



Quality Review Report

2014-2015

P.S. 186 Castlewood

Elementary School 26Q186

**252-12 72 Avenue
Queens
NY, 11426**

Principal: Melissa Haidary

**Date of review: January 21, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Danielle Giunta**

The School Context

P.S. 186 Castlewood is a/an Elementary school with 397 students from prekindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 13% Black, 21% Hispanic, 30% White, and 34% Asian students. The student body includes 1% English language learners and 18% special education students. Boys account for 55% of the students enrolled and girls account for 45%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2012 - 2013 was 95.6%.

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	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	Celebration	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	Focus	Proficient
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	Proficient

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms, teaching strategies consistently provide scaffolds and multiple entry points into the curricula. Student work and dialogues regularly reveal critical thinking and high levels of engagement.

Impact

As a result of students' engaging in appropriately challenging tasks, work products and discussions reflect high levels of student thinking and participation.

Supporting Evidence

- Instructional strategies, such as planning for differentiated small groups, implementing structures for student led conversations, development of "tool kits" as resources and scaffolds to support student learning, have led to the school achieving a 9% increase in English Language Arts (ELA) and 3% increase in math proficiency. Moreover, there was an increase of 2.9% for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in the self-contained classroom setting in both ELA and math.
- Across classrooms, lessons were aligned to units of study. The use of academic vocabulary in ELA and fluency in math were evident and students were asked to cite evidence from text and explain their thinking in multiple ways in math. Students had opportunities to engage in discussion with peers through purposeful and flexible groupings inclusive of small group work and discussion circles.
- Across classrooms, teachers are embracing the role of teacher as facilitator through the implementation of flexible grouping as well as whole class grand conversations or Socratic circles. In a grade 2 math class, students worked in small groups to brainstorm multiple ways to solve a mathematical problem. Each group was provided a scaffold to support their work called, *My Addition Strategies Mat* which helped push their thinking to solve problems in multiple ways. When students completed the initial task they were called to the carpet to engage in a student facilitated conversation sharing their strategies and rationale. Prior to beginning the conversation, the teacher reviewed a *Talk Rubric* developed with the class. During group discussions, students consistently used mathematical language to share their strategies to solve problems. The teacher only interjected to help students clarify their thinking or encourage students to attend closer to precision in use of mathematical language.
- Teachers across the school consistently develop and utilize scaffolds to support student learning and ensure all students, including students with disabilities, have access to the curriculum. During a visit to a kindergarten classroom, students were at the beginning of their *How To* writing unit of study. Students previously drafted ideas for topics and were writing their first draft of one of their topics, while the teacher worked with a small group of two students in need of additional support. After immersing the children in both guided practice and instruction on representational drawing, the teacher took step-by-step pictures of students making a popsicle, so students could experience their topic and use the pictures as a scaffold when transferring their knowledge into writing

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Proficient

Findings

Across classrooms teachers use or create assessments, rubrics and checklists aligned to the curricula. Classroom practice reflects the use of on-going checks for understanding.

Impact

Teachers utilize assessment data and information from on-going checks for understanding to make effective adjustments in curricula and teaching practices as well as formulate flexible groupings; however, students are not yet able to articulate the feedback they have received, cite how feedback has helped them or be cognizant of their next learning steps.

Supporting Evidence

- Across classrooms, teachers use student assessment data from Teachers College Reading Levels and teacher conference notes to determine small group work and plan for multiple entry points. Teachers confer and make adjustments to teaching based on observation of student responses and student work. Teachers incorporate mid-lesson interruptions to provide feedback around trends in misunderstandings of a task to refocus student work. For example, during one class visit, kindergarten students were in the beginning of a “How To” unit of writing. During the mini-lesson the teacher modeled how sketching each step on a different page can help the writer teach their audience how to brush their teeth. During student independence, through conferring, the teacher noticed students were skipping the sketching step and highlighted a student who was incorporating the strategy as a reminder to the rest of the class. Further, the teacher incorporated anticipated mid-workshop interruptions into her daily lesson plan.
- In a fifth grade math class, the teacher conferred with groups of students working on differentiated tasks. The teacher listened in to partner discussions, reviewed their work and incorporated probing questions and provided feedback to push student thinking to the next level. In discussions, with students, they expressed how they appreciate that their teacher does not provide answers and makes them think.
- During the student meeting, students spoke clearly about expectations of a given task; however, students were unable to articulate how they knew they completed the task. Most student work shared at the student meeting was not accompanied by rubrics, teacher or peer feedback or evidence of students reflecting on their work. Students exhibited uneven levels of understanding regarding the use and purpose of rubrics and most students struggled to explain their next steps for improvement.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

All curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and integrate the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work.

Impact

The integration of the instructional shifts within curricula has led to coherence across classrooms and provides all learners, including students with disabilities, access to the curricula and tasks and are cognitively engaged.

Supporting Evidence

- The school has embraced the Department of Education (DOE) and United Federation of Teachers (UFT) unit planning template which is also aligned to daily lesson plans. Most teachers have adjusted this planning template to incorporate a section to highlight planning for a variety of learners, including students with disabilities, at-risk children and high-achievers. For instance, teachers generally use the unit template to map out the overarching unit. This serves as a roadmap for daily lessons in which they highlight small group work for groups of students, include higher-order thinking questions and anticipated interventions and extensions.
- The school has been a Teachers College Reading and Writing Project for over ten years. School leaders and teachers work closely with staff developers to align the units of study to the standards within a variety of genres. Supplementary programs such as Foundations, Wilson, Reading Recovery and Leveled Literacy Instruction are used to further support at-risk students or those in-need of remediation.
- To strengthen the writing component of their literacy program and ensure alignment to standards and coherency across the school, teachers incorporate writing progressions into their planning process. This has been particularly helpful to school leaders, teachers and parents, since it clearly outlines the skills, strategies concepts and expectations taught within each grade level.
- In math, the school has adopted the EnVisions math program and utilizes Singapore Math bar models as a supplement to promote number sense and mathematical reasoning. Although the school has seen an increase in math proficiency by 3%, school leaders have identified math as a key subject area for improvement. To that end, teachers have adjusted their former use of Exemplars to align closely to units in EnVisions, in an effort to assess their students' abilities to transfer and apply knowledge learned in class, to more complex problem-solving experiences.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

School leaders consistently communicate high expectations and align a variety of professional learning experiences and feedback to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching*. School leaders and teachers consistently communicate high expectations connected to a path to college and career readiness to families.

Impact

As a result of consistent communication, school leaders have created a culture of high expectations and a system of accountability for those expectations. Families receive frequent, on-going feedback about student progress, which helps them understand expectations and their role in positioning students on a path to college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- The school's mission is to develop an environment in which students, parents and staff work collaboratively, to maximize students' intellectual emotional and social potential. School leaders and teachers have implemented a variety of means for communicating their mission through a school website, emails to families, monthly letters, curriculum workshops and progress reports, which outline expectations by marking period.
- During the parent meeting, parents expressed that they receive ample, on-going feedback about their children's progress and feel welcomed in the school. As a fully inclusive school, with 31% of students with disabilities and 100% of class structures classified as Macro- or Micro- Integrated Collaborative Team classes, parents recognize and appreciate the deep level of commitment on social-emotional support the school provides, as a key support for college and career readiness. Parents also expressed concerns around the demands of the Common Core Learning Standards and the need for increased parent workshops to gain a deeper insight into the standards and instructional shifts in an effort to support their children on a deeper level.
- School leaders leverage frequent cycles of observation with timely feedback and actionable next steps aligned to the Danielson *Framework for Teaching* to communicate high-expectation for teacher practice. Across all classrooms visited, school leaders identified how teachers are incorporating their feedback specifically in asking higher-order thinking questions, probing questions to elicit student thinking and small group work. School leaders were able to highlight examples of increasing levels of effectiveness in teacher practice.
- In addition to feedback provided during teacher observations, school leaders have designed a professional learning plan and utilize an instructional coach to support teachers in meeting high-expectations through scheduled three-week cycles. School leaders clearly outline a set of expected outcomes at the conclusion of a cycle. Areas of focus are determined based on classroom observations and aligned to the school's instructional focus. Cycles of support have included supporting teachers in analyzing student work, to determine and plan for small group instruction, as well as support ensuring learning activities align to the learning objective of a lesson. Additionally, school leaders communicate high expectations to staff via a weekly calendar, weekly *Frequently Asked Questions* sheet, and opportunities to meet with them.

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

The majority of teachers engage in inquiry-based structured professional collaborations that promote the achievement of school goals. Teacher teams consistently analyze assessment data and student work.

Impact

Teacher collaboration has built coherence within and across grades resulting in improvements in teacher pedagogy and opportunities for progress towards school goals and student achievement.

Supporting Evidence

- Teachers participate in multi-level collaborations including: grade level teams, professional development team, vertical Literacy Instructional Team (LILT), Math Instructional Team (MILT), Micro-Integrated Collaborative Teaching (ICT) team and Macro-ICT team. All teams work towards producing artifacts that can serve as resources to the larger school community and also highlight their effectiveness.
- Grade level teams meet weekly to analyze student work and make adjustments in planning and teacher practice. For example, as a result of analyzing student work, the second grade team determined students were not elaborating in their writing. Lessons were revised to explicitly teach students to include more elaboration within their writing. Each week, a teacher on the team brings student work to analyze, looking specifically at whether students have included more elaboration to their writing, as a means to monitor progress. As they increased their focus on elaboration, teachers noted students were making conscious efforts to elaborate and were taking more ownership of their writing.
- The work of teacher teams is aligned to the schools instructional focus, which emphasizes the planning process with particular attention to planning for multiple entry points. Teachers anchor their conversations in looking at student work and provide support through feedback from school leaders and the instructional coach. Teachers expressed that they value the feedback they receive both at the individual and team level. For example, based on feedback at the classroom level, one teacher who is a member of the MILT team, who is focusing on increasing talk in math, is working towards moving into the role of teacher-as-facilitator. The teacher invited school leaders into her classroom to provide informal feedback on her attempts to incorporate a new teaching practice. As a result of this work, students within the classroom have begun to engage in high-level student-facilitated math conversations and the teacher has now opened her classroom for inter-visitations to her colleague.