



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 150 Queens

Elementary School Q150

**40-01 43rd Avenue
Queens
NY 11104**

Principal: Carmen Parache

**Date of review: January 22, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Marion Wilson**

The School Context

P.S. 150 Queens is an elementary school with 1198 students from grade Pre-kindergarten through grade 6. The school population comprises 1% Black, 46% Hispanic, 23% White, and 30% Asian students. The student body includes 14% English language learners and 13% 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 95.5%.

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	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		
<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	Celebration	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school establishes high expectations for all constituent groups, including students, teachers, and families, through a variety of communication practices. The administration consistently conveys important information to staff via the components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching and the use of professional learning teams.

Impact

There is mutual accountability for student success by all stakeholders. The high levels of professionalism, quality instruction, and effective communication around academic, social, and behavioral expectations for students result in improved student outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- The principal communicates with staff weekly highlighting best practices as well as checking in with staff regarding feedback, instructional expectations, and on-going professional development support.
- There are monthly “Parents as Learning Partner Sessions” along with end of unit celebrations that encourage parents to participate in instructional practice and student learning activities aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards.
- Parents receive newsletters, translated into appropriate languages, as well as periodic progress reports in subject areas highlighting student progress within units of study. They attend monthly workshops and have access to assessment data allowing parents to be active participants in their child’s learning.
- Through use of rubrics and teacher and peer feedback systems, students are able to clearly articulate the skills, strategies and standards they are learning and what they need to do in order to improve their work products. This was evident during the student meeting where students in all grade levels consistently defined expectations that were communicated to them around writing units and stated next steps, such as, why they need to demonstrate thinking in math tasks and how to connect their work to real world concepts.
- As part of the observation cycle at the school, administration holds debriefing sessions where teachers reflect on their practice and determine their own next steps to help them meet the high instructional expectations.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

While pedagogy is consistent in providing instructional supports, questioning scaffolds and entry points for a variety of learners, some teachers' practices are not fully aligned to a rigorous curriculum.

Impact

Teaching is purposefully planned and implemented to allow opportunities for most, but not all, students to engage in and to take ownership of their learning.

Supporting Evidence

- Clear scaffolds and entry points, such as purposeful groupings, sentence starters, vocabulary prompts, thinking maps, graphic organizers,, visual cues and student centered work stations allowed all learners a variety of pathways to complete tasks and to demonstrate their thinking. For example, in a third grade class, English language learners were provided with sentence starters and picture cues that allowed them to engage in discussions with their peers around ways that species adapt to survive in their environments.
- All classrooms demonstrated evidence of structured opportunities for students to engage in tasks on their own or with peers that required the use of academic vocabulary, genre-specific, evidenced-based writing and the demonstration of deep understanding and application of math concepts in their work. For example, students had to write to explain their thinking about their math problem-solving activities. However, there were limited opportunities outside planned activities that allowed for students to lead and further explore and apply these concepts in different situations and take ownership of their learning.
- Across classrooms there was clear evidence of planning of teaching points that are aligned to curricula, such as asking students to investigate genre traits authors use in order to make improvements to their own writing. However, in some classrooms, lessons, teaching strategies and planned activities did not yield student work products for a variety of learners reflective of the expectations and rigor of the curricula.
- In most classrooms visited students engaged in discussions in pairs and in flexible groups where they were able to make connections, relate ideas within and across content and justify their choices. In a fourth grade class visited, students were using accountable talk stems with their peers and discussing appropriate responses to open-ended questions relating to the story they were reading.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Strategic curricula decisions made by school leaders and faculty have resulted in coherence and alignment to the Common Core Learning Standards within and across grades and content areas. Teachers use student work and relevant data to make adjustments to curricula and tasks that have closed achievement gaps and increased cognitive engagement for all learners, including English language learners and students with disabilities.

Impact

Rigorous habits are embedded across classrooms, within units and tasks that require all learners, including student subgroups, to think critically and create their own meaning through evidence based expectations. Teachers use student data to ensure that all learners have access to curricula and that tasks are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- School curriculum maps and tasks use a blend of resources from varied sources including, but not limited to, Go Math, Expeditionary Learning, performance tasks, Engage NY, New York City Department of Education Scope and Sequence and the standards. These resources include essential questions, standard-aligned learning goals and targeted vocabulary as well as interventions and extensions to target the diverse needs of students.
- There is a clear balance of fiction and non-fiction texts and opportunities for immersion in each genre at grade level and beyond, through increased use of complex texts aligned to authentic, real-world tasks within units of study. These units include appropriate scaffolds such as linguistic frames and visual supports across all content areas and across grades.
- The math curriculum and blending of programs target key standards and demonstrate increased focus on instructional shifts. For example, in a 5th grade Talented and Gifted (TAG) classroom, students were engaged in a variety of high level tasks that directed that they differentiate among the different types of triangles by using their sides and angles to classify them. Each activity expected students to demonstrate a deep understanding of concepts and the ability to apply them in real world math situations.
- The school uses Measures of Student Learning (MOSL) data and item skills analysis this year to modify curricula and redesign tasks as information revealed that students struggled with applying conceptual knowledge to high-level questions. Tasks are designed in centers that allow students multiple opportunities to incorporate the deeper meaning of content and to apply it to their writing or math tasks.
- Understanding the linguistics of complex text by making meaning of linguistic frames has been embedded into curriculum in all content areas in order to increase access to text complexity and to provide access to grade-level reading for English language learners throughout the school.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

The school consistently uses and adjusts curricula-aligned assessment practices, grading policies and pedagogical strategies that focus on checks for understanding to create a clear portrait for students and staff regarding student progress.

Impact

Data driven decisions are made school wide leading to rigorous curricula adjustments at the teacher team and classroom levels, and student self-assessment tools guide instructional decisions and provide clear and actionable learning targets for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- On a weekly basis, teachers are strategically grouped vertically and horizontally to plan rigorous tasks aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards that support critical thinking and student next steps. Teachers look at and refine rubrics for each unit while creating ongoing assessments that are used by teachers to form instructional groups and plan curricula activities.
- Across classrooms there is evidence that teachers are monitoring the progress of students within each unit of study through strategies such as the use of checklists, questioning, exit slips and conferencing in order to effectively group students. Students are aware of purposeful groupings and are able to articulate their understanding of the groupings and the range of work that needs to be done with their peers.
- The principal and administrative cabinet work closely with teams to track a variety of data such as MOSL, performance assessments, baseline, pre-assessments and post assessments, running records, teacher created, curricula based chapter and unit assessments to guide the refinement of unit plans, lessons and activities. The results of these assessments are used to chart students' progress, and the disaggregated data is used by teacher teams to track student understanding of standards and to make adjustments to the curriculum.
- The school utilizes rubrics that are used across grades and a variety of genres. There are also standard-aligned rubrics used in all content areas as well as aligned student-pacing checklists that ask students to identify strengths and areas for improvements to ensure they are aware of the steps needed to progress towards mastery of standards.

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

Teachers work effectively in collaborative teams within and across grades to share their practice, analyze data from common assessments, monitor student progress and make modifications to curriculum.

Impact

These structured collaborations result in shared leadership structures and the implementation of curricular adjustments aimed at improving student learning outcomes.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams are currently visiting each other’s classrooms to observe practice. One teacher new to the school said she observed effective teaching practices and new ways to teach reading.
- Although teachers are clearly evaluating the impact of curriculum on student learning through analysis of assessment data and student work products, they have not yet engaged in inquiry around pedagogical decision-making and how their practice informs outcomes for all learners.
- Across teams, most teachers are able to articulate the instructional focus of increasing student engagement by continuing to expose students to discussions and learning activities that elicit their thinking and ultimately improve instruction. During one meeting, teachers were gathering and tracking data to identify skills that students displayed in their writing in the former grades in order to make decisions about what targets needed to be addressed at their current grade level.
- During the inquiry team meeting, teachers analyzed select students’ skill levels, identified practices that are working well and effectively targeted challenge areas, while recommending instructional approaches to colleagues around how to effectively support the needs of these learners when reading complex non-fiction text.