



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Mayflower

Elementary School 26Q191

**85-15 258th Street
Queens
NY 11001**

Principal: Michael Ranieri

**Date of review: November 5, 2014
Lead Reviewer: Dr. Rhonda Dawn Farkas**

The School Context

The Mayflower is an elementary school with 406 students from pre-kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 6% Black, 11% Hispanic, 11% White, and 70% Asian, and 2% other students. The student body includes 11% 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 2014-2015 was 96.0%

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	Well Developed
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	Celebration	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	Additional Findings	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	Well Developed

Area of Celebration

Quality Indicator:

2.2 Assessment

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Teachers employ a variety of assessment methods, including ongoing checks for understanding.

Impact

As a result, teachers make effective instructional adjustments to meet all students' learning needs and students are well aware of their next steps for learning.

Supporting Evidence:

- In response to a fourth grader's opinion essay, which required him to use evidence from the texts *More Valuable Than Gold* and *How the Gold Rush Changed America*, the teacher provided detailed comments, such as "You clearly introduce the topic and your ideas are organized" and "Be sure to be more consistent with your linking and transition words," referring to the student's strengths and next steps, respectively.
- Teachers across all grades and subjects consistently engage in ongoing checks for understanding during each lesson by asking thought-provoking questions of the students, and without prompting, students openly and freely express accord or discord in response to their classmates' responses.
- Teachers also maintain detailed conference notes and make immediate and effective adjustments based on the information gathered. For example, after a fourth grade teacher administered a "quick check," and realized that five students needed additional support, she met with them at the carpet to engage them in small group instruction that included modeling and visual supports.
- In one kindergarten class, the students self-assessed their own writing and identified their own next steps, such as, working on blending sounds to make words, punctuation and spacing, adding details, or adding more sentences. Similarly, a third-grader, while working on comparing and contrasting the way characters identify problems and find solutions, indicated on his paper, that his next step was to work on solutions to a problem and find more evidence in the text.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

Instructional practices across the school demonstrate a coherent set of beliefs of how students learn best. Teachers provide scaffolds and extensions for all students to: engage in cognitive rigor; demonstrate higher order thinking and standards mastery; and enable students to take ownership of their own learning through critical reflection.

Impact

As a result, diverse groups of students engage in deep discussions and debates, formulate their own questions, initiate topics, and make unsolicited contributions. Moreover, the school has met the goal for closing the achievement gap and has exceeded the target for its overall achievement rating.

Supporting Evidence:

- Across a preponderance of classrooms, teachers empower students to: think critically and creatively, demonstrate in-depth understanding; build on their own and each other's ideas and chain them into coherent lines of thinking and inquiry; extend and refine their knowledge; make new distinctions; clear up misconceptions; and reach conclusions using multiple modes of communication such as annotated written conversations, verbal discourse, and technology, as well as concrete objects and symbols in math.
- During classroom discussions, students were encouraged to pose and respond to specific questions, as well as make explicit links between claims and their justifications. In one fourth-grade class, some students engaged in written conversations with their peers using informational texts culled from Scholastic.com/storyworks, such as *Kevin and Daisy*, an article about a boy with Autism. Protocols from their accountable talk folders were used to guide and focus their conversations while others used conversational prompts provided by the teacher using the article on the same topic but different level using the nonfiction piece entitled, *My Brother has Autism*. Other students engaged in silent written conversations in response to their reactions to reading about a 14-year old girl who decided to help re-establish hope using an article titled *Surviving Hurricane Sandy* compared and contrasted both articles as well as engaged in analysis of written conversations by their peers during which time they provided strengths and next steps to peer partnerships.
- In a third grade class, while comparing and contrasting *The Case of the Gaspig Garbage*, by Michele Torrey and *The Lemonade War*, by Jacqueline Davies, one student provided spontaneous input by expressing that in both texts, the characters were motivated to solve problems.
- Across the vast majority of classrooms, teachers provide students with a variety of high quality supports, such as graphic organizers, thinking maps, and technology, to guide them through the initial stages of writing. However, the practice of offering students opportunities to create authentic writing products, rather than use conventional worksheets for their final drafts, is only implemented in some classes.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:

1.1 Curriculum

Rating:

Well Developed

Findings

The school's curricula and academic tasks, across grades and subject areas, are aligned to Common Core Learning Standards and emphasize rigorous work habits and higher order thinking.

Impact:

All learners have access to rigorous, coherent curricula across all subject areas that promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence:

- Across the school, teachers have developed a repository of wide-ranging resources in English Language Arts and math, including ReadyGen, Engage NY, the Common Core Library from the New York City Department of Education, NY Ready, the Social Studies Scope and Sequence, EnVisions, and math exemplars, and create sequenced units of study that serve as a detailed road map and high-quality system.
- Curriculum maps, units of study, and rubrics in reading and writing incorporate the Common Core Learning Standards instructional shifts, include tiered academic vocabulary, close reading of complex tasks, and emphasize higher-order thinking skills and rigorous habits that result in coherence and the progression of sequenced and scaffolded, complex CCLS-aligned resources. Furthermore, the curricula meet the learning needs of pertinent groups of students, including ELLs, SWDs, and high-achieving students.
- Teachers' Common Core-aligned lessons promote higher order thinking skills, such as comparing, classifying, creating analogies that address the "big ideas" and specific details, and discussing controversial issues with competing points of view among all groups of students, thus, enhancing students' analytical, evaluative, and reflective skills across content areas. In addition, lessons consistently provide supports and extensions necessary for student achievement and incorporate the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), such as providing multiple options for student engagement based on learner variability in the context of tasks and offering choices for individual, pair, and group work, which has resulted in students' enhanced analytical, evaluative, and reflective skills across content areas.
- The school has maximized capacity for closing the achievement gap, as evidenced by the gains and reduction of learning gaps as noted in the 2013-2014 School Quality Snapshot, particularly for the English Language learners (ELLs) in English language arts (ELA) and Math and for Students with disabilities (SWDs) in math.

Quality Indicator:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

School leaders consistently underscore their high expectations to staff and convey that they are expected to achieve at very high levels and produce rigorous, challenging, and high quality work. The school effectively communicates and partners with families to support college and career readiness among their students.

Impact

Parents and staff are engaged in school decision-making and open exchanges of information regarding students' progress, which results in shared responsibility for student learning and increased student learning for all students.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders have clearly defined standards for professional learning and classroom practices that embed the components of the Danielson Framework for Teaching. They consistently convey ongoing, descriptive feedback to teachers that reflects high expectations, such as the inclusion of higher-order thinking questions in lessons and engaging students in productive struggle with complex texts, which underscores the principal's mantra, "If there is not struggle, there is no progress." In addition, administrators regularly provide ongoing descriptive, high-quality feedback to teachers around instructional practices, including comments such as, "Questioning strategies can be used as a form of assessment during lessons. By using Depth of Knowledge questions in your lesson planning, you will be able to collect data on what your students have learned during lessons." Such suggestions have been embraced by teachers, as evidenced by the solid implementation of ongoing assessments and engaging students in self-monitoring of their own progress during lessons.
- School leaders and faculty communicate with parents throughout the school year through various modes including flyers, emails, telephone and text messages. They also correspond via a new phone app through Apple iTunes entitled WhizFish Inc., which results in successful partnerships that support student progression towards the expectations for college and career readiness.
- The administration disseminated a Parent Workshop Survey requesting parents to indicate their preferences for proposed workshops to poll their interests and enhance their involvement in support of the school's culture of high expectations that are connected to post-secondary readiness. In response to this internal survey, the majority of parents requested information on Common Core, supporting their children at home in reading and math, and gearing up for assessments, all of which have been offered and favorably received, as determined by their feedback in which activities/events/workshops was ranked number 2 out of 7 "Favorite Things About PS 191Q." In addition, the school provides parent workshops on *iReady*, an online program that automatically adjusts the difficulty of the questions according to each student's ability level and provides customized instruction according to student needs.

Quality Indicator:	4.2 Teacher teams and leadership development	Rating:	Well Developed
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Findings

Structures for professional collaboration are in place across the school and teachers engage in inquiry-based analysis of student work and data.

Impact

The work of teacher teams has resulted in school-wide instructional coherence, increased student achievement, and staff decision-making that affect student learning across the school.

Supporting Evidence:

- Fourth and fifth grade teachers created an opinion writing data checklist, replete with next steps, to use during lessons to gauge student mastery of each of the seven traits in writing, including students' command of evidence and use of transitions and conventions. Similarly, the second and third grade teachers created graphic organizers of gradient difficulty for students to compare and contrast the way characters identify problems and find solutions. Consequently, students have become skillful in making evidentiary arguments, as evidenced both in conversation, as well as in writing, across content areas.
- The school's vertical team sets goals based on individual student, class, and school data to refine instruction, ensure that all curricula units are appropriately aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards, and meet the needs of all learners. As a result of these joint efforts, students have extensive opportunities to engage with complex texts, which supports their academic vocabulary that spans all content areas, as evidenced in their rich and robust dialogue and writing.
- Teachers collaboratively decided to create student-friendly rubrics and self-assessment checklists across all grades and content areas, which has resulted in school wide coherence and increased student achievement for all learners, as demonstrated by 65% and 71% of students reaching proficiency in English language arts and math, respectively, on the 2014 New York State (NYS) assessments.
- A fourth grade teacher on the school's vertical team shared an instructional technique that focused on the identification of elements of opinion and argument writing to address the need for students to advance their skills in this genre, such as categorizing concepts that connect to the main idea to present coherent paragraphs and including text evidence, as well as vivid details, as determined by analyses of student work. Following a demonstration, using a sample editorial piece of writing, she modeled how to establish a color-coding system to highlight: an opinion statement, reasons in support, a counter argument, and facts and research to support. She acknowledged that this method is contributing to students' progress in opinion and argument writing, as required by the instructional shifts. The entire team agreed to pilot this method and report back on student progress.