



**Department of
Education**
Carmen Fariña, Chancellor

**Office of School Quality
Division of Teaching and Learning**

Quality Review Report

2014-2015

The Horace Harding School

Elementary School Q206

**61-21 97th Street
Rego Park, N.Y. 11374**

Principal: Joan Thomas

**Date of review: February 24, 2015
Lead Reviewer: Seiw Kong**

The School Context

The Horace Harding is an elementary school with 604 students from grade Pre-Kindergarten through grade 5. The school population comprises 18% Black, 33% Hispanic, 30% White, 17% Asian and 2% multi-racial students. The student body includes 24% English language learners and 10% special education students. Boys account for 49% of the students enrolled and girls account for 51%. The average attendance rate for the school year 2013-2014 was 94.0%.

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	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	Focus	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		
<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	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:	3.4 High Expectations	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

The school consistently communicates high expectations to staff through the use of Danielson Framework for Teaching to promote student learning and achievement. Performance data via Engrade and progress report keep families apprised of student progress and growth towards school expectations.

Impact

School staff has a set system of learning and student performance accountability that provides feedback to both students and parents on understanding the student progress, thus providing a clear path towards student achievement and college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- Parents shared that teachers communicate with them on a regular basis about school goals and their child's progress through conferences, monthly newsletter, phone system, emails, and Engrade, an online grade book.
- Monthly Teacher Team Newsletter is published and circulated among staff to showcase best practices that are seen in classrooms. Monday Professional Learning Opportunities along with common preparations time allowed teachers and staff to learn instructional strategies and refine their practices.
- Administrators continuously conduct learning walkthroughs with teachers, grade leaders and vertical team to gather best practices and norm the expectations for teacher practice, student work, classroom environment and instruction that is based on the Danielson Framework for Teaching.
- Student-Led Conference that was implemented this year promoted student learning and allowed teachers, parents and students to discuss ways to support growth, build confidence and self-esteem that connect to college and career readiness.

Area of Focus

Quality Indicator:

1.2 Pedagogy

Rating:

Developing

Findings

Teaching strategies such as multiple entry points, scaffolds and extensions for English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities (SWDs) were inconsistent in most of the classrooms. Student work products reflected uneven levels of student thinking and participation.

Impact

Students were unevenly engaged in the appropriate challenging academic tasks to ensure strategic multiple entry points, thus limiting higher order thinking skills in student work products, including the work of ELLs and SWDs.

Supporting Evidence

- Differentiation of instruction provided multiple entry points to students of ELLs and/or SWDs were evident in two out of seven classrooms. In one classroom, students were engaged in different group work according to their performance level. They completed the tasks following the directions on their own while the teacher conducted a reteach to support the struggling students.
- The school instructional focus defined the engagement of students as rich and collaborative discussions with an emphasis on questioning and discussion to deepen their comprehension. However, this was only evident in three out of the seven classrooms visited. Turn and talk along with engaging students in higher order thinking group discussion was inconsistent.
- In most classrooms, all students worked on the same task, with no visible modifications for the struggling students or the accelerated students. Two out of seven classrooms have differentiated activities where students were challenged at their entry point. In two mathematic lessons, students were in placed in groups with different tasks that were aligned to the learning objective. The groups engaged in higher order thinking discussion using various manipulative to complete the task. In one classroom, students presented their work by explaining their reasoning to the strategies that they have selected to complete the fraction word problems.

Additional Findings

Quality Indicator:	1.1 Curriculum	Rating:	Proficient
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Findings

Curricula are aligned to the Common Core Learning Standards and content standards with a purposeful integration of the instructional shifts. Curricula and academic tasks are planned and refined using student work and data.

Impact

Curricula provide access to academic tasks that are cognitively engaged to ELLs and SWDs in order to build coherence that promote college and career readiness.

Supporting Evidence

- School leaders and teachers ensure that English language arts (ELA) curriculum units of study integrate the Common Core Learning Standards and instructional shifts. Units of study also reflect learning objectives/expectations, essential questions, academic vocabulary and assessments with enduring understandings.
- Five out of seven lesson plans reflect scaffolding of instruction, strategic approach and small group instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners. Academic tasks are refined consistently to ensure all learners including ELLs and SWDs are cognitively engaged.
- Teachers created two differentiated performance based assessments for writing and mathematics based on student work to provide access to curricula and the scaffold to increase student understanding and promote student learning.

Quality Indicator:	2.2 Assessment	Rating:	Developing
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Findings

ELA and Math common assessments were used to measure student progress but teachers' practices in using assessment data to adjust curricula and instruction were inconsistent. Teachers' ongoing checks for understanding and student self-assessment were inconsistently used across the classrooms.

Impact

Small group instruction based on student assessment data, and ongoing checks for understanding were not evident in most of the classrooms, thus limiting student learning and growth.

Supporting Evidence

- Math and ELA rubrics were evident in all the classrooms; however, students were not able to articulate their goals and the next learning steps in the rubrics.
- The school uses Fountas and Pinnell Running Records to determine the student reading level. Go-Math Chapter test and performance based assessment are used to assess and monitor student mathematic growth.
- "Glow and Grow" teacher comments were used in every classroom; however, most of the classrooms do not reflect the student self-assessment nor peer assessment.
- School indicated that teachers use the Fist of Five, thumbs-up, checklist, exit slips along with reflection sheet for checking for understanding, but it is only evident in two out of seven classrooms.
- In most of the classrooms, there was no evidence of teachers recording conference notes or monitoring for content or concept mastery during the group or independent work.

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

Grade Team and Vertical Team inquiry-based professional collaboration is structured for teachers to promote the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards, including the instructional shifts and build leadership capacity.

Impact

Teachers are actively engaging and making key decisions to strengthen their instructional strategies in order to promote student learning and achievement for all learners.

Supporting Evidence

- Teacher teams used inquiry protocol, ORID; O=objective/observation, R=reflection, I=interpretation and D=decision to build coherence in all Pre-K to 5 grade team meetings. Each teacher has a specific role namely, grade leader, facilitator, data collector and recorder.
- English as the second language teacher participated in the teacher team meeting to support teachers in scaffolds and differentiation of instruction for ELLs.
- Teacher team provided structure for teachers to build leadership capacity and have a voice in the key decisions. The special education teacher suggested specific format for content writing to increase understanding for ELLs and SWDs and to diffuse student misconceptions. The grade leader ensured that the protocol was adhered to and the team made decisions that affect and improve student learning.
- In addition to grade level teacher team, the school has also built a vertical team to build understanding of each grade level expectations of the Common Core Learning Standards and the school goals. Each grade teacher analyzed the standards of the next grade level to fill the instructional gaps of their current grade level and strengthen their instructional capacity.