to prepare students for college and career readiness. The parent coordinator also sends out a monthly calendar of events to all parents.
- Teachers receive a monthly letter and newsletter that is aligned to the instructional focus and measures of teacher practice. A weekly and daily focus reminds staff of the instructional expectations, professional learning opportunities and other important events for that day or week.
- The Guidance Counselor and administrators work together in communicating the expectations for the Project Wisdom initiative which help teachers, students and families work towards understanding the characteristics of leadership and expected behaviors.
- During the parent interview, parents stated that the school communicates expectations for their children and gave out curriculum letters. Another parent added that the school sends home progress reports, invites them to parent teacher conferences, and informs them about their children’s progress in meeting expectations for learning. Parents also praised the school for having enrichment opportunities, multicultural activities, and hosting workshops, including a workshop on Common Core Standards and a mathematics workshop where families received strategies to help their children with assignments.

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

Teachers participate in professional teamwork to analyze student work and data to adjust curricula to inform instructional decisions.

Impact

Teams are working to ensure that CCLS are embedded in each unit of study across grades and subjects, yet this process is limited in ensuring student progress towards goals and strengthening teacher practice.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams meet weekly where time is allotted to examine student work and engage in making adjustments to lessons to ensure that teams understand the needs of all students. However, this practice was not evident during the review. For example, in a teacher team meeting, only one teacher shared a mathematics problem worksheet with the rest of the group, minimal student data was analyzed and there was a minimal adjustment made to the next lesson as a result of the meeting.
- All staff is expected to engage in structured collaborative inquiry through teacher teams in order to align and implement the CCLS instructional shifts.
- Teachers meet every Monday for professional learning and once a week for inquiry but during a teacher team meeting observed, teachers articulated that they haven't started the inquiry process yet. One teacher stated "We are still in the process of analyzing our writing performance tasks and choosing a targeted population".
- Grade leaders participate in instructional cabinet and facilitate the work with horizontal grade teams.