Department of Education
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

Dr. Richard R. Green

PS/IS Q183

2-45 Beach 79 Street
Queens
NY 11693

Principal: Jessica Romero

Date of review: March 9, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Catherine M. Powis

The School Context

Dr. Richard R. Green is an elementary/middle school with 588 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 8. The school population comprises 52% Black, 35% Hispanic, 5% White, 4% Asian, 2% American Indian and 2% Multi-Racial students. The student body includes 4% English language learners and 14% 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 89.7%.

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**	**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	**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	**Focus**	**Developing**

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
School leaders and staff consistently communicate expectations that are connected to a path to college and career readiness and offer ongoing feedback to families and students.

Impact
Families understand their children's progress toward expectations and staff supports students to achieve those expectations.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents express their appreciation for progress reports sent to them at the middle of each marking period providing parents with progress on the four core subjects, attendance, class work, behavior, and next steps for improvement with a tear-off section for parents to write their feedback to the teacher. Also, the guidance counselor sends letters to parents with checklists of things to do regarding grade 8 high school admission process so that they are proactive with their child to meet deadlines and attend open houses and go on school visits.

- Monthly newsletters to parents inform them of celebrations of students' academic work, such as, the middle school grades presenting slide shows in class using the Keynote and PowerPoint presentations of their choice. Teachers and parents meet on Tuesday afternoons as needed to discuss their children's progress and how to help them succeed. Parent workshops are offered on Saturdays through a partnership with the ENACT program. Workshops include topics, such as: Adjusting to Change-Coping with Transition; Walking in Their Shoes-Understanding Your Child; Being a Positive Role Model; Expressing Your Common Core Needs. Additionally, parents can attend the monthly grade assemblies. For example, the kindergarten assembly celebrated the theme of love and the students memorized their lines to put on a show.

- The Response to Intervention Team works diligently to assign interventions that are specific to student needs. For example, the English as a Second Language teacher is assigned to pull-out students who are struggling readers to administer Imagine Learning, a new online program that the principal purchased for 100 students to use this year. Level one students are also assigned to afterschool interventions. The school reports that due to this student support, referrals have dropped from 29 to 9 from September to March.

- The guidance counselor provides mentoring for girls and for boys. For example, through a free program, Project Window, middle school young girls learn how to make choices and decisions that will produce the best possible outcomes and promotes self-esteem. Additionally, the counselor works with students in preparation for a high school open house by developing a list of survey questions for students to ask, such as, "Do you have any advanced placement courses? Which ones?"

Area of Focus

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

Findings
Teacher teams inconsistently analyze student work and data for students on whom they are focused. Distributed leadership structures are developing to support leadership capacity-building and include teachers in key decisions.

Impact
Teacher team work does not consistently result in improved teacher practice and progress toward goals for groups of students. Structures to develop shared leadership have not yet gained traction in consistently affecting student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence

- During a grade 4 team meeting, one teacher shared that they are focusing on, "…doing inquiry work on setting". Another teacher then reported to the team that a student in her class showed gaps in learning across three assessments, such as not understanding the main idea in one, not providing details in another, and not restating the question in yet another assessment. Another teacher shared that her students "did ok", and the third teacher shared that her students "got it; they made connections". Following this, a discussion among the three team members included how setting is about "time and place"; the need to "…re-educate ourselves about setting"; confirmation that, "we know the skills – we know how to teach it –so, we'll be fine". There were no definitive strategies decided upon or shared that would be used to teach students how to identify setting and understand how it is used by the author, in order to have an impact on student work or teacher practice.

- When asked, teachers in the grade 4 team were not able to identify specific protocols used to examine student work and data for the level one students they are focusing on. When reviewing the team's inquiry binder there was evidence of the use of an organizer that documents a review of student work samples with the intention of recording their strengths and weaknesses. However, one teacher completed the organizer while the other teachers made entries that were sketchy and/incomplete with no evidence of instructional adjustments.

- The instructional team meets twice per month and is responsible for reviewing and refining unit plans, creating units for staff on college and career, and discussing instructional shifts in lesson plans. These teacher leaders are expected to share their work with grade teams throughout the year. For example, one grade 3 teacher noted how the item analysis of the State math exam surfaced fractions as an area of concern. So she made sure that grade 3 teachers were incorporating more support regarding fractions into the units of study in math. However, this lead teacher support to grade level teams and teachers is inconsistent since not all grades are represented on this team, and teachers stated that they will work with other grades when they can find the time to do so, such as working with the grade 4 team.

- The interschool teacher development coach partners with teachers and school leaders to deepen knowledge of questions and discussions. They work with teachers to help them reflect and grow as they meet their students' needs. Teachers are trained and developed to take the lead in facilitating professional learning for the rest of the staff. This practice is beginning to support leadership capacity-building and have an impact on student learning.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient

Findings
Across grades and content, curricula are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and integrate the instructional shifts. Academic tasks are planned and refined using student data.

Impact
School leaders and teachers make purposeful decisions to build coherence so that all students have access to curricula and tasks that promote college and career readiness and are cognitively engaging.

Supporting Evidence

- The school uses Ready Gen and Go Math in grades 3 to 5 and CODE X and CMP3 for grades 6 to 8 as curriculum resources for math and English language arts. Imagine Learning, a software program, is an added resource to build foundational skills in language and literacy and is presently being used to supplement the curriculum for English language learners. In addition, the school has partnered with Literacy, Inc. Reading Partner Program to enhance certain Common Core competencies, such as read-aloud fluency and discussion around key elements of text across grades. Additional resources are accessed on Engage NY.

- Lesson plans and curricula are refined by using academic vocabulary and varied activities so that all students have access to the standard(s). For example, in kindergarten more detailed pictures and other visuals are used to engage emerging readers and develop vocabulary. In grade 1, math Grab and Go activity cards and teacher-made games help to differentiate tasks. In grade 8, math lessons incorporate Learn Zillion videos to generate a whole-class discussion regarding the problem of the day.

- Following a school review of baseline data, raising levels of questioning and discussion has become the instructional focus this school year to build coherence across grades. In turn, lesson plans in the core subjects include more opportunities for groups of students to engage in discussion in response to specific academic tasks that require them to draw evidence from a text. For example, in one lesson plan students in leveled groups are comparing and contrasting by accessing evidence across two texts and English language learners will use Google Translate to help them read and understand the text, and can write in Spanish on the computer, where it will be converted to English.

- Literacy standards are integrated into science and social studies lessons across grades. In a grade 4 lesson plan, students were to use evidence from a text they read to describe the types of rocks and the rock cycle. As a follow-up, they were assigned a writing task that captured the thoughts that would be exchanged during a gallery walk in the classroom.

Quality Indicator:	1.2 Pedagogy	Rating:	Developing

Findings
Teaching practices are aligned to the curricula and reflect a set of beliefs about how students learn best through participation and discussions.

Impact
Although the school shares a belief system about how students learn best, informed by the Danielson Framework for Teaching, work products and discussions across classrooms do not consistently reflect students' higher-order thinking and active engagement.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teaching practices reflect the school's instructional focus that students engage in questions and discussions in order to aid in comprehension. This focus is the framework of the set of beliefs that teachers share about how students learn best in their classrooms. Teachers plan to incorporate instructional shifts aligned to this focus by having students work in groups on shifts, such as, citing evidence across two texts to support a claim; understanding an author's purpose and perspective through the details in a text and comparing and contrasting using another text; using a standards- based, math problem-solving rubric and stating the reasoning for how to arrive at a solution.

- In a grade 8 math class, the teaching point was being developed through group work. Two student groups worked on leveled, extended constructed response tasks to understand linear and non-linear functions while a third, smaller group worked directly with the teacher using white boards as the teacher asked scaffolded questions to unpack a problem and solve it. Students participated in high level discussions, using calculators as needed to arrive at solutions. However, in another grade 4 class, students were in groups with roles, such as, facilitator and recorder, and had to refer to the text to respond to a question written on a task card. One group was too large with six or more students, and therefore, some students did not engage in the task. In another group, the student facilitator asked and answered his own question and the recorder was writing his own notes directly from the text leaving the rest of the group disengaged.

- In a grade 6 Integrated Co-Teaching class, students were to compare and contrast two memoir texts to understand the authors' purpose, and different strategies used to convey their perspectives in their writing. Students worked in leveled groups on an assignment that was matched to their academic level with some student choice. Students referred to a "Discussion Prompts" chart and a "Response to Literature Rubric" posted on their desks to complete their student choice task and group task. Two English language learners were using Google Translate to assist them with writing their responses. Conversely, in a self-contained grade 4/5 bridge class, students were divided into two groups, one with the paraprofessional and one with the teacher. Each group was expected to respond to questions that were posted on chart paper in two places in the classroom. The teacher and paraprofessional recorded responses to questions on the chart paper. The questions included: "What is one feature of each rock?; How does the author use a specific example to support the idea that extreme heat or pressure can create a metamorphic rock?" However, the teacher did not clarify some of the science vocabulary being used and had difficulty managing her group, which resulted in students disengaged in the task and wandering away from the posted chart paper. Furthermore, when they then sat at their desks, students were instructed to "start writing", and did not readily begin, since more explicit and scaffolded support in understanding the task, unpacking the vocabulary in the questions, and the charted responses, was lacking.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing

Findings
In some classrooms, teachers employ checks for understanding and students self-assess their work, while in other classrooms, there are uneven levels of assessment of student work products, and inconsistent alignment to rubric expectations.

Impact
Teachers inconsistently provide actionable feedback regarding student achievement and effective adjustments to meet students' learning needs.

Supporting Evidence

- In one grade 4 class, student work displayed teacher feedback detailing what students did well and what they need to work on to improve. Comments were connected to a task-specific rubric and graphic organizers used by students to link their thoughts on setting, story detail, and main idea. However, in another grade 4 class, student work posted reflected some vague comments, such as, "add details" with no connection to a rubric. In a self-contained grade 4 class, teacher comments were general, such as, "nice job" on one and "completed task" on another students' work, with no connection to a task-specific rubric.

- In an Integrated Co-Teaching class, one teacher was utilizing a Progress Monitoring Chart to jot down notes on student understanding as she visited working groups. In a grade 4 class, the teacher was referring to a chart with student exit slips posted in sections "Got it", "I have some idea", and "I have no clue" from the previous math lesson. Students were animated in understanding their place on the chart and to which group they would be assigned for the present lesson. Also, in this class, questions, such as, "What's another way she can see it if she can't see it in her head?"; "Can you help her out?" further checked and clarified whether students were conceptualizing the math task.

- In some classrooms, checks for understanding were evident. During a grade 3 lesson, student groups were asked to self-assess their work by referring to a rubric that measured simple tasks, such as, gathering information, writing in complete sentences, and carrying out their roles in the group. One higher level measure included a general statement of whether students correctly created all questions pertaining to the text. In a grade 8 math lesson, one student shared that she was using a Rubistar problem-solving rubric, Comparing and Analyzing Functions, to self-assess as she worked, so she "…can get a 4". She also shared, "But the teacher has the final say on whether she agrees (with me)." However, in a grade 4 self-contained lesson, when students were reading words from a chart that other students wrote, such as, weathering, there was no follow-up to determine their understanding of this academic vocabulary.

- During the student interview, students brought their portfolios with them. Most portfolios contained few samples of student work, with no teacher feedback, or rubrics, or any other assessment tools. Some portfolios contained benchmark assessments with multiple choice and short responses. One grade 4 folder of an English language learner did not contain any work. He noted that he was in this school for one year and in the country for two. A student in grade 7 shared, "There weren't much essays this year. Some are on the wall". He shared a one page with his responses to four questions and graded 4/4; however, could not articulate why the piece received 4/4. In addition, when a grade 8 student was asked if she knows what she needed to work on to improve her writing; she stated that, "I think I need to do more essays and vocabulary". A rubric in her portfolio indicated a level 2 rating. A grade 5 student shared a short biography that he wrote about a person he made up by looking at the computer. He stated that his "…teacher said I got a 4", with no indication on the work.